

## SESSION 2 CASE STUDY 2

### Creating strong channels of communication for agriculture policy research in Indonesia

Dr Wahida Maghraby

Agriculture Policy Analyst, Indonesian Center for Agriculture Socio Economics and Policy Studies,  
Ministry of Agriculture; and former Agricultural Attaché to the European Union

#### ABSTRACT



While agriculture is a key sector in Indonesia, agricultural research and development in Indonesia have had limited access to the national budget. From 2010 to 2020, research and development spending in the sector amounted to only 0.014% of the national GDP. The budget allocation was focused on increasing productivity and was biased towards the food crops sector. To make best use of this limited funding, a broad range of skills is required for building policy collaboration at different levels – community, regional, national and international. Central to this is communication and the building of networks.

Without opportunities for capacity building and network building, the number of researchers with required skills and experience decreases over time. Advanced communication skills, strong networks with different stakeholders, and an open-minded attitude are considered key to the success of the research collaboration process, strengthening the partnership and increasing mutual benefit between partners. Indonesia needs investment in capacity building for early career researchers and policy analysts, to strengthen the translation from research into policy. A proven track record and history of successful collaborative research are strong factors that influence research partners and donors to open the door and provide an opportunity to develop high-quality policy research. Thus, it is important for research centres and policy units in Indonesia to expand their networks and be very creative in creating strong channels of communication with multi-stakeholder partners to develop high-quality policy research and increase impacts at community, regional and national levels, and increase international influence. This presentation provides examples of impacts with policy collaboration successes at the national and international level.

In this presentation I discuss creating strong channels of communication for agriculture policy research in Indonesia, and collaborative research and partnerships. Like other countries, Indonesia has been experiencing the spill-over of the global food crisis: trade distortion and effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic which have not ended yet. Geopolitical tensions and their recent escalation contribute to high food prices. Last year's export ban for rice also had an impact in Indonesia and other countries, with high prices of staple foods, in particular rice. We are all experiencing the impacts of climate change that affect agricultural production.

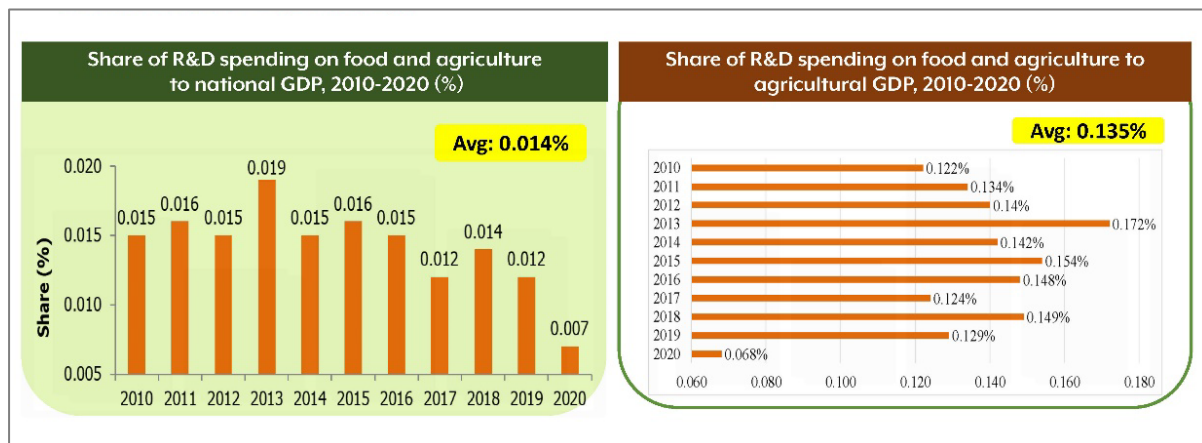


Figure 1.

Agriculture GDP grew positively during COVID-19, but the share from agriculture to the national GDP slightly decreased over the last decade. The numbers in Figure 1 show that the share of R&D spending on food and agriculture to national GDP and to agricultural GDP in 2010–2020 was very small.

