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Agro-Socioeconomic Newsletter

Indonesian Center for Agricultural Socio Economic and Policy Studies (ICASEPS)

Editorial

National agricultural development is constantly overshadowed by technological developments, which signal the need for various adjustments to existing procedures. In this context, this Newsletter presents information on the role of ICASEPS in promoting agricultural digitalization. In addition, information on international collaborations involving experts and institutions competent in developing modern agricultural technology is also provided for readers.

This newsletter also features a variety of interesting information, including training on rural transformation issues and several socioeconomic analyses presented by ICASEPS at a mid-year seminar. We hope this information is useful and provides readers with additional knowledge.

Cheers.

The Editor

CONTENT

Policy Update

EVIDENCE TO UNDERPIN INDONESIA'S AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

Wahida, Miftahul Azis, Fitria Yuliana, Fajri S. Nida

Background

Agricultural digitalization has become a hot issue discussed in various forums, including bilateral, regional, and multilateral settings. Indonesia even raised the issue of agricultural digitalization in a joint communique at the 2022 G-20 meeting. Agricultural digitalization is believed to have the potential to solve many problems in the agricultural sector and can increase the attractiveness for the younger generation to participate in the sector.

This collaborative study is a follow-up to the Small Research Activity (SRA) with a similar topic and focus on the role of government that was conducted in 2022−2023. With the same partner, Brawijaya University and Beanstalk Australia, ICASEPS is again trusted to carry out collaborative activities with a broader scope from 2024 to 2027. The purpose of this collaboration is to support the Government of Indonesia in developing and implementing policies, creating a structured and evidence-based investment roadmap, and preparing policy recommendations and capacity-building requirements that promote agricultural digitalization with a significant impact, inclusivity, and a focus on climate-smart agriculture.

ACIAR requires all projects to develop the impact pathways as part of their research for development, as a prerequisite for every ACIAR investment. The impact pathways are developed through: a) Policies to enhance sustainable and inclusive growth: Improved policy framework and implementation strategies to guide Indonesia's use of Digital AgTech for sustainable and inclusive sector growth, and b) Improved capacity to benefit from Digital AgTech by enhancing capacity and expertise to increase innovation, productivity, resilience, and inclusion through the use of Digital AgTech.

Meanwhile, this project is targeted to elaborate on the benefits and challenges of the adoption process in using Digital AgTech from a) policy makers, b) extension officers, and c) Digital Ag Technology innovators. The coverage of digital solutions is as follows: 1) digital financing, 2) farmer communication platforms, 3) digital farming advisory,

4) farmer equipment and hardware, 5) digital payment, 6) digital trading and marketing, 7) agribusiness solution, and 8) e-government solutions.

Preliminary Findings

Data collection, designed and conducted through snowballing techniques, aims to answer the research question: "How do adopters and non-adopters of Digital Agricultural Technologies in Indonesia perceive the benefits, barriers, and broader implications of digitalization, and what does this reveal about systemic enablers and constraints within the agricultural innovation ecosystem?" The Brawijaya University will lead the survey from May to September 2025. Prior to data collection, the team conducted a mapping of locations that have adopted different Digital Ag Tech solutions. Those locations are 1) West Java (Cianjur, Bandung, and West Bandung); 2) Central Java (Solo, Temanggung, and Boyolali); 3) Yogyakarta (Sleman and Bantul); 4) East Java (Malang and Banyuwangi); 5) Bali (Tabanan); 6) Lampung (Lampung, Mesuji, East Lampung, and Central Lampung); and some adopters who are located outside Java. Meanwhile, apart from the survey, ICASEPS is heavily participating in a series of FGD and interviews (online and offline) with different stakeholders (policy makers [central and local], extension officers, extension centers, knowledge institutions, as well as digital innovators).

