

Integrating Climate Change Perspective in the Farmer Business School (FBS) Approach

Background

The Farmer Business School (FBS) approach was developed by the International Potato Center (CIP) in 2008 through the initiative of an Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)-funded project that aims to link vegetable farmers with markets in West and Central Java, Indonesia. FBS is a participatory action learning process that involves farmer groups' participation in agricultural value chains. As part of capacity strengthening, FBS comprises a series of group-based experiential learning activities over a production-marketing cycle while interacting with other chain actors and stakeholders.

Experiences in FBS applications across Southeast Asia have increasingly highlighted the need to address climate change risks in promoting farmer business development, including: 1) local adaptation strategies to ensure sustained crop production for markets, 2) targeting of and investment planning for agricultural value chains guided by long-term scenarios for climate change impact, 3) vulnerability analysis as part of business planning among micro- and small agricultural enterprises.

Integrating a climate change perspective potentially makes FBS a more robust action learning approach by enabling farmers to capture wider business opportunities in value chains while enhancing climate smartness on-farm. This also promotes cross-learning and knowledge-sharing between FBS proponents and other organizations/programs involved in farmer capacity building for local adaptation/mitigation to climate change.

FBS-CC Learning Workshop

24 to 26 March 2014, Holiday Inn, Clarkfield, Pampanga

In collaboration with CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), the Food Security Through Asian Roots and Tubers (FoodSTART) Project funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a learning workshop with government institutions, climate change experts, NGOs and Local Government Units (LGUs) in the Philippines was organized.

Objectives

1. To assess vulnerability threats and agro-environmental risks to small-scale farmer businesses;
2. To identify opportunities for resilience-building in business planning and development, through proven best practices and innovations for climate change adaptation/mitigation.
3. To integrate climate-smart practices in FBS approach,
4. including targeted learning content in the curriculum.
5. To develop an action plan for piloting climate-smart FBS in new/on-going initiatives for agri-value chain development.



The learning group during the field visit to Gerona agro-met station

Field visit to Tarlac farmer groups and LGU (Central Luzon, Philippines)

Mayor Dennis Go of Municipality of Gerona, Tarlac suggested that a clear protocol on climate change must be established and it is important for the national government to integrate climate change into the national development plan. After the courtesy call, the group headed to Climate-resilient Field School (CrFS) and agro-meteorology station piloted in Gerona, the first in Central Luzon. Members of the farmers' group and Rice Watch Action Network (RI) explained how the technology works especially during weather disturbances. The station is locally funded with automated weather station (AWS). This technology gives the farmers warning which is useful for pre-production decisions that they need to make. RI believes that being resilient is having access to climate information, insurance, climate appropriate technologies and ability to diversify the crops.

Knowledge and experience sharing

The workshop served as the venue for the pool of social scientists to discuss and learn for the experiences of others in addressing climate change issues. An expert from the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) shared the key concepts on climate change adaptation and mitigation. A representative from International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) discussed the field-based challenges in implementing their "Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction" program. The local farmers' experiences and efforts to build resilient livelihoods in Central Luzon and Cordillera also highlighted the discussion.

The group used these inputs to brainstorm and to develop future actions—hence, two subsequent activities were designed after this learning workshop.

FBS-CC Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop
29 May 2014, Astoria Plaza Hotel, Ortigas, Pasig City



Stakeholders during the action planning session

As a follow-up activity to the learning workshop conducted on 24 to 26 March 2014, the consultation workshop was intended to discuss with potential institutional partners for piloting and upscaling the FBS with climate change perspective in new and ongoing initiatives. The stakeholders' consultation meeting aimed to deliver the following:

Objectives and outputs

1. Identify opportunities for resilience-building in business planning and development through proven best practices and innovations for climate change adaptation and mitigation
2. Develop action plans for piloting climate-smart FBS in new and ongoing initiatives for agri-value chain development in the Philippines.

