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## AMEA'S ANNUAL LEARNING EVENT 2024

On 25 and 26 June 2024, AMEA held its fourth Annual Learning Event (ALE). Our aim was to:

- Inspire you by inviting four key-note speakers to share their BDS Visions!
- Provide learning from across the Network
- Generate debate
- Provide ideas for partnership
- Launch our Global Learning into Action Initiative

Over 200 people from over 60 organizations registered, which is a record for our AMEA events! We also had excellent turnout over the two days with 95 participants from 49 organizations. This was an event with experience and diversity as shown below.



## LEARNING AND DEBATE

We started by recapping the AMEA's Strategy:



### STRATEGY TO 2030

**OUR VISION** is where farmers are receiving a living income for fair working conditions that inspires the next generation to invest in sustainable farming as a business.

**OUR MISSION** is to transform the systems that support farmers organisations and agri - SMEs to create value for farmers and themselves.

**OUR APPROACH** is to provide a platform that enables stakeholders to learn, innovate and scale up the most effective ecosystem approaches for supporting farmers.

**OUR EXPECTED OUTCOMES** by 2030 are:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM</b><br>A vibrant network with 100 members and partners delivering collaborative system change strategies in 20 Local Networks | <b>INCLUSIVE &amp; SUSTAINABLE GROWTH</b><br>50 million farmers receiving improved, coordinated business development services which enables their Farmer Organizations and Agri-SMEs to create added value for them |
|---|---|

We explained the operationalisation of this vision and mission through ongoing BDS Roadmap processes in our nine Local Networks. We emphasized the need for local strategies based on the opportunities and challenges presented by each Country context. However, we know services transcend borders and we need visions on how BDS markets could evolve to inspire us.

Over the two days we had 4 visions presented to us. These visions highlighted the potential for improving BDS markets if we work together to make this happen. It was also clear that combining standards with technology can unleash this potential. I encourage you to listen to the videos below and consider how you and your organization can contribute.

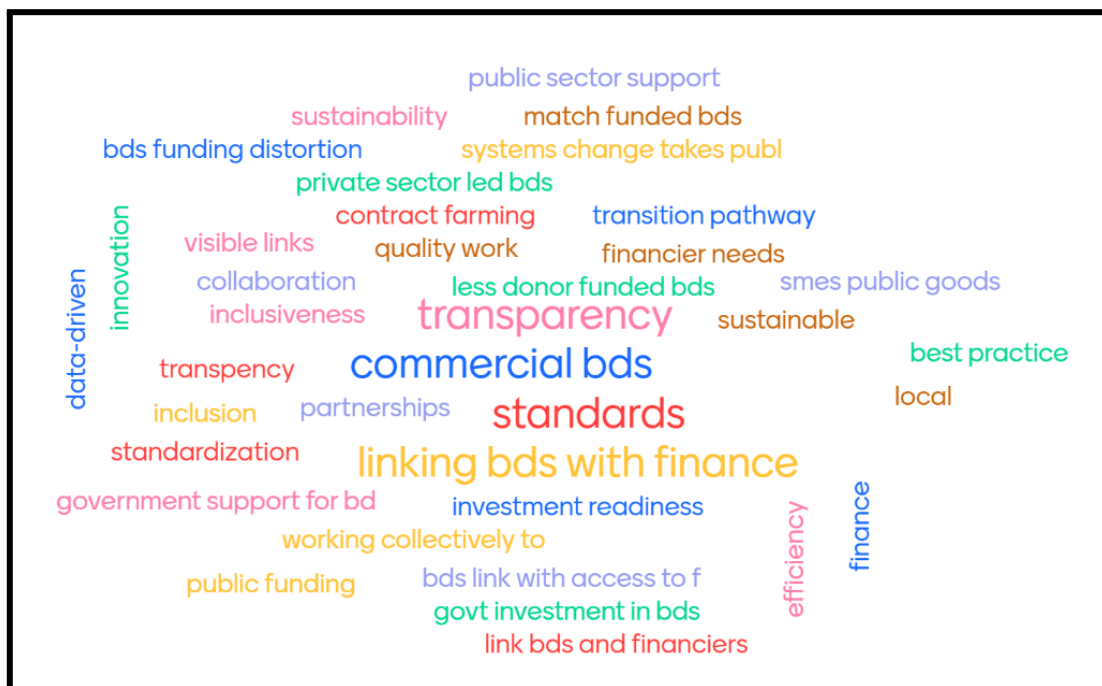
[AMI VISION](#)

[ATL VISION](#)

[AGRA VISION](#)

[ARGIDIUS VISION](#)

We also asked for your reactions to these inspiring visions. These were your take-aways:



We followed these visions with six thematic presentations and discussions.

## 1. AGRIBUSINESS CLUSTERS IN HORTICULTURE

iCRA's Agribusiness Cluster (ABC) Approach is the 2nd most used approach from the peer reviewed [AMEA Toolbox](#) with over 500,000 farmers benefiting from recent programs. Three AMEA members and partners presented how they have adapted the ABC approach for different contexts in the horticulture sector.

**Rikolto**

**World Veg**

**2SCALE**

These presentations showed how diverse organizations have adopted the ABC approach and believe strongly in it, especially the focus on developing local capacity. This is localization in practice.

## 2. INPUT SYSTEMS

Systems of agricultural input supply are not always efficient, accessible, or affordable to many in the rural areas of several countries. In this session, AMEA members presented their approaches and models to tackle key challenges in creating sustainable and scalable input systems.