Significant preliminary findings from the field show the importance of the presence of Digital Ag Tech in Indonesia as follows: 1) Operational efficiency and automation: Adopters consistently reported time-saving and labor-reducing benefits. IoT systems and remote monitoring enabled them to manage farm and livestock conditions remotely via smartphones, reducing the need for daily physical inspections. 2) Increased productivity and quality: Technologies like soil sensors, automated irrigation, and climate control contributed to better yields and crop quality. Examples include brighter-colored melons and healthier livestock due to stable environmental conditions. 3) Market access and price transparency: Digital tools such as auction apps and social media platforms helped farmers and traders reach broader markets. Respondents appreciated price transparency and improved bargaining position. 4) Youth engagement and innovation mindset: Younger adopters embraced technology as modern and empowering. They viewed AgTech not only as a productivity tool but also as a way to professionalize farming. Despite enthusiasm, adopters faced challenges such as unstable internet connections, power outages, and dependency on third-party technical support, as well as delays in maintenance and sensor errors caused by the unavailability of spare parts, a lack of capacity to fix problems that occurred, and other constraints.

Apart from adopters, some preliminary findings from non-adopters confirmed their limitations in adopting digital technologies, such as: 1) Financial limitations: The high initial costs of devices like IoT sensors or drones deterred many non-adopters. A lack of financing schemes or access to credit, especially for landless farmers, was a major barrier. 2) Low digital literacy and fear of misuse: Older farmers expressed apprehension toward complex interfaces or making mistakes while using apps. Many feared that technology would be too difficult without formal training. 3) Infrastructure and accessibility gaps: Non-adopters frequently cited unreliable electricity and internet connectivity in rural areas. These limitations made digital tools appear impractical, regardless of potential benefit. 4) Cultural and behavioral resistance: Resistance stemmed from traditional mindsets and a reliance on intuition or inherited practices. Some feared that technology might replace farm labor, sparking local social tension. 5) Perceived irrelevance and risk: Several respondents believed that technology was not tailored to small-scale operations. Others questioned its reliability, citing examples of sensor inaccuracies and price manipulation in digital markets.

ICASEPS is also responsible for forming a Steering Committee (Steer Co), which serves as a platform for communication, discussion, and experience sharing to support policy formulation aimed at accelerating the adoption level and benefits for users, thereby playing an active role in advancing modern agriculture. The targeted ministries to establish Steer Co are 1) Ministry of National Development Planning, 2) Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Communication and Digital (KOMDIGI), 3) Ministry of Villages and Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and 4) Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs. This forum is also used to convey findings from the field to the technical ministries in charge of agricultural digitization policies. There is an expectation that this project will help the government develop an evidence-based policy to enhance the enabling ecosystems for Digital Ag Tech to penetrate, grow, and be adopted by many smallholder farmers in Indonesia.

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Policy Development

PLANTATION COMMODITY SEED GOVERNANCE POLICY ENSURES THE SUPPLY OF QUALITY SEEDS

Miftahul Azis, Fitria Yuliani, Muhammad Suryadi, Ahmad M. Ar-Rozi, Rizghina Ikhwan

Introduction

The plantation commodity seed governance policy in Indonesia aims to ensure the availability of high-quality seeds, which are crucial for enhancing productivity and establishing a sustainable farming system. However, the current system faces several challenges, including fluctuating demand, insufficient production capacity, uneven distribution, and inadequate supervision. This study assesses the existing policy frameworks and identifies gaps in the seed system, with a focus on cocoa and sugarcane commodities in East Java Province.

A systemic approach was employed to understand the performance, inequality, and challenges of the plantation commodity seed systems. The study mapped actors and processes, evaluated the effectiveness of the system, and identified gaps between demand and supply. Cocoa and

sugarcane were selected due to their strategic importance and the urgency of policy. Field observations were conducted in Jember, Banyuwangi, and Pasuruan Regencies, East Java Province. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders, including research institutions, seed producers, supervisors, distributors, and farmer groups.

Plantation Commodity Seed Production

Seed production is crucial for a resilient and sustainable plantation commodity seed system. However, Indonesia's seed production capacity for cocoa and sugarcane faces limitations. Production is concentrated in government-affiliated research institutions, such as the Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (Puslitkoka) and the Indonesian Sugar Plantation Research Center (P3GI). Private actors and farmer cooperatives have limited participation due to technical and market constraints. The market structure lacks competition, with dominant players controlling access to superior varieties and basic infrastructure. This results in limited distribution and a lack of market transparency.

The production process is complex, with cocoa relying on vegetative propagation and sugarcane requiring precise planning for planting. Spatial inequalities in seed supply capacity exacerbate the problem, with only a few provinces having functional Regional Technical Implementation Units (UPTD). Production capacity can be increased through expanded breeding networks and the adoption of tissue culture technology; however, this requires an integrated plan for meeting seed needs.

