

COURSE MEMORANDUM

2nd ICA-MAFF (Japan) Training Course on “Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer’s Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY-2024.”

Part 1: July 31 to August 14, 2024, in Thailand

Part 2: August 15 to 28, 2024 in Japan

1. Background

Agriculture, forestry, and fishery as the key industries for employment are still essential for countries in Asia and Africa to lead to their economic independence. However, food systems and farmers’ organisations in Asia and Africa are vulnerable to global shocks (for example pandemic, the Ukraine war, and climate change). These shocks impact food security as they result in the rise of global food prices and food shortages. Addressing these challenges and strengthening agriculture cooperatives and farmers’ organisations is necessary.

Amid increasing concern in the world on increasing prices of agricultural inputs such as fertilisers triggered by prolonged the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukrainian crisis, the focus of attention has been on the roles to be played by farmers’ organisations and agricultural cooperatives, which are organised by smallholders to gain negotiation power, and there is a growing expectation for fostering and strengthening them.

This ICA-MAFF training course is designed to build the capacity of farmers in their roles for the improvement of their income and promotion of sustainable agriculture through the development of agricultural cooperatives.

2. Introduction

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is a non-profit international association established in 1895 to advance the cooperative social enterprise model. Its members are national-level federations of cooperatives and individual cooperative organisations, primarily operating at a national level. ICA’s members, representing cooperatives in **107** countries, have established seven principles defining cooperative organisations’ essence. ICA is organised with a Global Office, four Regional (Europe, Africa, Americas and Asia-Pacific), and eight Sectoral Organisations (Banking, Agriculture, Fisheries, Insurance, Health, Housing, Consumer Cooperatives and Worker Cooperatives) to accomplish its purposes.

The ICA Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) Regional Office has been operating from New Delhi since 1960 and serves 108 national-level member organisations from 29 countries (as of May 2024).

3. Training Course

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of the Government of Japan has chosen the ICA to implement an umbrella Project on **“Capacity Building Project for Agricultural Cooperative Sector in Asia and Africa (CBC Project in AA) in FY-2024 of Japan**. Under this Project, Program 1, the Training Course on “Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Improvement of Farmer’s Income through Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in FY-2024” will be held in physical format in two parts. **Part I** of the Training Course will be held in collaboration with the Cooperative League of Thailand (CLT) in Bangkok, Thailand from **July 31 to August 14, 2024** and **Part II** in collaboration with the

Institute for the Development of Agricultural Cooperation in Asia (IDACA) in Tokyo, Japan from **August 15 to 28, 2024**. The Training Course is being funded by MAFF, the Government of Japan, and implemented by ICA.

4. Objective

Given that soil for agricultural use has been affected by long-term use in conventional farming and others affected by changing climatic conditions, the training course is designed to review and study the roles of farmers' organisations and find new roles of farmers' organisations to meet "sustainable agriculture."

5. Participating countries and number of participants

Seven (7) participants will be selected from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

6. Course Locations

Home Country Assignments (HCAs):

The selected participants are expected to undertake their Home Country Assignments (HCAs) for 15 days (July 16-30, 2024) before the actual commencement of the Training Course.

They are expected to view **videos online** and respond to questions, prepare a **Job Report**, and a draft **Action Plan** after discussions with their seniors. The purpose is to get an understanding of the function of cooperatives and write down ideas for the preparation of an action plan. This would be helpful for them to explain and refine their actions during the training and to implement them after the training course. The Guidelines and Format for the preparation of the Job Report and draft Action Plan will be sent to the selected participants.

The Training Course will be divided into two parts, as has been explained below:

Part-I: To be Conducted by ICA and CLT, Thailand (On-site):

Fifteen (15) days program, from July 31 to August 14, 2024 will be designed with basic subjects on organising and management of agricultural cooperatives and further development of business systems. It will also include a study on some successful cases related to sustainable agriculture. For effective implementation of the program, the member organisations of ICA-AP will be requested to support the implementation of the program.

Part-II: To be Conducted by IDACA, Japan (On-site):

Fourteen (14) days from August 15 to 28, 2024, will be conducted in Tokyo, Japan by IDACA by way of lectures and study visits. Some of the key subjects to be covered are – various aspects of the development of agricultural cooperatives in Japan, i.e. farm guidance, joint collection and shipment, and business management methods of agricultural cooperatives.

