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CONCEPT NOTE

Regional Review and Planning Workshop

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



Siem Reap

Cambodia
(2-3 June 2015)

Partners



1. BACKGROUND

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT, www.ait.asia) led, European Union financed Project titled “Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Lower Mekong River Basin (SRI-LMB: <http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia/>), in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Oxfam America, and government ministries and national universities of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand has begun implementation of a “more intelligent pathway” for cultivating healthy and profitable rice. SRI is an emerging alternative technology to conventional rice cultivation techniques that instills a social dimension to farming to produce healthy and profitable crops using less water and less seed, and through skillful management of plants, soils, water and nutrients. The Project is being implemented in food insecure rainfed rice production areas. The objective is to develop location specific technology using principle of SRI and Farmer’s Field School platform by initiating farmer’s participatory action research. Documenting the results and sharing it with the immediate and community at large through an inclusive participatory process from local to national and regional level are at the core of the project. The existing government policies would be studied within the context of sustainable and climate resilient food secure rainfed smallholder system and evidence-based suggestion for a better set of policies would be generated through a participatory consultation process closely working with all relevant stakeholders including policy makers in the country.

A series of actions have been undertaken under the auspices of the Project since 2013, including the Regional Inception and Planning workshop, National Inception and Planning workshops (four, one in each country), Regional Training of Trainers course, Central Farmer’s Participatory Action Research (2 in Thailand, 3 in Cambodia, two ongoing in Vietnam and one ongoing in Lao PDR), Regional Farmers Exchange visit. More importantly, Farmer’s Participatory Action Research (FPARs) activities were conducted in wet season 2014 at 60 action research sites in 5 provinces (3 in Cambodia and 2 in Thailand). Approximately 120 field experiments were set up by farmers to develop locally suited low cost technological options using SRI principles with an aim to increase yield and profit in rainfed ecosystem. The initial learning and feedback, which was received from local and national stakeholders during provincial and national review and planning workshop respectively, needs to be deliberated at regional level prior to initiation of the next cycle of action research.

With this background, the first Regional Review and Planning workshop has been planned with an aim to share the initial learning derived from 60 action research sites, to jointly review Project activities undertaken since 2013, and to collect feedback from various stakeholders and feed into the next cycle of action research to strengthen the Project actions.

The first Regional Review and Planning Workshop will be organized in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 2-3 June 2015.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 🌍 To share learning from the first cycle of action research conducted at 60 action research sites
- 🌍 To review the Project activities involving implementing partners, project associates and project Steering Committee
- 🌍 To discuss strategic directions and finalize major work plan for the next cycle of action research in consultation with national and local project partners.

The workshop will be organized in two parts:

A) Plenary and Learning Exchange Session (Open Session 1 day, 02 June 2015)

- 🌍 Sharing key learnings from first cycle of action research;
- 🌍 Exchanging lessons learned from similar efforts regionally and/or internationally on sustainable rice production, consumption and climate change, and opportunities and challenges of rainfed smallholder rice production.
- 🌍 Sharing initial results of monitoring, evaluation and learning study of the SRI-LMB

B) Review and planning workshop (1 day, 03 June 2015)

- 🌍 To review the information, results and feedback from all project countries in light of the project objectives and log frame;
- 🌍 To review the process and identify strengths and weaknesses of FPAR and farmers' training activities
- 🌍 To review the role of the project partners and their outputs in relation to project objectives and identify strengths and weaknesses
- 🌍 Integrate inputs from review exercise, summarize, and formulate suggested changes for the next cycle of action research and other planned outputs along with setting strategic directions for future project activities.

2. OUTPUTS

- 🌍 Review of the overall project's activities, learning, strengths and weaknesses in implementation efforts
- 🌍 Work plan for second cycle of the FPAR with links to work plan of the subsequent project period;
- 🌍 Specific details on the responsibilities and tasks of each stakeholder involved in the project;
- 🌍 Awareness about the project among regional organizations, media and public in general

4. ORGANIZING AND FUNDING BODY

The workshop will be organized by AIT in collaboration with FAO and Oxfam with local support from the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA), MAFF Cambodia that hosts the SRI LMB Project office in Cambodia. ACISAI/AIT will cover all the cost associated with organization of the workshop.

5. DATES, LOCATION AND SCHEDULE

The Workshop will be held in Siem Reap, Cambodia for a total period of 2 days (excluding travel) from 02 - 03 June 2015. The workshop schedule is attached at the end of the concept note.

6. PARTICIPANTS

Project partners (international and national), ministry representatives, country coordinators, local provincial coordinators, district trainers and farmer's trainers of host country, and universities from all four countries will participate in the workshop. In addition, other individuals and organizations from the region or beyond are welcome to attend the open session of the workshop (Day 1).