Plantation Seed Certification and Labelling

Certification and labelling are key to ensuring seed quality and authenticity. However, implementation is hampered by limited human resources, low incentives, and weak supervision. In cocoa, the vegetative certification process is not standardized, and the role of the Seed Certification Management Unit (UPSB) is not optimal. In sugarcane, the certification mechanism is more systematic but faces challenges in farmer adoption. Many farmers prefer local seeds due to their lower cost and higher accessibility, as well as limited awareness about the benefits of certified seeds.

Distribution and Supervision of Plantation Seeds

The distribution of plantation seeds is primarily driven by informal channels, with most seeds used by farmers originating from uncertified local sources. Distribution is uneven, with limited reach to remote areas. The role of technical institutions in supervision is limited, characterized by reactive monitoring and the absence of a digital seed reporting system. This results in poor monitoring of seed circulation, with many seeds being unlabelled and of unclear origin.

Challenges of Plantation Commodity Seed System

The plantation commodity seed system addresses complex challenges across production, certification, distribution, and institutional support. Production capacity is significant but not fully maximized, and is highly dependent on government projects. Certification adoption is low, with disparities between producer and user levels. Distribution is uneven, with limited reach to remote areas. Supervision is weak due to limited resources and a lack of a digital reporting system. Institutional roles between central and regional governments are not well-coordinated, and farmer institutions are not systematically involved in the development of seeds.

Adequacy and Readiness of the Plantation Commodity Seed Supply System

The plantation commodity seed supply system has not fully met national needs. The primary demand drivers are replanting programs and area expansion; however, there is no structured seed demand projection system in place. Simulation results show significant gaps in seed capacity. For cocoa, the current national capacity is only 12 million stems, with a deficit of 21 million stems in a moderate scenario and 54 million stems in an ambitious scenario. For sugarcane, the national production capacity is 280,000 tons, with a deficit of 470,000 tons in a moderate scenario and 845,000 tons in an ambitious scenario.

Factors influencing seed demand include low replanting intensity, low adoption of superior seeds by farmers, price factors, lack of predictive needs planning, and limited information on superior varieties. These factors contribute to weak demand and challenges in fulfilling seed needs.

Effectiveness of Seed Governance Policy for Plantation Commodity

The evaluation of the seed system's performance shows limitations in ensuring the availability of superior seeds. Production is primarily driven by research institutions, with limited involvement from private and community breeders. Certification is not a priority for farmers, and the release of new varieties is stagnant. Distribution systems are not well-formed, and supervision is weak. Institutional capacity is not built as an integrated national system.

Opportunities and Strategies for Strengthening Plantation Seed Systems

Opportunities to strengthen the seed system include national policy momentum, local institutional development, advancements in R&D and breeding, improved distribution and access, and enhanced certification and supervision. Strategies include integrating seed needs planning, strengthening cross-sector coordination, developing regional institutions, encouraging breeding incentive schemes, establishing interactive seed distribution platforms, and developing digital seed quality tracking systems.

Policy Recommendations

The plantation commodity seed system addresses structural, institutional, and technical challenges in ensuring the supply of high-quality seeds. The effectiveness of the seed system is impaired by weak supervision, limited variety release, uneven seed distribution, and low adoption by farmers. Strengthening the seed system requires a systemic approach, including increasing production capacity, reformulating regional institutions, maintaining certification and supervision, and integrating spatial and temporal data in seed needs planning. Policy recommendations include linking the seed agenda to the transformation of the plantation industry, developing the seed system as a multi-actor ecosystem, increasing the diversity of varieties, shifting the orientation of seed programs to function-oriented systems, and establishing reliable information and data systems for evidence-based policies.

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Policy Issues

FORECASTING THE IMPACTS OF RICE AND MAIZE PLANTED-AREA EXPANSION PROGRAM ON PRODUCTION IN 2025

Adi Setiyanto, Abdul Basit, Julia F. Sinuraya, Hari Hermawan, Fajri S. Nida, Annisa F. Astari

Background

The agricultural sector in Indonesia is crucial for national food, feed, and energy security, particularly during times of crisis. The 2025–2029 Agricultural Development Plan aims for an annual growth of at least 4.81% to support a national economic growth target of 6%. Rice and maize are prioritized due to their significant contributions to food security and the national GDP. Despite a decline in rice production in 2024, maize showed a modest increase. For 2025–2029, rice and maize are projected to grow at annual rates of 4.35% and 16.05%, respectively, supported by the Cropping Area Expansion Program (PAT). This study, conducted in Grobogan Regency, Central Java Province, assesses the impact of rice and maize area expansion on 2025 production and offers policy recommendations for sustainable implementation.