2) Participants are also expected to study sustainable agriculture through learning from actual practices under the "Strategy for Sustainable Food Systems, MeaDRI" of the Government of Japan.

3) Action plans will be completed based on learning from the training programs. Participants are requested to make a presentation on their action plan at the end of the training program.

Participants must leave for their respective countries right after the end of the training course in Japan.

7. Timetable

The participants who are finally selected by the ICA-AP are expected to follow the Training Course for its full duration and according to the timetable developed by the ICA-AP/IDACA. It may be noted that once the ICA-AP formally selects a participant, he/she will be placed at his/her organisation under the charge of the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Head of the organisation and given specific tasks to be accomplished during the HCA.

Home Country Assignments (HCAs): July 16 to 30, 2024

Part-I: Training Course by CLT (Thailand): July 31 to August 14, 2024

Part II: Training Course by IDACA (Japan): August 15 to 28, 2024

8. Invitation to ICA member organisations (MOs) to Nominate Candidates and Nomination Procedures:

ICA MOs/Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Asia and the Pacific region are hereby invited to nominate candidates for selection to participate in this Training Course.

- 8.1 The nominations must be made in the ICA-prescribed Nomination Forms only [a copy of which is attached herewith];
- 8.2 While making nominations, it needs to be clearly understood that this is a long-duration training program. The selected participants shall remain away from their place of duty for nearly a month.
- 8.3 Please ensure that only the most appropriate nominations are made. After the selection of candidates and their placements in their respective organisations for HCAs, no changes or replacements are accepted. In the event of any cancellation or replacement, people on the waiting list will be given priority for selection.

Important Note: A sufficient and firm guarantee should be provided to the ICA to the effect that the candidates nominated for the Training Course would return to their home countries after completing the training program in Japan. Kindly note that in case the candidate does not return to the home country from Japan on the designated date of departure, the sponsoring organisation is liable to reimburse the ICA for the cost of training incurred on the candidate.

9. Selection of Participants:

- 9.1 7 participants will be selected from among the candidates to be nominated by the ICA MOs/Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Asia and the Pacific region.
- 9.2 The participants will be selected based on their work experience. Regardless of educational/professional qualifications, they are to be nominated based on work experience.
- 9.3 Participants need to belong to agricultural cooperatives or farmers' groups. In the case of a country where the agricultural cooperative is not established or not in order, the government officials in charge of fostering a group of farmers can be included.

- 9.4 No specific eligibility is needed concerning academic background or specific qualification, the participant needs good communication ability in English for effective participation.
- 9.5 Participants, between the age group of the 30s – 40s will be given priority for selection.
- 9.6 Selected Participants should be requested to continue to serve the organisations they belong to for five (5) years or more after participating in the training course.
- 9.7 Participants should be physically and mentally fit to travel and study abroad.

[A Medical Fitness Certificate is required to be submitted together with the Nomination Form].

Please inform your candidates that they would be exposed to a variety of foods, cultures and customs in different Course location countries and that they would be required to stay in hotels, hostels or training institutions. They should be prepared to accept such situations that may not be entirely satisfactory to them.

10. Obligations of the Participants:

- 10.1 Possess valid travel documents/passports.
- 10.2 Leave a photocopy of the passport at home and keep one with the participant.
- 10.3 Obtain visas to participating countries - Thailand and Japan.
- 10.4 **Have adequate insurance coverage for health/travel accidents etc. for the period from the date of travel from their home country to Bangkok till the date they arrive in Japan.** The insurance cost will be reimbursed to the participants by CLT (on behalf of ICA) in Bangkok, on the production of the original receipt of payment up to a maximum of US\$ 50/- per participant. **In Japan, all the participants will be insured by IDACA till the date they reach the international airport of their home country after completing the course.**
- 10.5 Carry 5 copies of passport-size photographs of the participant.
- 10.6 Carry sufficient funds to cover personal costs (including excess baggage charges, if any).
- 10.7 Participants must leave Japan on the designated date of departure.

11. Obligations of the ICA-AP:

[A] The ICA-AP will cover the following expenses for participants during the Training Course:

11.A.1. International economy class travel by the shortest route [from the nearest international airport in the home country to the Training Course destinations]. No domestic travel costs in the home country are covered by the ICA-AP.