AFAP

AgNexus Africa

Corus International

These presentations showed how local capacity can be developed through input systems programs. The development of Village Based Agents in their different forms appears to be in an innovation phase but it appears we are now at a point where roles of different extension/advisory services need to be assessed and misaligned incentives considered. This would include a strategy for enabling their interaction with other Business Services and Business Development Services.

### **3. REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE**

Nicely following on from Input systems we had the opportunity to learn about the role of Ag-SMEs/Coops for supporting farmers transition to regenerative agricultural practices. This session was prepared by the AMEA Environmental Impact workstream.

Corus International

IDH

Corus highlighted a specific but pervasive environmental challenge, whereas IDH looked through the lens of different agri-SME business models. There appeared to be compelling evidence that viable business models exist, however it was also clear that public subsidy is often required in the first phase.

### **4. DATA-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT**

AMEA has invested over a number of years in promoting a data driven approach, which includes the forthcoming International Standard on Professional Farmer Organizations. This session enabled participants to discuss the relevance of high-quality data, standardized ways of collecting and sharing data for Ag-Business Development Services, and the role of data governance and informed consent.

AMEA

DAC

The need for a data driven approach in the Ag-SME/Ag-BDS sector was not doubted. The need for a Nationally coordinated system was clear, as was the

need to convince Governments and Donors of the need to invest in a coordinated, collaborative way. AMEA is one vehicle for this advocacy effort.

## **5. ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FOR REFUGEES**

The increasing number of people being globally displaced has drawn attention of organizations to providing support to refugees and their host communities. In this session, we learned about enterprise development approaches in these contexts and lessons from implementation.

[Self Help Africa](#)

[Farm Africa](#)

Both projects showed that enterprise development initiatives can be successful even in the most challenging circumstances. But, should these approaches be scaled and if so, how?

## **6. GENDER EMPOWERMENT**

Check the updates from Grameen Foundation and NCBA CLUSA since last year's Annual Learning Event and get familiar with their approaches ("Gender First" to create male champions and the WIELCOOP tool), which are yielding results for gender empowerment.

[Grameen Foundation](#)

[NCBA CLUSA](#)

There was clearly significant interest in these approaches and we hope we will see increasing uptake of these approaches, especially the WIELCOOP which AMEA invested in. Will you be one of the first movers?

## **LEARNING INTO ACTION INITIATIVE**

AMEA officially launched its Learning into Action initiative, a new phase of AMEA's knowledge generation work. We will be leveraging previous experience with case studies and the ISF Advisors study on effectiveness and efficiency of BDS. However we will be taking dialogue from global to the local with the formation of Communities of Practice in 10 countries. 70 strategic mini-case studies over the next 3 years will stimulate debate about the cost-effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability of BDS approaches, as well as other themes relevant to the local

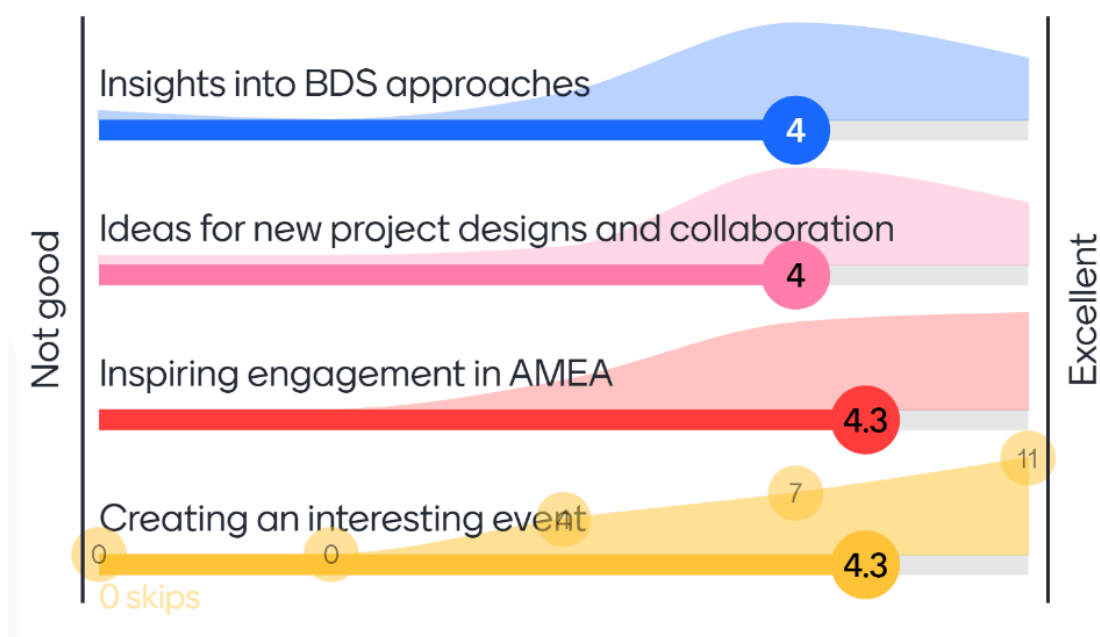
networks. These lessons will be used to inform action in the countries through policy briefs.

**We are therefore calling on all members and partners to contribute by:**

- Identifying programs that are considered strategic in the Local Network countries (+India) and could be studied
- Supporting the development of relationships with key National Institutions that can enable this initiative to become influential i.e. learning can be taken into action
- Encouraging staff in the Local Network countries (+India) to participate in the Communities of Practice

## FEEDBACK

We aimed to make this an interesting event and it appears we delivered based on your feedback:



If you could not attend or would like to provide additional feedback please contact our [Network Director](#) and [Program Officer](#).

## A FINAL WORD OF THANKS

AMEA is member led and we literally cannot do this without you! So, thank you to the participants and a special thank you to all the presenters from the organizations below.