Projected Impact of Rice Planted-Area Expansion

Indonesia's rice production in 2025 is projected to reach 56.73 million tons of dry unhusked paddy (GKG), a 6.75% increase from 2024. The PAT initiative is expected to contribute 1.10 million tons (30.56%) of this growth, valued at IDR 8.52 trillion. This growth is attributed to interventions such as land clearing, irrigation, and the installation of pumps and pipes. Existing rice fields are projected to account for 1.19 million tons (33.13%) of the increase, mainly due to improved yields. Favorable government policies, including maintaining domestic rice sourcing, raising the government purchasing price (HPP), improving access to subsidized fertilizers, and reducing fuel costs, are estimated to contribute an additional 0.91 million tons. These findings underscore the importance of maintaining existing production zones and irrigation networks while optimizing newly developed areas under PAT.

Projected Impact of Maize Planted-Area Expansion

In 2025, maize production is projected to reach 16.36 million tons of dry shelled corn (14% moisture), an increase of 1.22 million tons (8.08%) over the previous year. The maize PAT program is expected to contribute 390.21 thousand tons (31.92%) of this increase, valued at IDR 2.61 trillion. Existing

maize fields are expected to contribute approximately 530.45 thousand tons (43.39%) due to yield improvements during the dry season and peak planting months. Other factors, such as expanded fertilizer subsidies and moderate wage and fuel adjustments, are expected to contribute around 123.64 thousand tons. External factors, such as climate change, international price volatility, and changes in consumer and feed factory prices, are projected to add another 152.99 thousand tons. The government's policy to raise the maize benchmark price (HAP) had a marginal impact, contributing only 3.72 thousand tons. Reduced imports and increased domestic maize consumption will account for a modest 21.60 thousand tons. These figures highlight the significant potential of both new and existing maize cultivation areas.

Policy Recommendation

To ensure the success of the rice PAT program, authorities must intensify monitoring and supervision of newly established and rehabilitated fields to guarantee proper planting in 2025. For maize, coordinated efforts among stakeholders, particularly involving the National Police and farmer/community groups, are crucial for effective program implementation. Revising the maize benchmark price (HAP) is essential to incentivize production more effectively. The government, through BULOG, must be prepared to purchase the projected rice surplus at a fair price while ensuring that rice remains affordable for consumers. Support mechanisms such as market operations and food aid programs for low-income households should be strengthened. Developing post-harvest facilities and agro-industries for rice and maize will be vital for reducing losses and enhancing value. Coordination between national and local governments needs to be improved to ensure the smooth implementation of PAT and related agricultural activities. Essential inputs, such as fertilizers, certified seeds, irrigation infrastructure, and stable input prices, must be guaranteed. Finally, the roles of agricultural extension agents and Food Task Forces (Brigade Pangan) must be reinforced to provide technical guidance to farmers and sustain increased productivity in both new and existing farming areas.

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ICASEPS Publications

Analisis Kebijakan Pertanian Vol. 23 No. 1, June 2025

1. *Pola kecenderungan migrasi kaum muda perdesaan dan pengaruhnya terhadap regenerasi petani di Provinsi Jawa Timur* (The patterns of migration tendency of rural youth and their impact on farmer regeneration in East Java Province) (Yudhistira Saraswati, Nailan Nabila, Paksi Mei Penggalih)
2. *Strategi pengembangan kelapa sawit rakyat dalam pemulihan pascapandemi Covid-19 di Provinsi Sumatera Utara* (Strategy for developing smallholder oil palm in the COVID-19 post-pandemic recovery in North Sumatra Province) (Fatimatuz Zahro Diah Putri Dani, Saktyanu Kristyantoadi Dermoredjo, Sahat Marulitua Pasaribu, Delima Hasri Azahari Darmawan, Bambang Sayaka, I Made Oka Adnyana, I Putu Wardana, Mutaqin)
3. *Dinamika tingkat kemandirian pangan: implikasinya terhadap kebijakan ketahanan pangan nasional* (The dynamics of food resilience: implications for national food

security policy) (Wahida, Resty Puspa Perdana, Kartika Sari Septanti, Esty Asriyana Suryana, Amalia Ulpah, Agus Saras Sri Raharjo, Sri Suharyono, Fitria Yuliani)

