

What is Muscat Fund?

This is our original program representing the intention of AAI for the better contribution to the international cooperation mainly in the field of technical transfer and rural development. Our spirit can be expressed by several keywords that are “Participatory Approach”, “Appropriate Technology”, “Small Scale”, “Sustainability”, “Ownership” and “Resource Management”.

Since established in the year 1984, AAI have been engaged in the technical cooperation activities with an idea that the basis of agriculture is to sow seeds and to cultivate land as is indicated in the Japanese name of our company. We have been participating in the technical cooperation activities in the fields of agriculture, forestry, rural development and environmental conservation mainly in arid and semi-arid areas of developing countries distributed in Southwestern Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Our common impression felt strongly through such activities in developing countries is that the sustainable participation of rural community with keen ownership is indispensable for the improvement of living condition and betterment of welfare. It is, therefore, important to carry out the development project in appropriate-scale. What we have to do is to support the activity performed by the rural community. Hasty and immature proposals, support ignoring the local economic situation and ill-considered funding should be avoided not to destroy the conventional system of rural community.

Under such circumstances, we gradually have thought the future possibility of collaborative projects on “grass-roots level” by ourselves. We also started to consider the problems and the improvement points of the prevailing development aid. In 1997 all AAI staff got together in Muscat, the capital of Oman, and we have decided to carry out our own grassroots activities within our capacity. “Muscat Fund ” was then established through joint contribution by AAI staff to support our own small-scale grassroots activities under the collaboration with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for genuinely serving the requirement of local community.

Major Activities under Muscat Fund

Survey and investigation of partner organizations

- To find out CBOs that are involved in the regional development activities through our past experiences of field survey and other relevant activities.
- To visit such local CBOs for inspecting their activities and exchanging views for the future cooperation possibilities.

Collaborative activities and technical cooperation with various organizations

- To participate in various activities aiming at the improvement of livelihood for the local inhabitant under the collaboration with CBOs.
- To support CBOs by technical transfer through field investigation and information exchange and also by the provision of fund through various aid agencies.

Capacity building of competent personnel for the future international cooperation

- To find out and also to make capacity building for young personnel who is willing to devote to the international cooperation.
- To introduce such competent personnel to our staff and friends who are assigned to developing countries to join in the practical activity with local community in the field level.

Application of participatory approach and development of appropriate technology

- To open collected information and activities obtained during our major activities to the public.
- To improve participatory approaches through brainstorming on international cooperation.
- To develop appropriate technology through practical activities in the field level.