As a solution, the budget allocation in 2015–2020 focused on the increase in productivity and was biased towards food crops (Figure 2), which is important and unavoidable because we are the fourth most populous country in the world. The capacity of the country to provide food security for the consumers, the people, is a strong message for every cabinet, every president in Indonesia.

The amounts and shares of R&D spending by thematic areas, 2015-2020					The amounts and shares of R&D spending by impact areas, 2015-2020				
R&D Spending	Thematic Areas				R&D Spending	Impact Areas			
	Breeding	Cultivation	Post-harvest	Food Security		Productivity	Nutrition	Climate Resilience	Sustainability
<b>Food Crops:</b>					<b>Food Crops:</b>				
Thousand USD	5,396	1,705	448	906	Thousand USD	7,477	317	110	264
Share (%)	35.81	11.31	2.97	6.01	Share (%)	50.05	2.12	0.74	1.77
<b>Horticulture:</b>					<b>Horticulture:</b>				
Thousand USD	1,530	405	170	0	Thousand USD	1,724	144	160	131
Share (%)	10.15	2.69	1.13	0	Share (%)	11.54	0.96	1.07	0.88
<b>Estate Crops:</b>					<b>Estate Crops:</b>				
Thousand USD	665	268	83	0	Thousand USD	924	45	0	38
Share (%)	4.41	1.78	0.55	0	Share (%)	6.18	0.30	0	0.25
<b>Livestock:</b>					<b>Livestock:</b>				
Thousand USD	2,726	677	91	0	Thousand USD	3,084	140	87	295
Share (%)	18.09	4.49	0.60	0	Share (%)	20.64	0.94	0.58	1.97
<b>Total:</b>					<b>Total:</b>				
Thousand USD	10,317	3,055	792	906	Thousand USD	13,209	646	357	728
Share (%)	68.46	20.27	5.26	6.01	Share (%)	88.41	4.32	2.39	4.87

Figure 2. Current major R&D initiatives and spending trends.

### Developing and brokering collaborative research and policy formulation

To make the best use of this limited funding, a broad range of skills is required for building policy and global collaboration at the different levels: in this case, community, regional, national and international. Central to this, communication and building networks are very important.

Indonesia needs high quality research to support the cycle of policy formulation, starting from agenda setting, then policy formulation, dissemination, and the adoption process, as well as increasing the effectiveness of

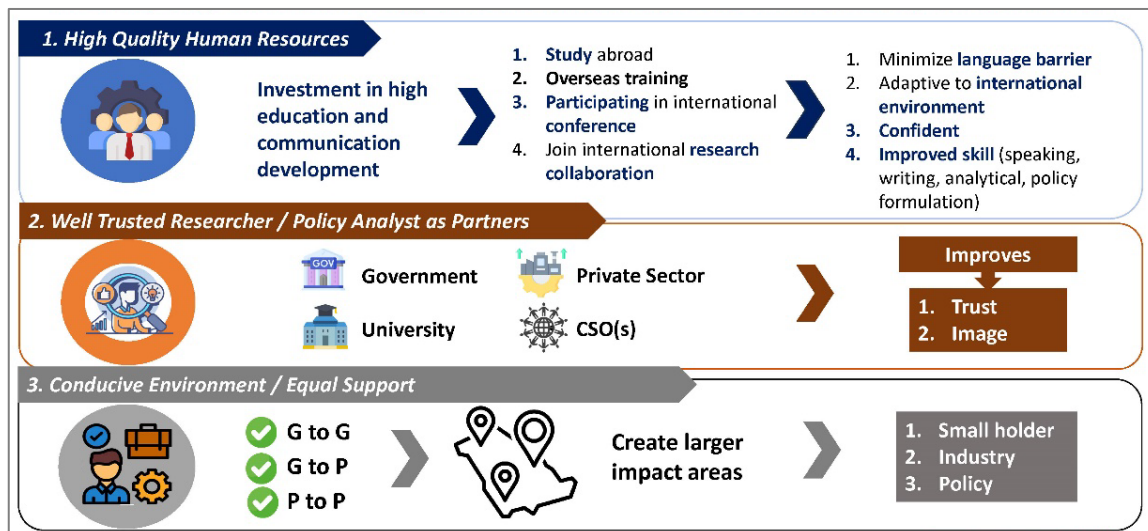


Figure 3.

policy implementation. I have learnt and experienced that these factors are very important to create a high quality research partnership.

