

## GAP certification for improved market access

**P**roducers face serious challenges in growing safe, quality agrifood products in a responsible way. Consumers, retailers, and legislation are putting new pressures on farmers and growers. They are increasingly required to use production practices that reduce the impact of farming on the production base (land and water), reduce the use of chemical inputs, make efficient use of natural resources, and safeguard worker welfare, collectively referred to as good agricultural practices (GAP).

The implementation of GAP is not easy, especially for small farmers who constitute the vast majority of the agriculture community in the Asia-Pacific, because of the diversity of national GAP schemes, codes, guidelines, and definitions of agricultural produce. The high cost of multiple audits adds to the problem. To be internationally recognized, diverse national GAP codes and practices must be harmonized and certified against the GLOBALGAP standard.

GLOBALGAP is an internationally recognized set of GAP. Through certification, producers demonstrate their adherence to the GLOBALGAP standard. Consumers and retailers are reassured that food is safe, of high quality, and produced sustainably, with care for the environment, workers, and farm animals. GLOBALGAP certification can enhance market access and reduce

costs involved in multiple audits. The demand for GLOBALGAP implementation and certification in Asia and the Pacific is on the rise.

To impart training to numerous stakeholders in member countries in a cost-effective manner in a short time on requirements for GLOBALGAP certification and share best practices of GAP adoption and promotion, the APO held a videoconference-based distance-learning course on the GLOBALGAP Standard for Greater Market Access in two sessions: 18–20 June (Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam); and 10–12 September (Bangladesh, India, IR Iran, Nepal, and Pakistan). The course focused on GAP/GLOBALGAP for fresh fruit and vegetables. NPOs implemented the course in each country for 238 participants.

Five experts from the GLOBALGAP Secretariat, Japan, Malaysia, and USA lectured on aspects of GAP adoption and certification, and how harmonization of national and regional GAP schemes with the GLOBALGAP standard could support Asian agricultural producers in the development of safe, sustainable agriculture and increase access of their agrifood products to the EU, Japan, USA, and elsewhere. Participants in each session shared the current status of national GAP schemes, issues and challenges in enhancing those schemes, and suggestions for further promotion of GAP adoption and certification in the region. 