

## PPPs for sustainable, competitive agribusinesses

Governments, development partners, researchers, and state banks are concentrating on leveraging private investment in agriculture, including through the promotion of public–private partnerships (PPPs), to access critical resources and achieve sustainability and rural poverty reduction. However, PPPs in the agriculture sector are not successful in many cases. It is important to understand critical issues like public benefits from partnerships, investment contributions and risk, active roles for all partners throughout the PPP project life cycle, and how PPPs can bring systemic change and improvements in scale and sustainability. In agriculture, PPPs mostly concentrate on value chain development, followed by innovation and technology transfer, business development/advisory services, and market infrastructure and logistics.

In partnership with the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, and NPO, the APO organized the Asian Food and Agribusiness Conference for Strengthening Public–private-sector Partnerships for Sustainable, Competitive Agribusinesses, in Bandung, 28–30 March. Director-General Hari Priano, Ministry of Agriculture, was the chief guest. Thirty-eight participants from 16 countries attended, with nine resource persons from the UK, USA, Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand and one local speaker. Sessions covered: engaging the private sector in inclusive, sustainable agribusinesses; an enabling environment for successful PPPs; PPP models in agribusiness value chains; and PPP innovation, technology development, and business incubation. A panel discussion explored potential future PPP enhancement.

The Cilembu Sweet Potato Agribusiness Center in the

Sumadong region hosted a site visit. The group consists of 170 farmers spread over the village and surroundings. Cilembu gave its name to the ivory-skinned sweet potato variety unique to the region. The center is involved in the production, processing, sales, and exports of sweet potato-based chips, jams, sauces, flour, cakes, noodles, and baked goods. Company Director Taryana described the center's start, working with the government, value chains, production methods, pest control, organic certification, and promotional activities. Participants were given a tour of sweet potato fields and postharvest facilities.

On the final day, the session chairs reported key findings and recommendations. Participant from the ROK Dr. Sung Hun Yi remarked that, "It was a wonderful experience for me to learn about relationships between economics, partnerships, and technologies." APO resource person and Director, Agribusiness Incubator Program, University of Hawaii, Steven Chiang found the conference valuable, commenting, "It was particularly significant because of the large number of attendees, which created excellent networking and exchanges, and because the topic of PPPs is especially relevant in today's environment where governments increasingly look to private partnerships to create greater impact by leveraging their skills, drive, and resources." Dr. John Strak, Honorary Professor, University of Nottingham, UK, observed that the conference was relevant to everyone involved in agribusiness. "Competitiveness, sustainability, and PPPs are subjects that will be debated and applied in many countries in Asia now and in the future. It was obvious that the attendees in Bandung had much to say and learned much from the speakers," he concluded. 🌐



*Conference participants touring the Cilembu Sweet Potato Agribusiness Center in the Sumadong region.*