Indonesia needs an investment in capacity building (Figure 3) for early career researchers and policy analysts to really strengthen the translation from research into policy. We need to become well trusted researchers and policy analysts to become research partners, between the government, private sector and university, as well as civil society organisations (CSOs). It will really improve the trust and image of Indonesians as partners. Also, we need a conducive environment that will support collaborative research and policy making: government to government, government to people, and people to people. I believe that this will create larger impact to, first, the farmers, the smallholders, who really get the benefit coming from this; second, to industries; and third, to policies.

### Creating strong channels of communication

Advanced communication skills, strong networks with different stakeholders, and open-minded attitudes are considered the key to the success of the research collaboration process, strengthening the partnership and increasing mutual benefit between partners.

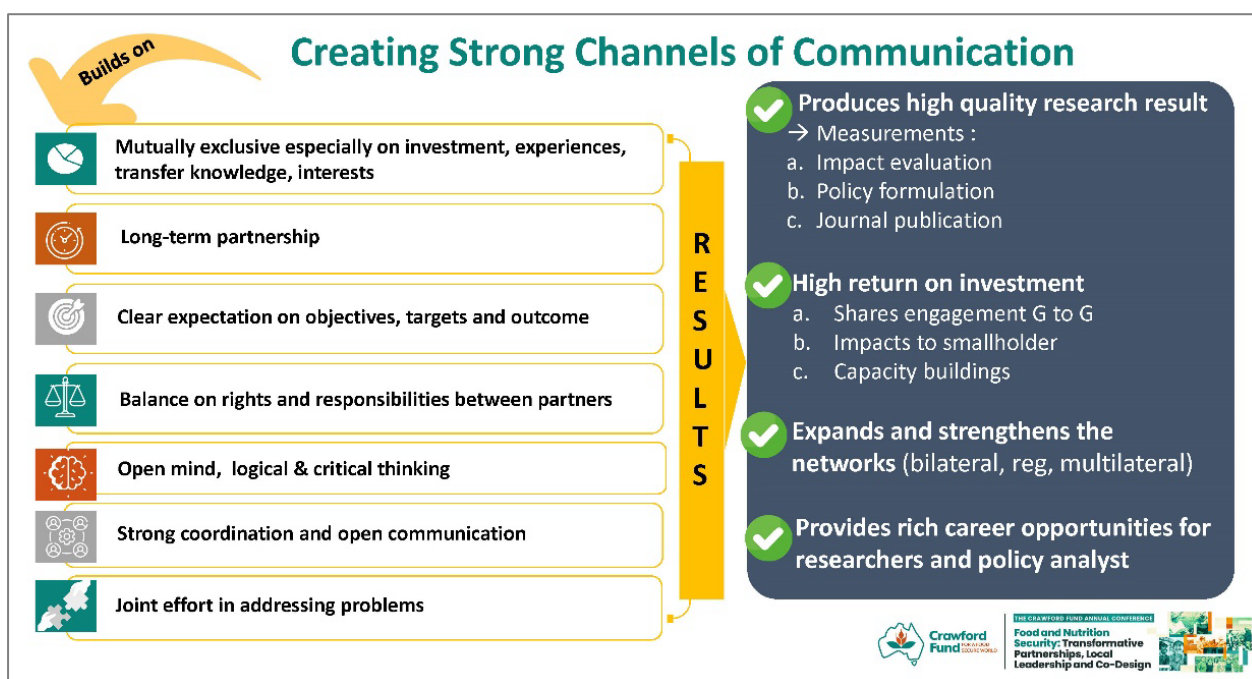


Figure 4.