4. *Model pengembangan usaha tani sagu di Kabupaten Luwu Utara, Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan* (Sago farming development model in North Luwu Regency, South Sulawesi Province) (Dewi Marwati Nuryanti, Naima Haruna, Sumantri, Muhammad Aqhsal Hidayat, Lisma, Yiyis Adriani)
5. *Penguasaan lahan dan pola tanam: implikasinya pada produktivitas lahan pertanian* (Land tenure and cropping patterns: implications for agricultural land productivity) (Rangga Ditya Yofa, Sri Hery Susilowati, Sumedi)
6. Supply chain and value chain analyses of West Java's Gedong mango variety for modern markets (Saptana, Ening Ariningsih, Handewi P. Saliem, Ashari, Kartika S. Septanti, Stefano De Faveri, Peter Johnson)
7. *Degradasi lingkungan dan dampaknya terhadap kegiatan usaha tani di sekitar lokasi pertambangan nikel di Kabupaten Konawe Selatan, Sulawesi Tenggara* (Environmental degradation and its impact on agricultural activities around nickel mining sites in South Konawe Regency, Southeast Sulawesi) (La Maga, Salahuddin, Nurhayu Malik, Dominggus Marei)
8. Analyzing rice production and consumption using a system dynamics model in East Kalimantan (Tri Wahyu Cahyono, Hiromi Tokuda, Eka Rastiyanto Amrullah, Willie Samodra Laya)

ICASEPS News

STRENGTHENING POLICY ANALYSIS: CENTER FOR STRATEGIC POLICY VISITS ICASEPS

The Indonesian Center for Socio-Economic and Agricultural Policy Studies (ICASEPS) and the Ministry of Agriculture received an official visit from the Center for Strategic Policy (CSP) of the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries on Wednesday, June 12, 2025. The visit aimed to strengthen inter-agency synergy in developing and implementing food policy analysis.

As a new institution established in 2024, the Center for Strategic Policy is working to build a solid institutional foundation. During the visit, the CSP team sought to learn directly from ICASEPS's experience as a longstanding institution for policy analysis in the agricultural sector.

During the meeting, the CSP team explored how ICASEPS identifies strategic issues, formulates evidence-based policies, and develops recommendations that address changing development dynamics. They were also interested in ICASEPS's policy communication strategy to understand how study results can be accepted and followed up effectively by ministry leaders and stakeholders.

ICASEPS Director, Dr. Sudi Mardianto, along with his management team and policy analysts, welcomed the visit and shared insights into how the institution carries out its duties and functions. According to Dr. Sudi, one key to producing high-quality policy studies is having competent human resources and an adaptive working system. "To deliver policy recommendations, we use a policy brief format that is concise, clear, and directly targets leadership's priority issues," he said. He also highlighted the importance of building a work ecosystem that supports the use of research findings in informed strategic decision-making.

To close the meeting, CSP Director, Subhechanis Saptanto, expressed appreciation for the information and insights gained during the visit. He shared hopes for stronger collaboration with ICASEPS going forward, particularly in supporting national food policies that directly impact the community. The session concluded with a group photo, serving as a symbol of the collaborative spirit between the two institutions.ERMA-RCA

MASTERCLASS ON RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN BALI: SYNERGIZING AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM AS A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Bali hosted the Masterclass: The Economics of Rural Transformation and Public Policy – Strategies and Methods for Successful Rural Transformation on May 5–8, 2025. The event brought together 29 participants, including academics, policy analysts, practitioners, and seminar attendees from Indonesia, Australia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Organized by ACIAR in collaboration with ICASEPS and APPERTANI, the masterclass aimed to enhance participants' understanding of rural transformation through the application of evidence-based policy and the strengthening of local economies.