The workshop output was a joint action plan with prospective institutional partners for piloting and out-scaling FBS with climate change techniques perspective in existing action research initiatives for resilience-building in farmer businesses and agricultural livelihoods.

The consultation workshop was divided into two parts: a) presentations of cases on climate-smart agriculture initiatives and rural development at community level (*Cases: I. IIRR Quezon Project; II. Climate-resilient Field School Gerona Project; III. Farmer Business School*); and b) action planning. The meeting was culminated with the suggestions outlined below as agreed upon by the group.

Recommendations from stakeholders

1. Conduct a Training of Facilitators (ToF) on FBS-CC for the LGU of Gerona, Guinyangan, Los Banos and Antipolo City
2. Conduct of three regional ToF for the staff of Department of Agriculture (DA) - Cassava Program
3. Discussion on the piloting of FBS-CC



Participants of the stakeholders' workshop together with resource persons

Profile of Stakeholders

Local Government Units (LGU)

1. Emelita Jamosale, Agricultural Technician (Antipolo City)
2. Cheryll Gonzales, Agricultural Technician (Los Banos, Laguna)
3. Fe Banasihan, Municipal Agriculturist (Los Banos, Laguna)
4. Maria Carlyn Medel, Cooperative and Livelihood Officer (Los Banos, Laguna)
5. Belina Rosales, Municipal Agriculturist (Guinayangan, Quezon)
6. Milagros Pacheco, Municipal Agriculturist (Gerona, Tarlac)

Farmer Organizations

1. Mario Ronquillo (Chairperson, Coffee Growers Guinayangan, Quezon)
2. Homer Bacud (Farmer, ATOP Gerona Tarlac)

Research Agencies

1. Angelito Carpio (Senior Science Research Specialist, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development-PCAARRD)
2. Candido Damo (Head, Cassava Program of Department of Agriculture)
3. Locil Lacaba (Staff, Corn Program of Department of Agriculture)
4. Julie Roa (Head, Social Science and Extension Office—PhilRootcrops, Visayas State University)

Non-Government Organizations

1. Rene Vidallo (Agriculture, Natural Resources Management Specialist-International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR))
2. Emily Oro (Country Director, IIRR)
3. Hazel Tanchuling (Secretariat Coordinator, Rice Watch Action Network-R1)
4. Julian Gonsalves (Senior Adviser, CIP-FoodSTART and IIRR)

Event Secretariat

1. Marietta Nadal (Senior Office Manager, CIP-FoodSTART)
2. Arma Bertuso (Research Fellow, CIP-FoodSTART)

Module	Suggested topics from stakeholders to integrate in the modules	Methods, tools, activity
Pre-FBS planning	a) Identify pilot areas (survey and profiling with farmers); b) Add FBS orientation with climate-smart perspectives; c) Crops planning/forecasting discussion in pre-FBS planning for climate change context in businesses	Video (i.e. R1-CrFS) with question and answer Lecture and discussions
1	a) Sharing of testimonials on groups' success stories; b) Levelling off the understanding on climate change and its impacts on agri-businesses; c) Perspectives on mitigation because this is about anticipating risks/challenges and responding to them; d) Group self-assessment (gradual increase on climate change awareness among participants); e) Organization to see whether commodity/ production system mitigates climate change (or low GHGs emission); f) In livelihood and business visioning – can use the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) criteria checklist of CCAFS	Self-assessment of benefits of enterprises to CC mitigation
2	a) Climate considerations in VC/business development; b) Incorporate tool for decision-making that will look at checklist of climate-smart practices whether they are low in GHGs emission or not. If low, will proceed or not?; c) Developing a climate-smart criteria/checklist/template in terms of being climate-smart; is your business promoting conservation of carbon; do you capture nitrogen	"To go or not to go?" checklist (template) exercise with the session
3	a) Include climate risk as an area for analysis during mapping risk; b) Use of decision-making tool for application in the business	Educational tours, checklist for CSA for
4	Special topics to include climate smart technologies based on identified innovations: Consumer valuation of "Green Product"; CC orientation in social marketing strategies.	Include climate risk and vulnerabilities and business planning
5	Include climate risk and vulnerabilities in business planning	
6	Climate-smart agriculture (for adaptation) as standard when critiquing business plans, and business should include disaster preparedness (mitigation)	

