



**Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Lower Mekong River Basin**

## National Inception and Planning Workshop Report

**Lao PDR**

Vientiane Province, 16-17 June 2014



Organized by Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative (DAEC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), LAO PDR in partnership with ACISAI Center AIT Thailand, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Oxfam



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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

SRI-LMB ([www.sri-lmb.ait.asia](http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia)), an EU-financed and AIT ([www.ait.asia](http://www.ait.asia)) led project, aims to contribute towards enhancing the resilience of rainfed farmers confronting climate change in the Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB) region. The purpose is to increase crop yield, productivity and profitability on sustainable basis at smallholder farmers' field in rainfed areas of LMB. The project through its action aims to address the food security and livelihood issue of smallholder farmers by developing adaptive measure against climate change. The action is being implemented in four LMB countries: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. The total period for implementation is 60 months (2013-2017).



## CONTACT DETAILS

SRI-LMB is a regional collaborative effort that brings various stakeholders together working at global, regional, national, and local level. The project is led by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in partnership with FAO, Oxfam, SRI-Rice of Cornell University and University of Queensland together with many national partners coming from national universities, NGOs and ministries.

For better collaboration and coordination at all level, the project has established it regional, national and local offices, which are called as Regional Coordination Unit at (PCU), Project Management Unit at country level (PMU) and Local Management Unit at provincial level (LMU) respectively. The newly established Institute-wide Center of AIT **Asian Center of Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (ACISAI)** hosts regional coordination unit (PCU) of the project. The Country Office, i.e., Programme Management Unit (PMU) for Lao PDR is hosted by Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperatives (DAEC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The office is located at Ban Don Tiew, Saythani District, Vientiane Capital. The local management units, i.e., LMUs are located in Vientiane Province, Khammouan and Savannakhet provinces. All three provinces are selected for the implementation of the field activities. Contact details of key project personnel and staffs working at regional, national and local levels are given below:

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## ACRONYMS

ACISAI	Asian Centre of Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
CFPAR	Central Farmers' Participatory Action Research
DAEC	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives
DDG	Deputy Director General
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOC	Department of Cooperation
DOI	Department of Irrigation
DOP	Department of Planning
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FFS	Farmer's Field School
FPAR	Farmers' Participatory Action Research
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
LMB	Lower-Mekong Basin
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MEI	Monitoring Evaluation and Innovation
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIPW	National Inception and Planning Workshop
NSC	National Steering Committee
NUoL	National University of Laos
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRA	Participatory Action Research
PSO	Permanent Secretary Office
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
SRI-LMB	System of Rice Intensification in the Lower Mekong River Basin
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**SRI-LMB** ([www.sri-lmb.ait.asia](http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia)), AIT led, FAO and Oxfam partnered, an EU-financed project, aims to contribute towards enhancing the resilience of rainfed farmers confronting climate change in the Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB) region. The purpose is to increase crop yield, productivity and profitability on sustainable basis at smallholder farmers' field in rainfed areas of LMB. The project through its action aims to address the food security and livelihood issue of smallholder farmers by developing adaptive measure against climate change. The action is being implemented in four LMB countries: Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand. The total period for implementation is 60 months (2013-2017).

Within the ambit of these larger goals, a Regional Workshop of the project was organized at AIT (<http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia/resources/doc/report-inception-and-planning-workshop-SRI-LMB-project-07-June-13.pdf>) where food security issue and challenges of rainfed smallholder farmers in Lao PDR and possible way forward aligning with the existing national policy were reviewed involving international and regional team of the project along with Lao team that involved Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Nabong College of Agriculture and FAO Country IPM Programme staffs.

During the workshop, it was suggested that the capacity building of rice farmers should be carried out within the framework of the MAF Strategy 2011-2020 to: 1) Gradual introduction and increased production of modernized lowland market oriented agriculture production, adapted to climate change, and focusing on smallholder farmers; 2) Conservation of upland eco-systems, ensuring food security and improving livelihoods of rural communities. These strategies are well anchored in the overall implementation plans of the SRI LMB in Lao PDR.

This discussion was furthered during the recently concluded National Inception and Planning Workshop (16-17 June 2014 at Napakuang Resort, Thalad, Vientiane Province) involving national audience and locals to adjust and align the project work as per government policy.

Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperative (DAEC) with assistance from the FAO Country IPM Program, AIT and Oxfam were the organizers of the workshop attended by some 50 persons involving government organizations, NGOs, relevant ministries & departments, farmers, and think tanks. The purpose of this workshop was to ensure wider national consultation on the objectives and activities of the project prior to implementation of activities in three selected provinces of Lao PDR namely Vientiane province, Khammouan and Savannakhet (1 Upland and 2 Lowland provinces). In each Province, 3 Districts will be selected with rainfed rice-based farming systems (Vientiane P: Kasy, Vangvieng, Feuang, Khammouan P.: Nakay, Mahaxay, Yommalath, Savannakhet P.: Champhone, Songkhone and Xaybouly).

The main objectives of this Workshop were a) to inform the wider national level audience on the project, its goal, objective and activities; b) to revisit the project definition, goals, overall work plan; c) to provide inputs for drafting of the country strategy paper; d) to formulate country specific log-frames, responsibility of each stakeholder and bud-gets; and e) to form National Steering Committees.

