WEBINAR SERIES

on

Financing Smallholder Agriculture for Rural Transformation (FINSMART)

1. Background:

Agriculture and food have always been the most sought for sector in times of any crisis faced by the humanity and during the current situation when COVID-19 emerged as the global pandemic, all countries are targeting seamless supply of food to reach out to the teeming millions. At the same time, the leaders and policy makers are concerned about the future challenges on production, import, store and distribute food for the last mile people. This global health emergency and restrictions in food movements also brings in another important question of reaching out to the smallholders, value chain actors and the roles of the financial institutions to continue the supply of capital to run the farm related business. With the spread of COVID-19 across the globe the changes in both demand and supply side of agricultural value chains are quite visible. Majority of the financial service providers adopted the 'new normal' and added new features in their service delivery. The additional features are also supporting the business models with an overarching objective to support its clientele spread over large geographical areas of their operation. Due to this global pandemic, the world rapidly changes around us, however, what hasn't changed is APRACA's commitment to its members and the community of financial service providers across the region. As a regional association of the financial institutions and active advocator of enabling environment to extend financial services to the smallholders and rural enterprises, we're focusing on removing the barriers and provide access to global knowledge and development in the field of rural and agricultural finance through online exchanges and interactions in a structured manner. APRACA Secretariat is also trying to reimagining the possibilities of mutual cooperation and building capacity of the member institutions by sharing on-ground experiences of the experts drawn from the region and other parts of the globe. Together with our international partners and the staff members of member institutions in APRACA network who make up our community, we want to support you in every way we can.

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2. Rationale:

We are mindful that extending financial services are not being compromised by the members of APRACA and are relentlessly supporting their clients during this tough time which is commendable and these efforts are worth mentioning as '*solidarity towards humanity*'. While the financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region are effectively engaged with their rural customers, APRACA Secretariat responded to this global and regional crisis by reaching out to all relevant stakeholders as the leading and extensive network of financial institutions to provide knowledge support to their frontline staff members in order to enhance their capacity to deal with the current situation and ensure access to and seamless flow of finance. The webinar series FINSMART is designed to provide a real time stock taking on the impact of this pandemic, good practices adopted by peer group financial institutions in the region and to recom-

3. Objectives and expected outcomes:

The overarching objectives of the webinar series FINSMART offered by APRACA jointly with other national/international agencies are aimed to build the capacity of financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region engaged with the smallholders and downstream actors in the agricultural value chains so as to ensure efficient strategies and measures are being taken to challenge the post-COVID19 situation and seamless flow of finance and investments in to the sector. The webinar series are also envisioned to provide an avenue for knowledge sharing by the stakeholders on concrete innovative actions/strategies/pathways on the ground along APRACA strategic objectives 2019-2024 via technology-mediated social platforms that would directly benefit the financial institutions/investors/agribusiness companies and smallholders engaged in agricultural and rural development.

The expected outcome of the webinar series is to (a) contribute and highlights the issues and challenges of the region to the ongoing global dialogue and (b) to support the financial institutions, national governments in the region to undertake the right strategies and measures to deal with the on-going pandemic and its aftershock.

4. Speaker and participants:

The speakers will be drawn from the APRACA member institutions, International Agencies (FAO, IFAD etc.), International Alliances/networks, Government institutions, Major Corporations, Universities, Civil Society Organizations, etc. The expected participants will be from the middle management and field level officials from APRACA member institutions, other relevant agencies engaged in rural and agricultural finance, consultants and donor agencies.

5. Proposed Programme:

Topics of proposed Webinars	Broad Areas to be covered during the discussions/interactions	Organizations to join webinars	Proposed Date and time
1. Agricultural Value Chain Finance: A Paradigm shift in financial service delivery. Click here for Registration	· Lending models that works to promote efficiency in agricultural value chains; · Identifying the financing needed to strengthen the chain and reach out to all actors; · Internal and External value chain financing to customize processes and lending instruments.	1.All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2.Private sector players engaged in Agribusiness and its development services.	**Date:** 12 November 2020. **Time:** 2.00 pm, Bangkok time (**GMT+7 hrs**.) **Duration:** 75 min Click here to join the meeting
2. Post-COVID19 financing strategies to smallholder and rural clients. Click here for Registration	· 'New Normal' in extending financial services to transform local economy and competitiveness of community business entity; ·Re-emergence of group lending as the new business models in the development finance sub-sector.	1. All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2. Government and Non-government sector engaged in promoting local entrepreneurship.	**Date:** 19 November 2020. **Time:** 2.00 pm, Bangkok time (**GMT+7 hrs**.) **Duration:** 75 min Click here to join the meeting
3. Financial Services to Small and medium agro-enterprises (SMAEs).@ Click here for Registration	·Developing and facilitating finance to SMAEs' through banking system in the Asia-Pacific region. ·Risk sharing and reduction through innovations in SMAE financing using cash flow methods and non-traditional collateral, guarantees and hedging.	1. All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2. New generation entrepreneurs engaged in SMAE development; 3. Government and Non-government sector engaged in promoting SMAEs.	**Date:** 26 November 2020. **Time:** 2.00 pm, Bangkok time (**GMT+7 hrs**.) **Duration:** 75 min Click here to join the meeting
4. Financial services to small scale fishers and cooperatives. Click here for Registration	·Fisheries and aquaculture value chains in developing countries of Asia; ·New Partnerships and networks for Fisheries Development in Asia; ·Specific efforts made to facilitate access to financial services, in particular for the small-scale operators and the local grass-root organisations that support these small-scale operators.	1. All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2. All national and regional networks and cooperatives of fishers; 3. Government line departments and technical agencies.	**Date:** 09 December 2020. **Time:** 2.00 pm, Bangkok time (**GMT+7 hrs**.) **Duration:** 75 min Click here to join the meeting
5. Green and climate smart finance to agriculture and allied sectors. Click here for Registration	·Increasing long-term investments in agri-food infrastructures to mitigate the risks of climate changes; ·Mitigation and adaptation efforts through climate-focused operations leveraging private-sector financing to tackle climate change-related challenges; ·How to support the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) commitments that address climate change challenges.	1. All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2. National and regional level technical agencies; 3.Government line departments and NGOs.	**Date:** 17 December 2020. Time: 2.00 pm, Bangkok time (**GMT+7 hrs**.) **Duration:** 75 min Click here to join the meeting
6. Suitable digital technology solutions to promote smallholder finance in Asia.#	·Adaptation of digital technologies in transforming delivery of financial services to rural clientele and navigate them to face the Covid-19 challenges. ·Discussions on the best practices of digital platforms and mobile agri-tech solutions as game changer in bringing information, capital and funding.	1. All regular and affiliated members of APRACA; 2. New generation entrepreneurs engaged in Agriculture and agri-business; 3. ICT solution providers, International agencies engaged in promoting digital technology solution.	**Date:** To be informed **Time:** to be informed **Duration:** To be informed

@ This Webinar will be held in collaboration with China Academy of Financial Inclusion (CAFI), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CABFIN Partners.

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******Please note that the detailed background paper and programme will be circulated well in time*******