FBS-CC Training of Facilitators
4-9 August 2014, Pines View Hotel, Baguio City



ToF participants during the market assessment exercise

As part of the recommendations during the learning workshop in March 2014 and stakeholders' consultation on May 2014 on integrating climate change perspective in the FBS, a training of facilitators (ToF) was organized for institutions interested to pilot/ upscale the FBS with climate change perspective (FBS-CC).

The organizers of the ToF were: International Potato Center (CIP) – Food Security Through Asian Roots & Tubers (FoodSTART) Project, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), CGIAR Program for Climate Change, Agriculture & Food Security (CAAFS), International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), and Department of Agriculture-Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project (CHARMP2), also financed by IFAD.

Objectives and outputs

1. To build capacities of facilitators for FBS-CC implementation
2. To develop action plan for organizing and piloting climate-smart FBS in new and ongoing initiatives for agri-value chain development

The week-long training aimed to deliver the following outputs:
a) an initial pool of rural development workers (20 participants) knowledgeable on farmer business schools with climate change perspective; b) initial FBS-CC curriculum tested; c) concrete inputs and exercises for the improved integration of climate change in the FBS curriculum; and d) action plans for piloting the FBS-CC in selected sites.



FBS group members showcasing their organic vegetable products during the business launching

Methodologies

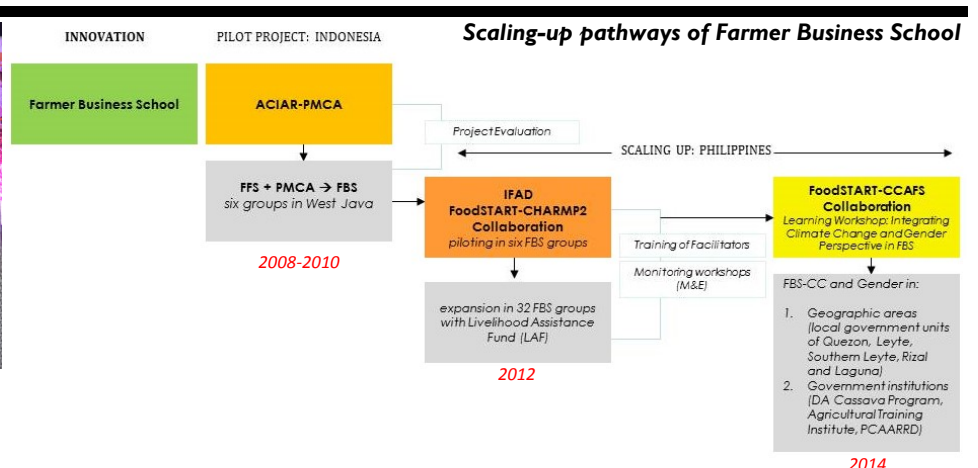
The training team used a mix of participatory learning modules in applying a climate change perspective within the context of value chains. This included fieldwork with group sharing, lectures using visuals and video, and interactive exercises. Active participation was strongly encouraged.

Participants were organized for field visits to FBS sites and markets, where they interacted with and learned from farmers and enterprises involved in FBS. Panel discussions were also conducted to facilitate sharing on the implementation and experiences of projects in FBS and CC.