The key to synergising the private sector is to create strong channels of communication (Figure 4) and then that builds on mutually exclusive interests, especially on investment, experiences and knowledge transfer. It builds on long-term partnership. And it is very important to have clear expectations on objectives, targets and outcomes, and a balance of rights and responsibilities between partners. It is very important for us to keep an open mind, with logical and critical thinking, strong coordination, open communication and a joint effort in addressing problems.

I believe with this we are able to produce high quality research, and high return on investment (Figure 4). We are going to be able to expand and strengthen the network bilaterally, regionally and multi-laterally. And last but not least, the large amount of new material generated will provide rich career opportunities for researchers and policy analysts.

### The new setting of agriculture research transformation

At the moment, and since 2019, Indonesia is the new setting for agriculture research transformations (Figure 5). These transformations create significant impact by translating research and innovation into knowledge, which is also adopted at farm level, and strengthens the role of policy units at the ministry level. Strong partnerships,

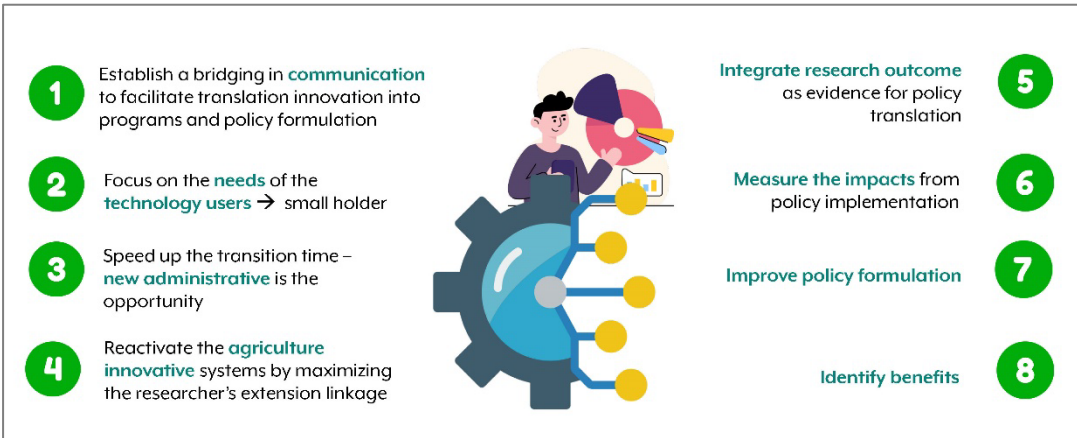


Figure 5.

integration and collaboration are key to accelerate the research link without creating any delay to policy formulation. These factors, I believe, are really important for us, and we need to work on them. Our first task is to really speed up the process. We need to focus on the needs. We need to shorten the transition time; new administration is the opportunity.

### Impacts and benefits of ACIAR projects in Indonesia

Figures 6a,b,c,d are examples of impacts and benefits from various ACIAR projects in Indonesia, showing how strong communication channels play a role to connect multiple parties to perform these projects effectively. Indonesia and Australia share similar concerns in these sectors.