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES (TBC)

Time	Activity	Person-in-Charge
01 June 2015: Arrival of participants at City Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia xx: Informal discussion among project partners and associates @ dinner (Room xxxx)		
Day 1 (Date: 02 June 2015), Tuesday		
0830-0900	Registration	
Session: Plenary Session		
0900-10.30	Welcome Address	H.E. So Khanrithykun, Director General, General Directorate of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia
	Opening Remarks	AIT & EU Delegation Thailand/Cambodia
	Keynote 1: Rice Intensification in the wake of climate change: opportunity and Challenges for sustainable rice production in Asia	Mr. Subash Dasgupta Senior Plant Production Officer FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
	Keynote 2: Agro-ecological approach, conservation agriculture and SRI	Prof. Amir Kassam OBE, FBS University of Reading, UK
1030-1045	Tea-Break and group photo	
Session: SRI in Asia and Beyond		
Session Chair: Prof. Amir Kassam Rapporteurs : Dr. Prabhat Kumar and Mr. Brian Lund Presentations (25 minutes each)		
1045-1110	Improving and Scaling Up SRI in West Africa: Insights from a regional, 13-country project.	Dr. Erika Styger Director SRI International Network and Resources Center Cornell University
1110-1105	Questions/answers	
1105-1140	Regional Rice Initiative and its work and results on FFS for Save and Grow Sustainable Intensification of Rice Production	Mr. Johannes Willem Ketelaar Chief Technical Advisor and Team Leader FAO Inter country IPM/Pesticide Risk Reduction Programme Action Research Expert for SRI-LMB FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
1140-1145	Question/Answers	
1145-1210	Learnings from policy baseline research of SRI-LMB	Mr. Brian Lund Regional Director East Asia Regional Office Oxfam America, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

1210-12.20	Questions/Answers	
1220-1320	Lunch Break	
1320 – 1345	SRI in Lower Mekong River Basin Countries: Initial Results and Learning from SRI-LMB	Dr. Abha Mishra Co-Director, ACISAI Center, AIT Team Leader, SRI LMB
1345 - 1355	Question/Answers	
1355-1420	Existing and evolving platform for farmers participatory action research with reference to SRI-LMB	Dr. Prabhat Kumar Director, ACISAI Center, AIT Regional Coordinator, SRI-LMB
1420-1430	Question/Answers	
1430-1455	Integrating and strengthening gender and landless into SRI-LMB	Ms. Kaneka Keo Policy and Communication Officer, SRI-LMB East Asia Regional Office Oxfam America, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
1455- 1505	Questions/Answers	
1505 – 1525	Tea Break	
1525-1630	Brainstorming: Revisiting goals, objective and conduct of the project	AIT (Dr. Abha Mishra and Dr. Prabhat Kumar)
1630 - 1730	Project partners meeting	
1830	Welcome Dinner	

Schedule of Activities (TBC)

Time	Activity	Person-in-charge
Day 2 (03 June 2015), Wednesday		
900:930	Reflection on key Points from Day 1	Dr. Prabhat Kumar
Session Chair: Prof. Amir Kassam Rapporteurs: Mr. Brian Lund, Ms. AlmaLinda Abubakar		
0930:1000	Review status, structure and pattern of responses from stakeholders of SRI-LMB from local to global: strength, weaknesses and way forward	Dr. Abha Mishra
1000:1030	Strength, weaknesses and opportunities and threats for farmer's education and action research work of SRI LMB Project and way forward for next year work	Mr. Johannes Willem Ketelaar
1030:1100	Tea Break	
1100: 1130	Policy and advocacy action plan for the 2 ND year	Ms. Kaneka Keo

1130: 1200	Key learnings including SWOT analysis and draft plans for the next action research cycle (Cambodia)	Mr. Kong Kea Country Coordinator Cambodia, SRI-LMB
1200:1300	Lunch Break	
1300-1330	Key learnings including SWOT analysis and draft plans for the next action research cycle (Laos)	Mr. Phatnakhone Khanthamixay Country Coordinator Laos, SRI-LMB
1330-1400	Key learnings including SWOT analysis and draft plans for the next action research cycle (Vietnam)	Mr. Tran Van Hieu Country Coordinator Vietnam, SRI-LMB
1400 - 1430	Key learnings including SWOT analysis and draft plans for the next action research cycle (Thailand)	Dr. Prabhat Kumar
1430-1500	Common findings of SWOT analysis and way forward for future work (Brainstorming Session) with country team	Facilitation FAO/AIT
1500-1530	Tea Break	
1530-1600	Summary of SWOT analysis and feedback for the 2 nd year work plan	Dr. Abha Mishra and Dr. Prabhat Kumar
1600-1640	Overall summary and way forward	Prof. Amir Kassam