The Workshop was co-chaired by Dr. Somnuck Thirasack, Deputy Director General of the Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Mr. Jan Willem Ketelaar, the focal point for SRI-LMB from FAO. Dr. Prabhat Kumar, Regional Coordinator, SRI-LMB and Director, Asian



Center of Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (ACISAI), the project's host Center at AIT, welcomed participants on behalf of the project and provided an brief introduction of the project. Followed to that Mr. Phousit Phoumovong, Mr. Noundy Phongsavanh and Ms. Khamphoui Luanglath, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry made a presentation on SRI and Action Research in the context of Farmer's Participatory Action Research (FPAR) in Lao PDR. The session continued with summarizing result of baseline survey / PRA study on SRI project by Mr. Avakat Phasouysaingam from the National University of Laos (NUoL). The presentation on monitoring, evaluation and impact were done by Mr. Diggpal Bahadur, M & E Specialist from PCU, AIT.

Participants discussed and brainstormed in group on details work plan for their relevant provinces. Provincial work plan was presented to the workshop for comments.

The second day of the Workshop started with a presentation on the project work plan by Mr. Phatnakhone Khanthamixay of DAEC followed by Ms. Nguyet Bao Dang's major highlights on the Project's communication and policy advocacy. The overall workshop outputs reflected on enhancing project's goal, objective and activities through planning, budgeting and developing the country specific log-frames and finalizing the draft country strategy paper with inputs from various stakeholders.

The formation of National Steering Committee/Technical Working Group for SRI LMB was discussed briefly and it was agreed to be completed at a later date with more consultation. The group will consist of representatives from PMU, relevant ministries & departments, academic institutions, one observer each from PCU, AIT and Local EU delegation. The ToR for NSW/TWG will be finalized in coming months. The working group shall meet annually at the national annual workshop to revisit and review project work in order to provide strategic direction to achieve the project goal.



## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 CONTEXT

The AIT led, FAO and Oxfam partnered, EU-financed project, entitled: "*Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Lower Mekong River Basin*" (<http://www.ait.ac.th/news-and-events/2012/news/ait-signs-agreement-with-eu-for-3-4-million-euro-project>) became operational in February 2014. The main objective of the project is to contribute to enhance resilience of rainfed rice farming systems involving small-scale farmers confronting climate change in the Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB) countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam). The project will address food security challenges in the context of impacts from -and adaptation to- climate change by stimulating local innovation using SRI and Farmer Field School (FFS) approaches involving smallholder farmers in rainfed areas of LMB countries. The project aims to sustainably improve agricultural productivity and food security in the context of climate change adaptation, and to enhance research capacities to continue to support this development. The project organized its Regional Inception and Planning Workshop at the AIT premises in Bangkok from 09-12 April 2013 involving various stakeholders from all four countries. The workshop facilitated orientation of project stakeholders and partner institutions towards project goals and implementation strategy and serviced the purpose of compiling and analyzing the needed background information from each of the 4 implementing countries. Country teams including Laos presented a country paper providing details on the overall rainfed rice production system along with the exiting agricultural policies of the Lao government. It is intended that this country report would be further developed in the country strategy papers upon successful development and completion of the planning for the project activities.

Moving from regional works workshop a National Inception and Planning Workshop (NIPW) was organized in Thalath, Vientiane Province on 16-17 June 2014 to proceed with the development of strategy and implementation plan for the project activities in the Laos PDR.

### 1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of the National Inception and Planning Workshop was to ensure wider national consultation on the objectives and activities of the project prior to implementation of activities in the three newly selected provinces of Lao PDR, namely Vientiane Province, Khammouan and Savannakhet (one upland and two lowland provinces with predominantly rainfed rice-based farming systems).



### 1.3 OBJECTIVES

The National Inception and Planning Workshop was jointly organized by the Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative (DAEC) and FAO IPM Programme country office with coordination support from the FAO Representative Office in Vientiane.

The workshop was expected to:

- Inform a larger audience of stakeholders about the project, its goal and objectives;
- Revisit the project definition, goals, overall work plan for the whole project duration;
- Provide inputs for drafting of the country strategy paper; and
- Formulate country-specific log-frames, responsibility of each stakeholder and budgeting; and
- To nominate participants and discuss terms of reference of the National Steering Committee (NSC) / Technical Working Group (TWG), which consists of representatives from government, local partners, research institutions and universities.

*Please refer to Annex 1 for the detailed schedule of the NIPW.*

### 1.4 PARTICIPANTS

Participants included representatives from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAEC), Department of Agriculture (DOA), Department of Irrigation (DOI), Department of Planning (DOP), Permanent Secretary Office (PSO) - the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Department of Cooperation (DOC) - the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Project Partner - FAO Regional and Country Programme on IPM and PRR, Project Coordination Unit (PCU) at AIT, OXFAM - non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and National University of Lao PDR - academic institutes, representatives from Provincial and District Agricultural Extension and Cooperative and Provincial IPM Trainers in the new selected provinces (Vientiane Province: Kasy, Vangvieng and Feuang; Khammuan Province: Nakay, Mahaxay and Yommalath; Savannakhet Province: Champhone, Songkhone and Xaybouly), and Farmer Representative from Napho Tai Village, Phonhong District, Vientiane Province previously involved in SRI. (*The list and contact details of each participant are attached in Annex 2.*)



## 2 SUMMARY OF SESSIONS

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE SRI-LMB PROJECT

Dr. Prabhat Kumar delivered the first presentation in plenary session. He provided the background on the overview of the project, i.e., the project idea was developed as part of a regional consultation organized with support from World Bank Institute involving agriculture ministry from the LMB countries, NGOs and CSOs, and United Nations organizations (<http://www.ait.ac.th/research/workshop-reports/AIT-WBI-Workshop-Report.pdf>). The resilience of rainfed small-scale farmers of Lower Mekong region confronting climate change is the main objective of the project. The project implementation period is for 60 months with a total cost of action approximately 3.4 million Euros funded by the European Union.