Held at HOMM Saranam, Baturiti, Bali, the masterclass explored key themes, including rural transformation theory, policy analysis methodologies, and best practices in community-based economic development. Distinguished speakers included Prof. Justin Yifu Lin (represented by Dr. Zitong Zhang, Peking University), Prof. Tahlim Sudaryanto (BRIN Indonesia), and Prof. Christopher Findlay (Australian National University). Over the course of four days, participants engaged in sessions that covered theoretical frameworks, analytical methods, and fieldwork focused on integrating agriculture and tourism.

On the first day, participants were introduced to the foundational theories of rural transformation, including the principles of the new structural economics. The second day focused on policy analysis skills, evaluation techniques, and diagnostic tools based on structural economics. The third day culminated in a field visit to Candikuning and Jatiluwih villages in Tabanan, Bali,

providing firsthand insights into rural transformation practices grounded in organic agriculture and tourism.

Rural Transformation in Bali: The Synergy between Agriculture and Tourism

The field visit began in Candikuning Village, Baturiti, known for its innovation in organic agriculture through P4S Hidayah Bali. This village has developed a system of cultivating imported and organic vegetables, spearheaded by Kadek Melon. According to him, organic farming not only reduces production costs but also results in healthier produce free from harmful chemical residues. The role of women in this transformation is also notable. Nangun Rata shared that women are involved not only in packaging but also in production and online marketing. In addition, the village has enhanced its tourism potential through the establishment of Strawberry Stop. This organic strawberry-picking agro-tourism center combines education and recreation, thereby diversifying the local economy and empowering the community.

The visit continued to Jatiluwih Village, Penebel, Tabanan, which has been internationally recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2012. The village exemplifies the integration of traditional rice farming and tourism. It continues to cultivate Cendana red rice using the Subak system. According to I Wayan Mustra, this rice variety is best suited to the local climate and supports sustainable agriculture. Jatiluwih's economic transformation has also yielded social benefits. Many young residents sought employment outside the village before tourism development, particularly in Nusa Dua. Today, tourism has created new local job opportunities. Village leader I Ketut Purna noted that youth now work as tour guides, restaurant staff, and souvenir vendors, contributing to improved community welfare.

Despite modern pressures and social change, Jatiluwih has preserved its agrarian traditions through the Subak system and the Tri Hita Karana philosophy, which emphasizes harmony among people, nature, and spiritual life. This principle ensures that economic transformation does not come at the expense of cultural values. The community maintains adherence to customary laws, which are believed to protect against agricultural misfortunes such as crop failure and pest infestations.

Rural Transformation Policy: Collaboration and Sustainability

The masterclass demonstrated that integrating agriculture and tourism can serve as a sustainable strategy for rural economic development. The models applied in Candikuning and Jatiluwih highlight the importance of collaboration among communities, governments, and other stakeholders. Success in rural transformation hinges on evidence-based policy support, capacity building, and the preservation of local wisdom.

On the final day, participants presented their key takeaways and discussed collaborative project ideas grounded in international partnerships. The event concluded with reflections from Ms. Wahida, policy analyst at ICASEPS and Chair of the Masterclass Organizing Committee, who emphasized the importance of replicating this model in other regions to enhance local economic competitiveness without compromising rural traditions and identities. Bali has provided a tangible example that rural transformation is not solely about modernization; it is about achieving a balance between economic development, cultural heritage, and sustainability.[ELN]

ICASEPS RECEIVES A VISIT FROM CHINA'S RDI-CASS, DISCUSSES AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The ICASEPS welcomed a delegation from the Rural Development Institute (RDI), a research body under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). The visit was part of ongoing efforts to build international relationships. The delegation, led by RDI-CASS Director Houkai Wei, Ph.D., was received directly by ICASEPS Director Dr. Sudi Mardianto, along with management and policy analysts.

The visit aimed to exchange insights and experience on agricultural and rural development research. The session began with introductions from both teams to break the ice, followed by a move to the main agenda.

Dr. Sudi presented a brief institutional profile followed by findings from the National Farmers Panel (PATANAS), which ran from 2007 to 2023. He also highlighted studies on rural transformation and shared various scientific publications, including national and international conference proceedings containing PATANAS-based research.

The PATANAS research covered 10 provinces and 45 sample villages, involving 1,800 rural households. The sites were grouped into eight agroecosystem types, such as irrigated rice fields, dry land with vegetable or plantation crops, tidal swamps, lowland swamps, and others.