11.A.2 Accommodation at various locations in Thailand and Japan [hotels/hostels on twin sharing basis].

11.A.3 Visa Recommendation Letters will be provided to the selected candidates for Course location countries. All visa-related costs are to be covered by the participants themselves.

11.A.4 Provision of food allowances or arranged meals.

11.A.5 Internal travel and transportation during field study visits in Thailand and Japan.

11. A.6 A maximum of 09 kg postage charges by surface mail to each participant for sending printed materials from Thailand and Japan to their respective countries at the end of the training program

[B] The ICA-AP will NOT cover any of the following costs:

11.B.1 Visa fees, airport taxes and other local taxes (exit tax, fiscal tax, etc.) in home countries before departure to join the Course in Bangkok in July-August 2024.

11.B.2 Transportation costs for travel to/from international airports within the home country.

11.B.3 Transportation and other costs incurred during HCA. These costs are to be covered by the nominating organisations as a part of their contribution to the program.

11.B.4 Health/Medical/Travel/Accident Costs: The candidates are advised to take on their own, a comprehensive health/medical/travel/accident insurance policy to cover risks **for the period from the date of travel from their home country to Thailand till the date they arrive in Japan.** This is to be done before leaving for Bangkok. The insurance cost will be reimbursed to the participants by CLT, (on behalf of ICA) in Bangkok, on the production of the original receipt of payment up to a maximum of US\$ 50/- per participant. **In Japan, all the participants will be insured by IDACA till the date they reach back to the international airport of their home country after completing the course.**

The ICA will not cover any kind of medical costs during the period of the Training Course. In case the candidates have been under treatment, they should bring their medical records along and the medicines that they normally take.

11.B.5 Costs of privately arranged excursions or shopping tours on weekends during the Training Course; and

11.B.6 Mobile charges/ roaming/postage charges and other personal costs.

12. Submission of Nominations to the ICA-AP, New Delhi

12.1 The Closing Date for Receipt of Nominations is June 20, 2024

12.2 Since the program is spread over two countries, Thailand and Japan, it is necessary for the ICA to finalise the selection of participants by **June 20, 2024**. Preparations on the part of the ICA involve firming up a variety of practical arrangements e.g., confirming hotel/hostel accommodations, air travel bookings, finalising visa formalities in the two countries and intimating host countries to make local arrangements.

12.3 It is necessary that the nominations from ICA Member Organisations be received by the ICA-AP as soon as possible and before **June 20, 2024**. It will not be possible for the ICA-AP to accept any last-minute withdrawals and/or replacements of already

nominated candidates. There are substantial costs involved if replacements are requested. Such costs will have to be borne by the nominating organisations.

12.4 Please ensure that nominations are sent to the ICA-AP only when the Nomination Form is complete in all respects. An incomplete Nomination Form will not be taken up for consideration for selection.

12.5 Nominated candidates shall participate in the Training Course for its full duration.

12.6 Candidates who have already attended any of the ICA/IDACA training courses **(in a physical/virtual format)** may not be re-nominated.

12.7 In some cases, the nominated candidates are required to obtain government clearance to travel abroad and attend the training course. All these formalities should be completed before the commencement of the Training Course.

12.8 The candidates who are selected for participation in the Training Course must sign an undertaking that they will leave Japan on the designated date of departure.

12.9 The International Cooperative Alliance will not be responsible for any costs except the one which has been outlined in this Course Memorandum.

13. Submission of Follow-up Report after one month and six months of the Training Course

After completion of the Training Course, ICA-AP will be sending a questionnaire to MOs of the participating countries to get feedback from the former participants. The MOs are requested to get the questionnaire filled in by the former participants. In case we do not receive the duly filled-in questionnaire, it would be difficult for ICA-AP to extend an invitation to such member organisations in the future.

14. Follow-up

After the training course, the ICA-AP in collaboration with IDACA will conduct a follow-up program to survey the progress of the Action Plan through a questionnaire. All participants in the Training Course and their organisations must answer the questionnaire. The nominating organisation in each country is expected to collect the questionnaire and submit it to ICA-AP within the stipulated date.

15. Acknowledgement of Receipt of Invitation

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and inform the ICA Regional Office if you intend to nominate any candidate(s) for this Training Course by return mail.



Balasubramanian (Balu) G. Iyer
Regional Director

Enclosed: Nomination Form