The project seeks to stimulate local innovation using SRI Principles and Farmers' Field School (FFS) approaches involving smallholder farmers in rainfed areas of LMB countries in order to sustainably improve agricultural productivity and food security in the context of climate change adaptation, and to enhance research capacities to continue to support this development.

#### Box 1: OBJECTIVES OF THE SRI-LMB project

- ❖ Development of multi-institutional multi-stakeholder network from local to regional level
- ❖ Development of science-based and pro-poor profitable crop management practices in four (4) Lower Mekong River Basin Countries (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand)
- ❖ Dissemination of co-generated knowledge and learning and development of pro-poor policy briefs with emphasis on women and landless
- ❖ Strengthening of national research-extension capacity and training capacity of farmer trainers, national trainers and local extension personnel involved in smallholder farmer extension programme.

While further elaborating the project plans, Dr. Kumar added that project is not only focusing on rice but rather on rice-based cropping systems. The rice would be the entry crop for the project and in subsequent season group of smallholders could explore to raise other crops using SRI principles and that might include beans, vegetables. Similarly, experimenting with rice-fish, rice-beans (on bunds), and rice-green manure crops remains possible under the ambit of the project depending on the area and interest of the participating smallholders.



The main intervention vehicle for the project is action research and capacity building using FFS platforms to achieve the goals of improved food and nutritional security and will include women and landless and/or land-poor from the communities.

Additionally, he shared the governance structure of the project by informing the audience that development of vibrant local to regional innovation platforms are important for achieving the goals of the project. These platforms are intended to seamlessly connect the flow of ideas and knowledge from local to international institutions and vice versa. Finally, he stressed the importance of AIT as a regional hub and encouraged students, from local universities and partner national institutes, to be the part of this multi-institutional and multi-stakeholders engagement. He also provided information on the availability of fund for students who will undertake research on subject convergent to the objectives of the project.

## 2.2 OVERVIEW OF THE SRI-LMB PROJECT IN LAO PDR

A presentation on SRI-LMB Project in Lao PDR was delivered by **Mr. Phousit Phoumavong**, DAEC DDG Secretary/**National Training Expert of SRI LMB project** in Lao PDR. He began his presentation by introducing SRI activities proposed to be implemented in Lao PDR throughout the project period. The proposed activity for wet season 2014 was DAEC staff to conduct field experiment on SRI in Thoulakhom District of Vientiane Province with a farmer group. Mr. Jan Ketelaar reminded participants that the 2014 wet season had already started and that it is also necessary for national team to understand about the project design in depth. He also emphasized that it is also important to ensure proper preparation before field work is started. Thus, during the 2014 wet season, there are many tasks that the national team should be dealing with such as village and farmer selection, training of national team, baseline survey, curriculum development for Central Farmer Participatory Action Research (CFPAR) and Farmers Participatory Action Research FPAR prior to organizing the CFPAR in dry season 2015 and the FPARs in wet season 2015.

## 2.3 OVERVIEW OF SYSTEM OF RICE INTENSIFICATION IN LAO PDR IMPLEMENTED BY DEPARTMENT OF IRRIGATION OF MAF

A representative from Department of Irrigation (DOI) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, **Mr. Noundy Phongsavanh**, was invited by the DAEC to share with workshop participants on SRI Project, achievements and challenges faced by SRI project earlier carried out by the DOI.

Mr. Noundy explained that first activity of the previous SRI Project, NCMI funded by ADB from 2005-2010, started with "demonstration plot" for 3,200 square meters in Tha Ngone Village, Saythany District, Vientiane Capital. Then activities were expanded to five Northern provinces including Huaphanh, Saiyabouly,



Xiengkhouang, Vientiane and Luang Prabang Province and later to all provinces of Lao PDR. As result, and during the project implementation farmers, practiced SRI from 80%-100%, where irrigation was available, yield was initially increased from 3.5 tons to 4 tons and later increased to 5 tons - 9 tons per hectare. After NCMI ended, SRI activities were carried out by PRONET 21 of JICA.

Key successes include less water, less cost, less area and high yield. Project results made farmers interested in practicing SRI. SRI was highly promoted by the policy maker. This project also set up a demo plot at the President's field.

Challenges that led farmers to discontinue SRI include: farmers found SRI was a new technology with many steps involved, technical backstopping by extension workers was highly needed, and farmers did not have a good understanding and lacked skills on SRI. This resulted in SRI perceived as time consuming, less labour available in the village due to labour migration, production cost increased whilst rice price was decreased, young and single seedling was attractive to and badly affected by pests (e.g. by golden apple snails), SRI could only be implemented in the areas where water management is reliable and data was not collected.

During Q & A, Mr. Noundy confirmed that previous SRI in the Lao PDR has not practiced direct seeded method as of yet.

In the context of labor saving, Dr. Kumar shared SRI experiences as practiced by Thai farmers in the Northeast Thailand that the farmers experimented with direct sown SRI and able to harvest a higher yield compared to conventional direct seeding at a very low seed rates. Mr. Ketelaar added that labor availability in rural areas is increasingly scarce so direct seedling would be recommended to be tested by the farmers in upcoming FPAR. Professor Somphanh Pasouvang shared that according to information from the Agriculture College SRI practice and results in Lao PDR were variable. However, successful cases were found in provinces where land area available for crop production is less, e.g. in LouangPrabang, Sayabouly and Xiengkhouang Province.