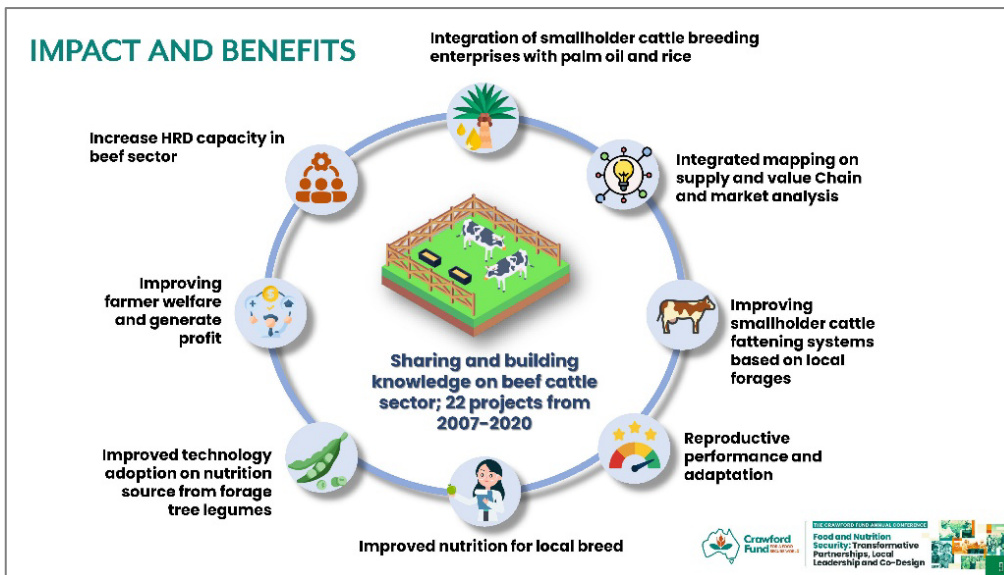


Figure 6a.

ACIAR has been supporting Indonesia in 22 projects from 2007 to 2020. Among impacts and benefits that were identified most fully was integrating market supply and demand. This first project (Figure 6a) improved smallholder cattle fattening systems based on local forages. The project was focused in the eastern part of Indonesia: East Nusa Tenggara and West Nusa Tenggara and some locations in Australia. It also helped farmers

improve reproductive performance and adaptation, and improve nutrition locally, while also improving farmer welfare and profit. Another benefit has been to increase the capacity in the beef sector where lots of researchers have become much stronger by participating in this project.



Figure 6b.

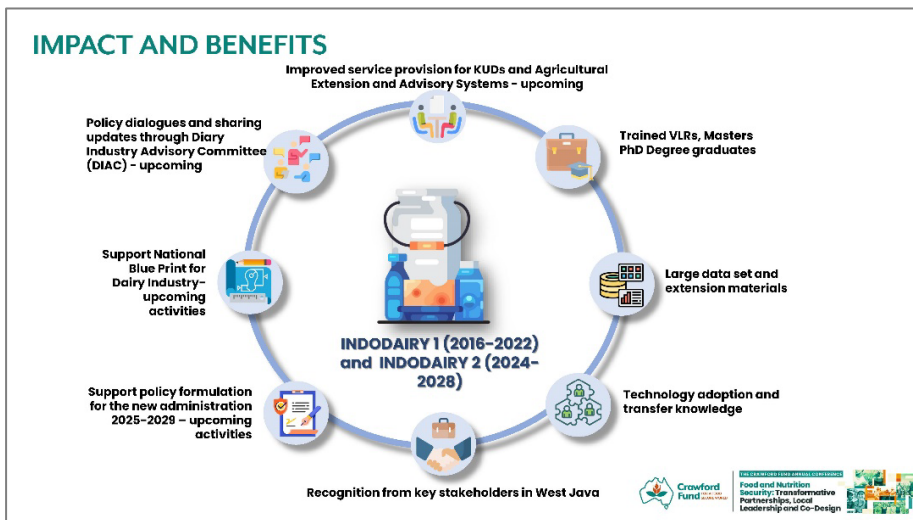


Figure 6c.