However, this presentation focused on four specific agroecosystems. Many stakeholders have utilized PATANAS findings to inform their policies. Undergraduate and graduate students have widely used the data and research for their theses and dissertations.

The RDI-CASS delegation showed strong interest in the explanations. The discussion was active, especially when digging into specific data variables. RDI-CASS also introduced its own research program, the China Rural Household Panel Survey (CIRS), which spans 14 provinces.

CIRS is a recurring household panel survey that tracks changes in economic, social, and agricultural conditions over time. Its approach shares many similarities with PATANAS.

The meeting ended with a group photo to mark the occasion. Delegates left with an enriched understanding of each country's rural development strategies. Both ICASEPS and RDI-CASS agreed to explore future collaboration on comparative research and joint publications.[RCA]

NEW CIVIL SERVANTS BRING FRESH PERSPECTIVES TO ICASEPS

The ICASEPS, under the Ministry of Agriculture, welcomed 14 new civil servant candidates (CPNS) into its workforce. These recruits come from various functional backgrounds, including policy analysts, public relations staff, librarians, state

budget financial officers, IT systems and technology managers, and human resource analysts.

Over a two-week orientation, the CPNS were assigned across three key units within ICASEPS: General Affairs, the Planning and Implementation Group for Socio-Economic and Agricultural Policy Analysis, and the Advocacy, Utilization, and Evaluation Group. They weren't just observers. They actively engaged in day-to-day tasks; they didn't just observe: they worked alongside staff, studied processes, and identified issues and opportunities for improvement.

After the orientation period, ICASEPS held a discussion forum where the CPNS, divided into three groups, presented their insights. They shared practical ideas based on direct experience, along with suggestions to improve workflows and institutional performance.

Their presentations showed strong awareness of ICASEPS's strategic role in shaping agricultural policy recommendations. More than just readiness to work, the CPNS showed readiness to contribute. Their feedback reflected thoughtful observation and a clear intent to help ICASEPS stay relevant and effective.

In his remarks, the Director stated that the CPNS are now fully integrated into the institution. He described their presence as "the visible round tail," meaning they're no longer outsiders but have become integrated into the agency's operations. He also emphasized that, as ICASEPS approaches its 50th anniversary, there is a need to remain responsive to changing times and deliver genuine public value.

ICASEPS management appreciated the CPNS's active participation and saw this as a strong start in shaping future professionals who are responsible, capable, and committed to the institution's goals.

Through collaboration and innovation, these CPNS have taken a strong first step. The orientation wasn't just about learning the ropes, but a key moment in shaping a more adaptive, collaborative, and productive future for ICASEPS.[RCA]

BUILDING INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS THROUGH THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS

To strengthen managerial capacity and leadership in agricultural research, ICASEPS participated in the Agricultural Research Leadership and Management Masterclass, held from May 4 to 9, 2025, at the Gurney Bay Hotel, Penang, Malaysia. This program was a collaboration between the Crawford Fund and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), attended by representatives from various international research institutions, including both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Strengthening Competence and Global Networks

For six days, participants received comprehensive training in agricultural research leadership and management. The program not only provided technical materials but also emphasized the importance of networking and strengthening cross-country collaboration as a foundation for sustainable research innovation.

Participating institutions included prominent research organizations such as IWMI (South Africa, Uzbekistan, Pakistan), ILRI (Kenya, Uganda), ICRISAT (India), CABI (Malaysia), TOSKA (Timor-Leste), as well as government agencies such as the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), National Agricultural Research Institute of Papua New Guinea (PNG), NAFRI (Laos), VAAS (Vietnam), and ICASEPS from Indonesia. Government research institutions from Fiji and Samoa were also present, further enriching the discussions and expanding opportunities for international collaboration.

Understanding Theory of Change as a Framework for Social Transformation

One of the core sessions of the program introduced the Theory of Change (ToC)—a planning and evaluation methodology used to drive social change through participatory and adaptive approaches. In the context of agricultural research, ACIAR highlighted the importance of integrating ToC into all projects it supports. This includes systematically documenting the pathway of change from activities to outputs, outcomes, and ultimately, final impacts. The framework also serves as a reference for Mid-Term Review (MTR) processes, ensuring the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of the initiatives.