## 2.4 ACTION RESEARCH IN THE CONTEXT OF FARMER'S PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH IN LAO PDR

The presentation on the action research in the context of farmer's participatory action research in Lao PDR was briefly presented by Ms. **Khamphoui Luanglath**, National IPM Project Coordinator. The content of the presentation included a brief history and achievement of the FAO IPM Programme in Lao PDR, the projects under the umbrella of the FAO-IPM Programme, farmer training activities, particularly farmer's field schools on IPM, fruit fly IPM and good cassava cultivation & cassava mealybug management using bio-control as an option. The farmer training on pesticide risk reduction, which is a part of the IPM training package and proved to be successful for raising awareness among the participated farmers, was also touched on.





## 2.5 PRA AND SURVEY RESULTS IN LUANG PRABANG, XAYABOULY AND XIENGHOUANG PROVINCES

GOL representatives from Lao PDR attended the Regional Inception and Planning Workshop at AIT in Bangkok on 09-12 April 2013. They indicated their intention to have the SRI LMB implemented in LuangPrabang, Saiyabouly and Xiengkhouang Province. AIT subsequently contracted EMC and NUoL to carry out PRA and survey in those earlier chosen provinces. Due to a recent decision made by the MAF, DAEC was proposed to be a project counterpart of FAO-AIT-SRI LMB Project instead of DOA as earlier anticipated and three new provinces (Khammouan, Savannakhet and Vientiane Provinces) were also selected. Although some of the PRA results may still relevant, the PRA result was not presented to the workshop and partly due to unavailability of the EMC staff. Only survey findings done by NUoL were presented as summarized in the below box.

### Box 2: PRA Survey Findings:

#### For LuangPrabang Province:

- ❖ Farmers in many districts did not have enough rice for all year round and many farmers still practice shifting cultivation. Farmers in many villages moved from rice cultivation in upland rice or “Hai” to paddy field and upland is used for cash crop instead. Farmers have limited paddy land. SRI was promoted since 2005 and continues until now in most of districts focusing in irrigation areas with a yield of more than 5 tons/ha. SRI was modified by farmers and PAFO to suit local situation e.g. SRI integrated with duck. Two districts, Nan and XiengGneung, were recommended for the study.

#### For Sayabouly Province:

- ❖ The province has potential to produce rice for Lao northern part. SRI started in 2005 to 2009 in about 1,000 ha with a yield about 6 tons/ha. After the project, farmers transplanted 2-3 seedling and use water for control weed. Two districts, Phieng and Pakliey, were recommended for a study.

#### For Xiengkhouang Province:

- ❖ Main agriculture production includes raising cattle and growing “Khao Kai Noy” rice. SRI was promoted since 2005 and again in 2010-2013 by Promotion of Organic Farming and Marketing in Laos (PROFIL) and Rural Income through Sustainable Energy (RISE) Program in Khoun and Phaxay District. After the project, DAFO dis-continued to monitor the number of SRI farmers. Phaxay and Phoukoud Districts were recommended for the study.

The findings showed that different provinces have different situations and implications for rice production. PAFO and DAFO in these provinces were interested about the SRI LMB project.



In order to have sufficient background information from the newly selected provinces, in lieu of detail PRA survey, it was agreed that:

- DAEC would collect and provide secondary information from other projects and reports;
- The planned baseline survey would be very detailed in order to capture the as much information as possible on rainfed rice production systems;
- Finally, these would be compiled by the PMU, Lao PDR in a short document;

## 2.6 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND IMPACT (MEI) STUDY

Mr. Diggpal Bahadur, Monitoring Evaluation and Impact study Specialist (MES) of SRI-LMB Project, AIT gave a quick presentation about MEI research. The main contents of MEI presentation were:

- **MEI concepts: What and Whys of MEI:** Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact study; steps in designing MEI systems; steps in developing the framework of MEI systems; learning is an integral part of MEI;
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact (MEI) study for Understanding the Patten of Change Between Different Group of Farmers:** Why MEI is needed in SRI-LMB; objectives of the MEI study; expected outcomes; how MEI is going to unfold; and key actors of MEI study.

There were confusion among participants between M&E and MEI study. The MES clarified that this is not M&E of the project but a research study within the project to monitor the pattern of change in farmers' practices and response to the intervention. The MEI study is primarily evaluating the field experiments and their results on the crop, farmer's response and impact on the participating households.

### Discussion on the pre-project baseline survey:

During the workshop, it was discussed that since the PRA exercise was undertaken in the previously selected provinces, the pre-project baseline survey should be done in greater detail and necessary information should be collected as part of the exercise. A discussion facilitated by Mr. Jan Willem Ketelaar on building consensus among the participants on planning for next one year, in the light of rice season already started and how best to utilize this time as a preparatory period for successful implementation of the project.

### Discussion with National Researcher (NR) from National University of Laos (NUoL):

MES discussed with NR and his team member on the draft inception report submitted to Project Coordination Unit (PCU). It was discussed that the report mainly outlines their findings during their visit to Luang Prabang,



Xiengkhoang and Sayaboury Provinces. However, MES mentioned that such a visit was not required as per the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and the MoA was jointly revisited to clarify each expected deliverables from NUoL, as part of MEI study. Change of provinces was also discussed with NR and the reason for such change. It was explored whether they are agreeable to this change or not, to which they showed their agreement and now that needs to be formalized with appropriate amendment in the MoA.

On the selection of Local Monitors (LMs), NR said they have selected the LMs but in the light of change of provinces, they will need to do it again in newly selected provinces.

#### **Discussion with PMU coordinator, Ms. Vorn:**

MES involved Ms. Vorn to build a mechanism for regular and timely communication between PMU/country and LMU/provincial Offices and MEI team. It was decided to keep the NR and his team informed of all finalized activities and she will also share this with DAEC colleagues.