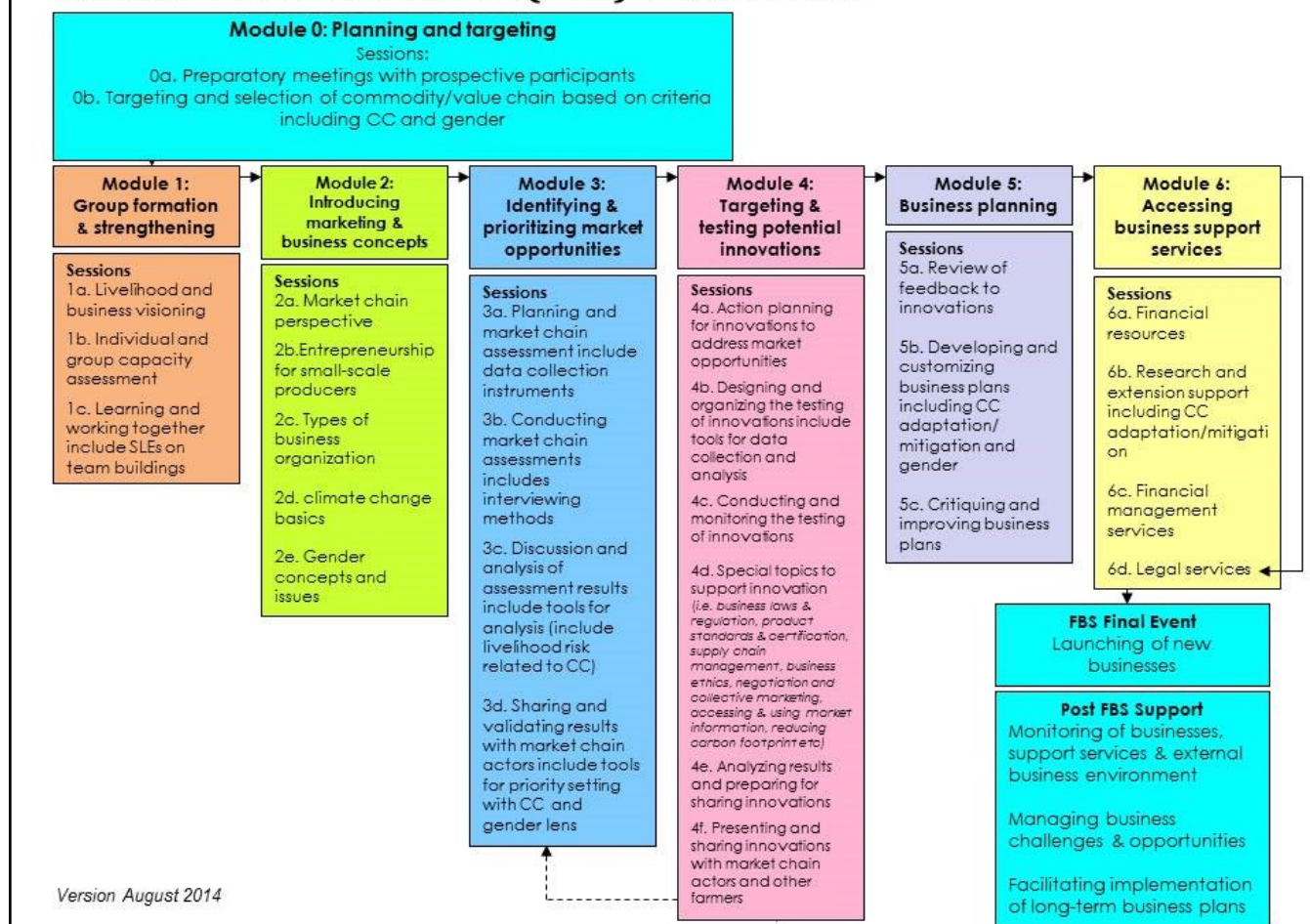
By the end of the ToF, the participants drafted ten (10) action plans in support to FBS-CC. Most of the plans included additional capacity building for field level facilitators. The implementation of FBS-CC is targeted for 2015-2016 due to budget considerations.