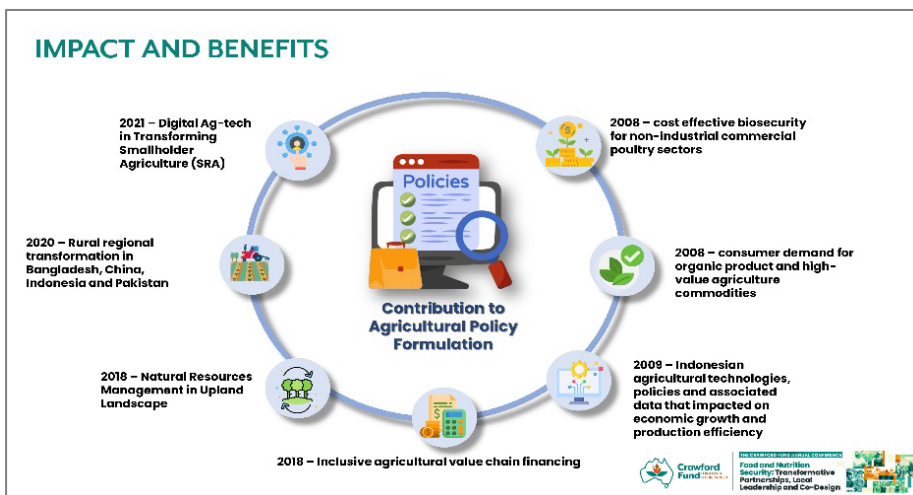


Figure 6d.

Another project that is a good example is the area-wide management (AWM) of pest fruit flies in mango-producing areas of Indonesia (Figure 6b), focused in the mango belt in the northern part of West Java, and on the Gedong Gincu variety in the east part of East Java. Fruit flies are one of the most serious horticultural pests globally. Through this project, it is very important for us to provide low-cost technology for smallholder farmers. This is what we need. Low-cost technology. It is also helping researchers mapping the supply chain. The project gives farmers the opportunity to access modern retail markets, by improving mango quality for domestic use and export. And it includes technology adoption, which is important for the farmers so they continue to use this technology. Ultimately, the project aims to prevent the spread of fruit flies in mango-producing areas in Indonesia.

The projects in Figure 6c are very timely because the next presidency will put very high importance on dairy production. There are two dairy projects: one ran from 2016 to 2022, and the other begins in 2024, led by David McGill. The first IndoDairy project trained Village Level Researchers (VLRs) which has been a very important outcome. We were also able to collect large datasets and extension materials. There is very good technology adoption and transfer of knowledge – very good outcomes of this project – and there is strong recognition from key stakeholders in West Java, which is where we conducted IndoDairy 1.

In the upcoming project, IndoDairy 2, we would like the project to support policy formulation for the new administration of the new president in Indonesia; support a national blueprint for the dairy industry (Figure 6c); and try to create policy dialogues and share updates through the Dairy Industry Advisory Committee (DIAC). By the end of 2028, we would like to see improved service provision for KUDs (village level dairy cooperatives) and agriculture extension and advisory systems.

ACIAR also has helped Indonesia to support agricultural policy formulation. Figure 6d maps the ACIAR projects from 2008 until 2021. In 2008, the projects focused on cost effective biosecurity for non-industrial commercial poultry sectors; and on consumer demand for organic produce and high value commodities. In 2009, the focus was Indonesian technology policy and associated data that impacted economic growth and production efficiency. The 2018 project looked at inclusive agriculture value chain financing; and at 'Natural Resource Management in Upland Landscapes'. Then in 2020, rural regional transformation. This was a multi-national project, in Bangladesh, China, Pakistan and Indonesia. In 2021, the project was about digital ag-tech transforming smallholder agriculture. This project is something new that Indonesia really needs. These projects have been proved to help Indonesia in sharpening policy formulation.

These examples demonstrate a proven track record and history of how channels of communication play a significant role in following up and facilitating successful collaborative research. Thus, it is important for research centre and policy units in Indonesia to expand their networks and be very creative in creating strong channels of communication with multi-stakeholder partners to develop high quality policy research, and increase the impact at community, regional and national levels, and increase international influence.

Collaboration and partnership are the keys to gain mutually exclusive benefits and impacts for Australia and Indonesia.

Wahida is an agriculture policy analyst at the Indonesian Center for Agriculture Socio Economics and Policy Studies (ICASEPS), Ministry of Agriculture. As well as developing new collaborative projects, Wahida's focus is in developing, monitoring and improving agriculture policies as well as policy advocacy and dissemination. Wahida is involved in two new ACIAR projects and continues her role in participating in other collaborative agriculture policy works with different donors and ministries. Wahida has a PhD in Global Food Studies from The University of Adelaide. From 2016 to 2020, Wahida was assigned as the Agricultural Attaché to the European Union based at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Brussels, Belgium.