While discussing about the baseline (pre-project) survey, it was shared that this could be effectively planned after the awaited approval/endorsement of the project by the government and also finalization of the appointment of key project personnel.

#### **Action points for MEI study**

- PCU to send the draft of amendment in MoA with NUoL and formalize it;
- Timeline for LM selection and training needs to be shared by NR;
- FAO who coordinates PMU and LMU offices in Lao PDR needs to plan for pre-project baseline study and share with PCU;
- NR needs to re-draft inception report for MEI work as per AIT-NUoL MoA provision to develop understanding on the study.

## **2.7 KEY CONCEPTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SRI-LMB PROJECT'S POLICY ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

Ms. Dang Bao Nguyet from Oxfam stated objectives of the session and clearly presented key concepts to familiarize the participants about policy advocacy, including its definition, the importance of policy advocacy and sustaining desired outcome and impact of development interventions, the processes/steps of policy advocacy, and the initial explanation of how the policy advocacy strategy will be developed in two main parts in details.

Part I: Basic concepts of policy advocacy and its relation with sustaining impact of development interventions: and Part II: Policy advocacy in the SRI-LMB project including purpose and expected results, project's model and



approaches, SRI LMB strategy and foundation for policy progress, what factors to be kept in mind and a sample of policy advocacy.

The objectives of this session were:

- To share with the participants key policy advocacy concepts;
- To gather their insights, knowledge and expertise about the recent policy challenges facing smallholder farmers while pursuing their food security, resilience in the context of climate change and sustainable income generation; and
- To initially work out some key elements of the project's policy advocacy strategy.

Ms. Nguyet stated a definition of policy advocacy as the deliberate process of influencing those who make policy decision, based on demonstrated evidences and involving multi-stakeholder action, to support and implement actions that contribute to the fulfillment of (someone's) rights, and to improve the livelihood of significant numbers of people. She shared the common understanding shared among NGOs and development sector that impact, improvement and change at desired outcome level can only last for a long time if they are adopted, integrated and promoted by government, with the government's funding and by joint effort with its staff. And the purpose of policy advocacy is to "advocate" for change, adoption and improvement at policy making/formulating level. Together with efforts making at program and field level, policy advocacy will create enabling conditions to leverage and sustain positive outcome and impact of development project/program/intervention.

#### Box 3: Policy advocacy is important, because:

- ❖ Policy makers greatly influence the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable groups through their decisions and actions;
- ❖ Change (happens at outcome/impact level) takes time and many projects fail when inputs cease. It requires follow up;
- ❖ Cause of poverty and injustice roots both from decisions at the household level, community leadership structures, national legislatures and powerful institution;
- ❖ Only a wide-range of program strategies targeted at multiple cause including policy causes will lead to desired impact (i.e. reducing poverty and injustice).

Policy advocacy aims at: i) formulation of new policies and practices; and/or ii) the reform of existing policies and practices to assure its efficacy; and/or iii) the enforcement of existing policies and practices; and/or iv) elimination of policies and practices that hinder the development of its own target beneficiaries.



**Main steps in advocacy:**

1. Identify problems and solutions
2. Define policy objective the project wants to achieve
3. Identify institution/VIPs who are decisive for the success or failure of the project's policy objective
4. Select correct tools and actions to achieve the policy objective

**Box 4: Five steps of policy advocacy process:**

- Step 1: Analyzing policies
- Step 2: Outlining an advocacy strategy
- Step 3: Finalizing an advocacy strategy
- Step 4: Framing a plan for advocacy
- Step 5: Integrating into program's plan and implementation

## 2.8 SUMMARY OF WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION ON DETAILED WORK PLANS AND BUDGETS FOR TARGET PROVINCES AND NATIONAL COMPONENT

The participants from each province and representative from each department were asked to work in group to discuss and brainstorm on activities and to come up with a draft work plan for the project interventions in each of the 3 provinces. The draft work plan for each province was presented to the big group for comments. Then a draft country work plan for the SRI LMB project was developed based on the provincial work plans and was presented to the workshop by **Mr. Phatnakhone** for comments. For a draft work plan, see *annex 3*.

While discussing the work plan, it was suggested that as there is a little capacity existing among the personnel at provincial level on carrying out experiments, data collection, data analysis and its interpretation, hence, a national level training of provincial staffs would be carried out this wet season (2014). *DAEC would prepare a concept note on this for further development of this idea in consultation with PCU, AIT of the project in close collaboration with FAO IPM.*



### 3. PROPOSITION AND FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE/TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

This session was briefly run by the DAEC DDG, Dr. Somnuk. A copy of the TORs of the NSC/TWG developed by other member countries (in English version) was shared with the workshop participants by Mr Ketelaar as a sample. Dr. Somnuk announced that the NSC should be DDG of ministries and department involved, that the NSC should meet on annual basis and would only meet more frequently when there is a critical issue to be discussed.

The members proposed by the DDG from 9 departments include:

1. Permanent Secretary Office, MAF;
2. Department of Planning and Cooperation, MPI;
3. Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperatives, MAF;
4. Department of Agriculture, MAF;
5. Department of Land Development,;
6. Department of Irrigation, MAF;
7. National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute;
8. Department of Personnel; and
9. National University of Laos

The NSC should also include representatives from key project implementing partners, such as AIT, FAO and Oxfam. No meeting was held among representatives from proposed departments to discuss about ToRs of the NSC/TWG. Hence, pending formal GOL endorsement of the project, the ToRs of the NSC/TWG would be finalized through email communication at a later date and time that would build on the consensus arrived during this workshop.