Evaluation and Research Impact: A Logic Model-Based Approach

Complementing the ToC, participants were also introduced to the concept of Evaluation and Research Impact using the Logic Model approach. This model organizes research activities in a logical "if-then" sequence—from inputs to tangible impact. It enables participants to strategically design research that not only delivers technical outputs but also fosters behavioral change (outcomes) and measurable impact on the ground.

This session was further strengthened by the SMARTS principle (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based, Supported), which helps participants develop performance indicators that are structured and meaningful. With well-formulated indicators, the success of research projects becomes more measurable and communicable to stakeholders.

Collaboration as a Pillar of Effective Leadership

As part of an interactive learning approach, participants were not only exposed to lectures from facilitators but also engaged in group discussions, case simulations, and role-playing exercises to directly apply the concepts learned, ranging from

Theory of Change and logic models to decision-making and communication management. This participatory method encouraged the sharing of experiences, collaborative problem-solving, and the sharpening of interpersonal and leadership skills in real-world institutional contexts.

A reflective session also prompted participants to explore internal dynamics within their respective institutions. Discussions revealed that one of the common challenges faced involves the equitable distribution of work and fostering trust within teams. Facilitators emphasized that effective leadership is not only about making strategic decisions but also about the ability to delegate responsibilities wisely and proportionally, enabling teams to operate optimally and remain resilient in the face of change.

These sessions were facilitated by experienced professionals in research leadership and management, including Shaun Coffey, Colin Chartres, Lynne, and Rebecca Cotton, who guided the learning process in an engaging, practical, and collaborative manner.

Impact of the Program

Participation in the Masterclass generated three key outcomes:

1. Enhanced individual capacity in managing and leading agricultural research.
2. Strengthened collaboration among research and policy institutions across various countries, reinforcing synergy between public and private sectors.
3. Expanded international networks through direct engagement with participants from renowned global research organizations.

This program stands as tangible proof that strengthening human resource capacity cannot be separated from international cooperation. Through interaction, shared learning, and collective reflection, participants acquired strategic insights to confront the increasing complexity of agricultural research challenges. Investment in leadership development and global collaboration not only supports institutional performance but also paves the way for more inclusive, impactful, and sustainable innovation.[AFA]

RESULTS SEMINAR ON AGRICULTURAL POLICY STUDY, INDONESIAN CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLICY STUDIES, 2025

The ICASEPS held a results seminar for the first semester of agricultural policy studies, presenting the progress of the annual study and the dissemination of grant studies on Wednesday, July 16, 2025, in a hybrid format. The purpose of

this seminar is to disseminate the results of the studies and shape policy recommendations. This activity also invited various relevant stakeholders from both within the Ministry of Agriculture and other agencies related to the study results. The presence of these stakeholders in the dissemination forum is a crucial element in ensuring the sustainability and relevance of the policies produced. The results of the study and policy recommendations prepared by ICASEPS need to be followed up on to have a real impact on policy formulation and implementation in the agricultural sector. In this context, the direct involvement of stakeholders not only enables validation and verification processes but also opens up space for policy refinement based on the practical perspective of institutions or agencies that have implementation authority. Therefore, presenting the results of the study directly to relevant parties is expected to increase the chances of policy recommendations being adopted into their respective institutional agendas, as well as strengthening inter-agency synergy in realizing the goals of sustainable agricultural development.

The five research topics for semester 1, one annual research topic, and two collaborative study topics are:

1. Predicting the impact of the rice and maize area planted expansion program on production in 2025
2. Policy on plantation commodity seed management to ensure the availability of high-quality seeds.
3. Strategies to increase agricultural production and quality, supporting downstreaming and added value of cassava and coconuts
4. Identification of agricultural development programs to achieve the targets of the national action plan for climate change mitigation on greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Identification of existing conditions of pesticide use in rice and vegetable commodities at the farmer level.
6. Strategies for optimizing the potential for increasing food production on sub-optimal land.
7. Evaluating service provision approaches and value-chain interventions to support milk cooperatives to grow the smallholder dairy sector of Indonesia (IndoDairy 2) (ICASEPS-ACIAR).
8. Evidence to underpin Indonesia Agriculture Technology Transformation (Digital AgTech) (ICASEPS-ACIAR).[JFS-LRS]

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