



Grow Asia Business Council Meeting

Wednesday 18 September 2019

Meeting Summary

The Grow Asia Business Council is comprised of global and regional business leaders to serve as an anchor in shaping the Grow Asia agenda, and to demonstrate and deliver the private sector's leadership and commitment to strengthening a sustainable and inclusive agriculture sector in ASEAN. Following the in-person meeting of the Grow Asia Business Council at the Grow Asia Forum in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2018, the virtual meeting shared updates and defined next steps on the joint action agenda to be taken through this multi-stakeholder platform. Key points are summarized below, as an input to the Business Council's on-going discussions.

Key Points from the Discussion

- 1. New Business Council Co-Chair.** The co-chairmanship of the Grow Asia Business Council was rotated from Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food to Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group. Council members shared words of appreciation and thanks for Pak Franky Widjaja's passionate leadership over the last five years. Sinar Mas will continue to remain a member of the Business Council and reiterated Pak Franky's vision of growing the Country Partnerships across ASEAN, while adapting to new opportunities in digital. The Council unanimously welcomed Khun Sumeth Pinyosanit, CEO of CP Group's Crop Integration Business Unit as its new Co-chair. The Council noted the excellent reach and brand of CP in the region, and Khun Sumeth underscored his commitment to carry forward Grow Asia's model through CP's integrated supply chains.
- 2. Country Partnerships Progress.** In 2019, Grow Asia launched its sixth Country Partnership in PNG, with support from Australia's DFAT. Grow Asia's Country Partnerships continue to increase their reach and impact, exercise greater autonomy, and are, to varying degrees, receiving investments from in-country partners to achieve self-sustainability. The Business Council also raised the possibility of developing a Country Partnership in Thailand funded by private sector partners. Such a Country Partnership could share lessons from Thailand's experience as a mature agricultural powerhouse in the region and expand the regional cooperation. For example, Thailand is an early mover on regional threats to crop production such as the Fall Armyworm (FAW). A Council member suggested that facilitating dialogues on FAW could be a potential entry point for establishing a Grow Asia Secretariat in Thailand. Council members will connect Grow Asia staff to their leadership teams in Thailand to scope a potential Country Partnership.
- 3. Future Funding.** Australia has indicated continued support for Grow Asia in its next phase. Notwithstanding, Grow Asia will face a shortfall in funding over the next 12-18 months, during which Grow Asia will streamline its operating costs (reduced rent, fewer secretariat staff) while seeking other sources of funding. The Business Council discussed various strategies, such as (1) sharing office space with similar programs or partners, (2) hosting secondees from WEF or private sector; (3) bidding for consultancy contracts for specific development projects, (4) setting up a sponsorship model to defray the costs of annual events (e.g. Grow Asia Forum), and (5) requesting voluntary contributions from business partners. The Council encouraged Grow Asia to communicate its value to the CPs as well as the business community through clear outcomes and KPIs, with the possibility of having the individual CPs, in the long-term, support the Regional Secretariat. Emphasis was placed on continuing regional programs such as the Digital Program as it brings tangible value to the private sector. The Council also proposed a separate meeting



to discuss funding opportunities and strategy to cover the shortfall and ensure ongoing financial stability for the organization

- 4. Next Steps on ASEAN RAI Guidelines.** Following the adoption of the ASEAN Guidelines on Promoting Responsible Investment in Food, Agriculture, and Forestry (RAI Guidelines), the ASEAN Secretariat requested further support from Grow Asia to operationalize them. Grow Asia intends to develop a regional blended learning program (which includes e-learning and face to face modules) to create a cadre of people from public, private, and CSO sectors who are trained to integrate the Guidelines into their individual job scopes. Council members are encouraged to consider sending staff to the participate in the blended learning program once it has launched.
- 5. New Regional Developments.** The ASEAN Secretariat has requested Grow Asia to provide inputs to a regional plan in response to the Fall Armyworm. Initial estimates indicate that the pest could cost the region US\$200-300 million to import the required corn supply, particularly for animal feed. Grow Asia can leverage expertise and information distribution networks to reach farmers through the corn Working Groups in the CPs. Grow Asia will develop and present a set of recommendations on FAW management to the AMAF in October, including the exchange of best practices which Grow Asia could coordinate. Grow Asia will continue to lean on the expertise of the Business Council to develop recommendations and engage members in conversations about pest management as appropriate going forward. Separately, IFAD is also in discussion with Grow Asia on creating a database of farmer organizations to facilitate efficient connections with agribusinesses.



Meeting Participants

- Co-chair Jens Hartmann, Regional Head, Asia Pacific, Bayer Crop Science
- Co-chair Sumeth Pinyosanit, Chief Executive Officer, CP Crop Integration Business Unit
- Harry Hanawi, Director, Corporate Affairs, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food – on behalf of outgoing Co-chair Franky Widjaja, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Sinar Mas Agribusiness & Food
- Mun Pew Khong, Head, Public Affairs and Sustainability, Asia Pacific, Bayer Crop Science
- Charuk Kuntanarumitkul, Consultant, CP Crop Integration Business Unit
- Deepak Baldwa, Regional Finance Lead, ASEAN & NEA, Advanta Seeds
- Bremen Yong, Director of Sustainability, Apical Group
- Pitra Narendra, Director, Government Affairs, Asia Pacific, Cargill
- Farra Siregar, ASEAN Managing Director, Corteva
- Christina Celestine, Regional Director of Communications and External Affairs, APAC/China, DSM
- David Chen, Chief Operating Officer, Golden Sunland
- Dharnesh Gordhon, President Director, PT Nestlé Indonesia
- Wisman Djaja, Sustainable Agriculture Development and Procurement Director, PT Nestlé Indonesia
- Harjan Kuiper, CEO Singapore branch and representative markets, Rabobank
- Biggy Nguyen, Vice President, Public Sector Solutions, Swiss Re
- Cindy Lim, Head, Sustainable Productivity, APAC, Syngenta
- Marion Martinez, Country Manager, Yara Vietnam
- Agnes Tong, Marketing and Communications Manager, Asia, Yara
- Jim Riordan, Head of Development Partner Funding Governance, Centre for Global Public Goods, World Economic Forum
- Grahame Dixie, Executive Director, Grow Asia
- Reginald Lee, Director, Partnerships, Grow Asia
- Paul Voutier, Director, Knowledge and Innovation, Grow Asia
- Pranav Sethaputra, Manager, Partnerships, Grow Asia
- Nadia Soerjanto, Manager, Knowledge and Innovation, Grow Asia
- Erin Sweeney, Associate, Partnerships, Grow Asia