#### 3.1 CONCLUSION, CLOSING AND WAY FORWARD

In summary, the workshop met the objectives in terms of informing a larger audience and stakeholders about the project. Draft provincial and national work plans were developed and discussed and some inputs for development of CSP were received. The proposed formation of the TWG was declared to the workshop participants. Consensus was reached that the national team is to ensure necessary preparation during the 2014 wet season such as village and farmer selection, training of national team, baseline survey, circular development for Central Farmer Participatory Action Research (CFPAR) and Farmers Participatory Action Research FPAR prior to organizing the CFPAR in late 2014/dry season 2015 and the FPARs in wet season 2015. The objectives, 1-4, of the workshop stated in the concept note were met and the workshop was officially closed by Dr. Somnuk, DAEC DDG



### 3.2 FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- DAEC is to follow-up on government clearance/formal project endorsement<sup>1</sup> before FAO could move to next step with support for project implementation;
- DAEC to develop detailed workplans for the project interventions in Lao PDR;
- DAEC to develop a Country Strategy Paper, outlining project strategy, proposed interventions & log frame for comments by the regional project management.
- DAEC with help from AIT and FAO would prepare a plan for national ToT or training on experimental design, data collection etc. to build capacity of the provincial staffs from LMU to be able to set-up CFPAR in coming dry season.

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<sup>1</sup> The MAF minister formally communicated project endorsement on 24 July 2014.



## Annex 1: SCHEDULE OF THE NATIONAL INCEPTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR SRI-LMB PROJECT

Thalath, Vientiane Province, Lao PDR, 16-17 June 2014

Time	Activities	Person-in-Charge
<b>Day 1:</b>		
08:00-08:30	- Registration	Ms. Chanthala Duangmala and Ms. Khem, Admin Team, DAEC
08:30-09:00	- Opening ceremony: o Welcome address  o SRI-LMB Project Introduction  o Key message from FAOR	Dr. Somnuk Thirasak, DDG, on behalf of Mr. Phoumy Phoumanivong, DG of DAEC  Dr. Prabhat Kumar Director, ACISAI Centre, AIT and Regional Coordinator SRI-LMB Project, Project Coordination Unit (PCU), AIT, Thailand  Mr. Jan Willem Ketelaar on behalf of Dr. Stephen Rudgard, FAO Representative, FAO
09:00-09:50	- System of Rice Intensification and Action Research in the context of Farmer's Participatory Action Research in Lao PDR	Mr. Phousit Phoumavong, DAEC, MAF, Mr. Noundy Phongsavanh, DOI, MAF and Ms. Khamphoui Luanglath, National IPM Coordinator, DOA
09:50-10:20	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
10:20-11:00	- Summary result of baseline survey/PRA study on SRI project and discussion	Mr. Avakat Phasouysaingam, Faculty of Agriculture NUoL
11:00-12:00	- Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact and plenary discussion	Mr. Diggpal Bahadur Monitoring and Evaluation Expert SRI-LMB Project PCU, AIT, Thailand
12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:00-13:40	- Presentation and discussion on general work plan for the whole project and possible plans for 2014.	Mr. Phousith Phoumavong Project Management Unit /Training Expert, SRI-LMB Project
13:40-14:30	- Working Group discussions on detailed work plans and budgets for (a) target provinces and (b) national component	Dr. Somnuck Thirasack and Mr. Phousith Phoumavong (DAEC) and & Vornthalom Chanthavong (FAO-IPM) Project Management Unit, SRI-LMB Project
14:30-15:00	- Reports from Working Groups	Mr. Phathnakhone Khanthamixay, Deputy





Time	Activities	Person-in-Charge
		Head Division of Agricultural Technique Mechanization Promotion, DAEC
15:00-15:20	Coffee break	
15:20-16:00	- Continued Working Group discussions on detailed work plans and budgets for (a) target provinces and (b) national component	Dr. Somnuck Thirasack and Mr. Phousith Phoumavong (DAEC) and & Vornthalom Chanthavong (FAO-IPM) Project Management Unit, SRI-LMB Project
16:00-17:00	- 1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of Technical Working Group (Closed Session)	
18:00	Welcome Dinner <i>Hosted by SRI-LMB Project</i>	
<b>Day 2:</b>		
08:00-08:30	- Registration	Ms. Chanthala Duangmala and Ms. Khemthong Xaiyavong, Admin Team, DAEC
08:30	- Proposition and Formation of the National Steering Committee/Technical Working Group (all participants)	Dr. Somnuck Thirasack, Deputy DG of DAEC
09:00-10:00	- Reports from Working Groups	
10:00-10:20	Coffee break	
10:20-11:20	- SRI-LMB Project Communication and Policy Advocacy	(Nguyet Bao Dang, OXFAM representative)
11:20-12:00	o Summary result of inception workshop.	Dr. Somnuck Thirasack, Deputy director of DAEC
	o Closing remarks	Dr. Somnuck Thirasack, on behalf of Mr. Phoumy Phoumanivong, Director General, DAEC