Sample action plans

LGU:	Guinayangan, Quezon
Enterprise:	Cassava (fresh roots), cassava "suman" (Filipino delicacy)
Objective:	To develop raw cassava and "suman" for local and export market to sustain livelihoods of cassava farmers
Pre-FBS activities:	1) Meet with co-facilitators 2) FBS planning with co-facilitators 3) 3) Initial social preparation—meeting with repre-
FBS implementation	1) Orientation and introduction of FBS (meetings, inter-
Technical support:	Resource persons
LGU:	Antipolo City
Enterprise:	Cassava (Farmer Associations in Sitio San Ysidro) Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City
Objective:	To increase production of cassava in the city To organize a processing center for cassava product
Pre-FBS activities:	1) Survey of area 2) Identify target participants 3) Re-echo FBS to other AEWS 4) FBS planning (schedule fund) 5) Meeting with confirmed participants
FBS implementation	1) To include FBS-CC implementation in the propose budget for 2016 of the Extension Division
Technical support:	Funding support if available Trainings ,seminars on cassava production and processing Trainings on marketing Planting materials and equipment



Farmer Business School (FBS) Curriculum



Draft FBS-CC curriculum based on the ToF workshop (for field validation)

The new draft FBS-CC curriculum integrates climate change perspective in the FBS by focusing on climate-smart agriculture approaches, vulnerability factors for business sustainability and future crop/product scenarios based on the climate projection in the production areas. The curriculum also enhances gender responsiveness of the FBS processes.

FBS Objectives

- ⇒ To form and strengthen farmer groups for marketing-oriented, climate-resilient, gender-sensitive learning and action
- ⇒ To identify and describe key actors and their roles in agricultural value chains
- ⇒ To analyse and prioritize value chain opportunities towards increasing business profitability of farmer groups and individual members
- ⇒ To introduce technological, commercial and institutional innovations in collaboration with other chain actors and stakeholders to respond to market opportunities with high consideration
- ⇒ To develop a business plan to make use of new market opportunity by building on innovations
- ⇒ To develop strategies for enhancing farmer's access and use of business development support services

FBS-CC: Status and way forward

As a result of the FBS-CC final event, several pilots will be implemented during 2015-2016 from the LGUs and projects attending the training, using local/in-house resources. The focus is on areas/communities where disasters have occurred, or are likely to occur, and where climate change resilience is a major consideration for development activities and outcomes. Root and tuber crops feature among these pilot FBS plans. During this event a number of future actions were identified, including:

1. Production of a new FBS manual incorporating climate change adaptation and mitigation in the curriculum
2. Further trainings for field-level farmer group facilitators
3. Developing an inventory of climate smart innovations for root

and tuber crops production, processing and marketing, as a guide to potential innovations for FBS piloting

4. Providing monitoring/backstopping for LGUs and projects/programs implementing FBS-CC
5. Process documentation and analysis, including case studies and analysis of implementation across institutional settings (LGUs, public sector agencies/projects, NGOs etc.)
6. Undertaking initial baseline study and final impact evaluation of the FBS-CC experiences.

The CCAFS small grant has enabled the integration of a climate change agenda in FBS to start, but further support is required now that the activities and outputs under this grant are completed. The ToF FBS-CC workshop identified the following activities/outputs that could form the basis for next steps in the FBS-CC process. :

- To train a corps of field level FBS-CC facilitators in the LGUs and projects/programs implementing FBS-CC in 2015 –16
- To backstop and monitor FBS-CC implementation in the Philippine pilot project/programs
- To complete revision and updating the FBS curriculum to incorporate climate change topics and climate smart innovations in value chain development, culminating in production of a new FBS manual, based on the experiences and lessons learned during the pilot implementation
- To document impact and disseminate learnings and results across and beyond the Philippines.

For these future activities, the CIP-FoodSTART team intends to collaborate with IIRR, based on the successful experience of the ToF in Baguio in August, if additional funding can be identified. Some support from PCAARRD, Philippines is possible within the framework of the joint workplan under development with CIP, and additional CCAFFS support will be important to complement this.