## Annex 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation	Phone /Email
1	Mr. Phatnakhone Khanthamixay	DAEC, MAF	55508315
2	Mr. Saliao Khemmalah	DAEC, MAF	22425317
3	Mr. Nuandy Phongsavanh	DOI, MAF	58947951
4	Mr. Ketsouvanh Souvanhnasone	Vientiane Province	56293368
5	Ms. Amone Chanthaksa	Savannakhet Province	99605888
6	Mr. Khamphouvieng Phounsombath	DAEC, MAF	55706213
7	Mr. Viengkham Xayamone	Khammuan Province	55656326
8	Ms. Lamkeo Sou-amphone	Khammuan Province	55650368
9	Mr. Bouaphanh Sengchanh	Mahaxay Dist., Khammuan Province	22328883
10	Mr. Bounsom Sysoulxay	DPC, MAF	52244775
11	Ms. Khampaseuth Luang-Oudom	DAEC, MAF	55846922
12	Mr. KeoviengkhoneSihavong	Khammuan Province	55160449
13	Dr. Somnuk Thirasak	DAEC, MAF	99692000
14	Ms. Khamphoui Luanglath	DOA, MAF	55621849
15	Mr. Sombath Panyasith	Nakay Dist., Khammuan Province	55156211
16	Mr. Phengsavath Leuangkhamma	Yommalath Distr., Khammuan Province	54415444
17	Mr. Bandith Souphannamaity	Savannakhet Province	59657269
18	Mr. Mixay Ounthavong	Savannakhet Province	55965029
19	Mr. Thongphanh Masikhram	Kasi Dist., Vientiane Province	97711113
20	Mr. Duangta Senxaypanya	Savannakhet Province	54415441
21	Mr. Khanya Xanoulath	Songkhone Dist., Savannakhet Pro.	22316284
22	Mr. Phongsith Vongkhounsy	Feung Dist., Vientiane Province	55818272
23	Mr. Pekno Sikhanthavong	Farmer Group	56774438
24	Mr. Avakat Phasouysaingam	NUOL	22461054
25	Mr. Xongxay Lattanakhampeth	Vangvieng Dist., Vientiane Province	55923399
26	Asso. Prof. Somphanh Pasouvang	Nabong Agri. College, NUOL	22425389
27	Dr. Chaai Bounphanouxay	NAFRI	99964473
28	Mr. Khamphone Hao-Onchanh	DAEC, MAF	55815078
29	Mr. Lair Manivong	DOA, MAF	23012428
30	Mr. Thepphasith Xaiyavong	MAF	22326299
31	Ms. Dang Bao Nguyet	OXFAM	Ndang@oxfamameric a.org
32	Ms. Phiengsavanh Thammasith	DIC, MPI	021-222214
33	Ms. Louly Xaiyaxang	DIC, MPI	021-222214
34	Dr. Prabhat Kumar	PCU, AIT	pkipm@ait.asia
35	Mr. Dignpal Bahadur	PCU, AIT	dignpal@ait.asia
36	Mr. Jan W. Ketelaar	FAO RAP	Johannes.Ketelaar@fa o.org
37	Mr. Bouaphanh Konenavong	Vientiane Province	22120837
38	Mr. Bouaphanh Chittaphong	DAEC, MAF	23012428
39	Mr. Outhong Phonesavath	DAEC, MAF	55405764
40	Ms. Chanthala Duangmala	DAEC, MAF	23452636



No.	Name	Institutional Affiliation	Phone /Email
41	Mr. Manilath Xaliphong	DAEC, MAF	23942147
42	Mr. Phousit Phoumavong	DAEC, MAF	55622666
43	Mr. Youngthong Sihanath	DAEC, MAF	55599951
44	Ms. Khemthong Xaiyavong	DAEC, MAF	77498626
45	Mr. Sommay Sihalath	Sommay Headphone Renting	22961366
46	Mr. Dalavong	Driver	23250484
47	Mr. Thongchanh	Driver	22542722
48	Mr. Toui	Driver	22689656
49	Ms. Phetsamone Chandala	FAO Laos	22217884
50	Mr. Phonesack	Driver, DAEC, MAF	55366629
51	Mr. Khamtan	Driver, Savannakhet	
52	Mr. Bounmy Sisouphanh	Driver, FAO IPM/PRR Programme	22408009
53	Mr. Kaysone	Translator	55662299
54	Ms. Vornithalom Chanthavong	FAO IPM/PRR Programme	55507779
55	Mr. Stephen Rudgard	FAO Laos	021 414503
56	Mr. Vilay Xaiyalath	Driver, Khammuan	54416119
57	Mr. Khampany		



Annex 3: WORKPLAN FOR THE YEAR July 2014 to July 2015

Sl.	Activities	Sub-Activities	Process (How)	When (Time line)	Resources needed	Who (Person Responsible)	Output	Remarks/ Status
1	Team preparation, PRA data collection	Establishment provincial and district steering committees	ຮ່າງເອກະສານ ນຸ່ງສະເໜີແຕ່ງຕັ້ງ	ອາທິດທີ 4 ເດືອນ 7, 2014 Week 4 of July 2014	ເຄື່ອງຮັບໃຊ້ ຫ້ອງການທີ່ຈຳເປັນ	ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ	ເຈົ້າແຂວງ, ເມືອງ	ມີຂໍ້ຕົກລົງເຊັນ ເຈົ້າແຂວງ
		Establishment provincial and district coordinator	ຮ່າງເອກະສານ ນຸ່ງສະເໜີແຕ່ງຕັ້ງ	ອາທິດທີ 1 ເດືອນ 8, 2014 1st week of August 2014	ເຄື່ອງຮັບໃຊ້ ການພອດ ທີ່ຈຳເປັນ	ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ	ເຈົ້າແຂວງ, ເຈົ້າເມືອງ	ມີຂໍ້ຕົກລົງ
		Organize workshop to introduce project concept with local authorities	ເປີດກອງປະຊຸມ	ອາທິດ 2 ເດືອນ 8, 2014 2nd of August 2014	ຄອມພິວເຕີ, ປຶ້ມເຕີ, ເຄື່ອງກັອບປີ້, ເຄື່ອງສາຍ, ອຸປະກອນຫ້ອງການ	ຂັ້ນສູນກາງ, ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ ແລະ ເມືອງ	ພະແນກການ ກ່ຽວຂ້ອງ, ການນຳແຂວງ ແລະ ເມືອງ, ເພີ້ຍແຜ່ຈຸດ ປະສົງ ແລະ ເປົ້າໝາຍໂຄງການສຳເລັດ	ຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມຮັບຮູ້ເຂົ້າໃຈຕໍ່ໂຄງການ ມີການສົມທົບກັບ ທີມງານຂອງສູນກາງ
		Select target villages, 25-30 households per village	ລົງສົມທົບກັບ ບ້ານເປົ້າໝາຍ	ອາທິດທີ 3 ເດືອນ 8, 2014 Week 3 of August 2014	ເຄື່ອງອຸປະກອນ ຫ້ອງການ	ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ		ສົມທົບກັບທີມ ງານຂອງສູນກາງ
		Training on PRA, introduction of using form for data collection, analysis, and planning	ຝຶກອົບຮົມ	ອາທິດ4ເດືອນ8, 2014 Week 4 of August 2014	ເຄື່ອງຮັບໃຊ້ ຫ້ອງການທີ່ຈຳເປັນ	ຂັ້ນສູນກາງ ແລະປະສານ ງານແຂວງ	ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແລະທີມງານ	ສາມາດເກັບກຳ, ວິ ເຄາະ, ວາງແຜນ ກິດຈະກຳ



National Inception and Planning Workshop Report, Lao PDR

		Planning to conduct data collection	ກອງປະຊຸມທົ່ວ ງານ	ອາທິດທີ1ເດືອນ9, 2014 Week 1 of September 2014	ເຄື່ອງຮັບໃຊ້ ຫ້ອງການທີ່ຈໍາ ເປັນ	ຂັ້ນສູນກາງ ແລະປະສານ ງານແຂວງ	ຜູ້ປະສານງານ ແລະທີມງານ	ມີແຜນການລົງ ເຄື່ອນໄຫວລະອຽດ
		Select target villages and households to join the project	ກອງປະຊຸມທົ່ວ ງານ	ອາທິດທີ 2ເດືອນ 9, 2014 Week 2 of August 2014	ເຄື່ອງຮັບໃຊ້ ຫ້ອງການທີ່ຈໍາ ເປັນ	ຂັ້ນສູນກາງ ແລະປະສານ ງານແຂວງ	25-30 ຄສ	ຄສທຸກຍາກ, ຂາດ ເຕັກນິກ, ເນື້ອທີ່ ໜ້ອຍ
		Inform villagers	ເຮັດແຈ້ງການ	ອາທິດທີ2ເດືອນ9, 2014		ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ	ບ້ານເປົ້າໝາຍ	ເປົ້າໝາຍຮັບຮູ້
		Conduct interview and data collection	ລົງສໍາພາດ ຄສ	ອາທິດທີ 3-4ເດືອນ 9, 2014 Week 3-4, August 2014	ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີມງານ)	ບ້ານເປົ້າໝາຍ	ສໍາເລັດຂໍ້ມູນ
2	Data analysis	Summary data and analysis	ກອງປະຊຸມທົ່ວ ງານ	ອາທິດທີ 1 ເດືອນ 10, 2014 Week 1 of October 2014	ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີມງານ)	ຫ້ອງການຂັ້ນ ແຂວງ	ສັງລວມບັນຫາ
3	Training curriculum development	Refine training curricula	ກອງປະຊຸມ	ອາທິດທີ2-3 ເດືອນ 10, 2014 Week 2-3 of October 2014				
		Development training guideline		ອາທິດທີ4ເດືອນ 10, 2014 Week 4 of October 2014				
4	Planning of implementation Crop calendar development	Planning of production, determine households join the program	ປະຊຸມກັບ ຄສ ເປົ້າໝາຍ	ອາທິດທີ 1ເດືອນ11, 2014 Week 1 of November 2014	ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີມງານ)	ຄສບ້ານເປົ້າ ໝາຍ	ມີແຜນການ ຜະລິດຂອງແຕ່ ລະຄສ



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5	Training	ToT	ຝຶກອົບຮົມ	ອາທິດ 2 ເດືອນ 11, 2014 Week 2 of November 2014	ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້	ສູນກາງ	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີ່ມາງານ)	ຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມຮັບຮູ້ ວິທີການຝຶກ ອົບຮົມ
6	Establishment Farmer Field School	Farmer training, Set up Farmer Field school	ຝຶກອົບຮົມ	ອາທິດ 3 ເດືອນ 11, 2014 Week 3 of November 2014	ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້ ກຳນົດນາສາທິດ ໂຮງຮຽນຊາວນາ ອຸປະກອນຮັບໃຊ້ ໂຮງຮຽນຊາວນາ	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີ່ມາງານ) ສົມທົບກັບສູນ ກາງ	ຄຄ ເປົາໝາຍ	ຜູ້ເຂົ້າຮ່ວມຮັບຮູ້ ວິທີການຜະລິດ ຮຽນຮູ້ການປູກ ເຂົ້າ ຈາກໂຮງຮຽນ ຊາວ ນາ
7	Monitoring	Activities implementation	ການຜະລິດ	ອາທິດທີ 3 ເດືອນ 11, 2014 ອາທິດທີ 4 ເດືອນ 5, 2015 Week 3, November, 2014 to week 4 of May 2015	ບັດໃຈການຜະລິດ	ປະສານງານ ແຂວງ, ເມືອງ (ທີ່ມາງານ)	ຄຄ ເປົາໝາຍ	ມີການຜະລິດ