

--- sSWGAB ---
Joint GoL/Donor Sub Sector Working Group on Farmers & Agribusiness

Minutes of the Sub Sector Working Group Meeting

4th October 2011, NICE meeting room, NAFES

A. Background

- The SWGAB was established in 2006 under the auspices of the Sector Working Group on Agriculture, Natural Resource Management and Rural Development SWG ANR.
- The purpose of the SWGAB is to oversee a capitalization process that will support policy making, smallholder farmers and capacity building with regards to agribusiness.
- The sSWG is co-chaired by NAFES/MAF and SDC with Lao Extension for Agriculture Project (LEAP) as Secretariat. NAFES has established Agribusiness Task Force (ABTF) to coordinate capacity building in areas of agribusiness services to smallholders.
- At the inaugural meeting, SWG members agreed to focus attention on the interest and needs of smallholders.

B. Minutes

1. Welcome remarks by Chair and Co-chair (NAFES and SDC)

2. Presentation of sSWGAB Progress 2010/2011 (Secretariat)

Discussions on Presentation

- GIZ: asked about TOR and outputs of studies conducted by sSWG
- Secretariat: mentioned that the findings of the studies were discussed amongst the members initiating critical discussions. It helped in building consensus in a thematic area e.g. contract farming, farmers' organization within the members. The findings of the studies were used in capacity building e.g. as follow up of the findings of study on contract farming, ABTF is facilitating a learning alliance of field practitioners from 5 districts in the Northern Lao on contract farming and developing a guideline on facilitating contract farming. The issues identified by the study are fed into policy discussion at different levels. All the capitalization and discussions in LaoFAB was taken into account and emphasized recently in developing strategy for NAFES to support small holder farmers.
- Helvetas: mentioned that it is shared responsibility of all the members to make use of outputs of the studies carried out by the sSWG.

- NUDP: informed the meeting that TOR of sSWG was agreed upon by members 5 years ago as part of aid coordination structure under the Round Table. A lot has been learned since t ToR to keep it relevant.

3. Presentation on Progress of Agribusiness Task Force (NAFES) – Task Force Chairperson

Discussion on presentation and contract farming

- DOA: requested ABTF to develop simple guidelines that can be used by the district and provincial staffs.
- NAFES: mentioned that ABTF is facilitating a learning alliance of field practitioners and developing a guideline to facilitate contract farming.
- AFD: asked if DAFO and /or PAFO are responsible for contract farming?
- LEAP: informed that contract farming involves multiple sectors and there is no clarity on specific role of line agencies to facilitate contract farming in the district. But in the field, DAFO and PAFO are involved in facilitating contract farming as they are working with the farmers. The new draft NAFES strategy mentions of NAFES role in agribusiness including supporting district extension staffs to facilitate fair and equitable contract between the small holders and private sectors.
- SDC: asked how ABTF can support other MAF agencies and projects e.g. NUDP and sub working groups e.g. uplands and the need to increase its outreach from NAFES.
- Helvetas: requested SWG to utilize its network of members to compile issues and problematic cases where small holder farmers are losing land as a result of contract farming. After cases are identified, mechanisms on how to deal should be planned with participation of diverse partners including civil society organization and local community.
- SDC: expressed that SWG members should come out with solutions for helping small holder farmers and raise issues of contract farming to policy level. He suggested that representation of National Assembly committee to oversee agriculture sector to sSWG might help to raise issues in policy dialogue.

4. Other discussions

- Helvetas - suggested SWG to be more inclusive with representative of farmers, civil society and private sector as members of the SWGAB.
- DOA – shared information on participation to IFOAM congress

- SHDP / NAFES: shared information on study currently undertaken to analyze the transition of production group to agriculture cooperatives. The finding of the study will be shared in workshop planned to be organized by November and formulate action plan for gradual shift of matured producer groups to agriculture cooperatives.
- DoI: shared its experience of assigning a fresh agriculture graduate to strengthen the capacity of water users groups and association in the village level.
- Secretariat: Informed that the first cooperative was registered under the PM decree on Cooperatives 136 in Sanasomboun district, Champasack with support from DGRV. United Nations has planned to celebrate year 2012 as International Year of Cooperatives (IYC 2012). Participants were asked to share information if any organization is involved or taking lead to celebrate this event in Laos. ABTF has compiled different tools on Agribusiness within NAFES and is available to interested participants.
- FAO: mentioned to follow up with the UN RC office and inform sSWG on events for celebrating IYC 2012.
- SNV/SADU: informed the meeting about first communal land title of the village production forest to village communities.

5. Presentation of draft work plan 2011/12 by Secretariat

Discussions on draft work plan

- GIZ: raised a question on how the draft work plan of SWGAB was developed
- SDC: mentioned that the presented work plan, which was circulated by the Secretariat a few days before the meeting, is draft for discussion in the meeting. Draft work plan is prepared based on the discussion with the members in earlier meetings and identifying area for capitalization on emerging issues on agribusiness to empower small holder farmers.
- SDC: recommended to involve private sector and farmers' participation as the SWG members on a regular basis. On the study on indebtedness of farming households, she also added to look at the role of big development projects playing in the issue.
- SDC: recommended to involve private sector and farmers' participation among the SSWGAB members on a regular base. Regarding the study on indebtedness of farming household, she also added to look at the role of big development projects in this issue.

6. Decisions taken

1. Secretariat to review the status of SWG and initiate discussion with the members on TOR of the sSWG

2. sSWG members to help in compiling cases and issues of contract farming where small holders are losing land in areas where they are working. Secretariat will coordinate with Helvetas for compiling problematic cases of contract farming to the members. It was also agreed to share contract farming agreements used in different parts of the country through LaoFAB document repository.
3. The work plan for 2011 was approved, but with addition and amendment as per the decisions above.

7. Closing

The Co-chair summarized the discussion and decision taken in the meeting. Thanked all the members for participation and requested all the members for collaboration in implementing work plan. She also mentioned that sSWG currently depends on resources of LEAP project, which is scheduled to end in mid 2012 i.e. before the end of the period covered by the work plan. She requested all the members for resource mobilization in implementation of work plan 2011/12. The Chair thanked all the members for their contribution and closed the meeting.

C. Documents distributed in the meeting

1. Manual on Rapid Market Analysis – Lao version
2. Presentation of Farmers Organization study – organized by sSWG AB
3. Presentation of Contract Farming Study – organized by sSWG AB
4. Presentation and report on Private Sector in Extension delivery
5. Farmers' Voices – Lao version
6. Think before you print – Lao version
7. Water wheel – documentary

D. Presentations

1. Presentation on SWGAB progress 2010/11
2. Presentation on Progress of Agribusiness Task Force (ABTF)
3. Presentation on SWGAB draft work plan 2011/12

E. List of meeting participants

S.N.	Name	Organization	Title
1.	Somxay Sisanonh	NAFES (Co-chair)	Deputy D G
2.	Liliane Ortega	SDC (Co-chair)	Deputy Country Director
3.	Kham Sanatem	MAF - DoA	Deputy DG
4.	Somsamer Doungdavong	NAFRI	Research Officer
5.	Phokhong Thepkaysone	NERI	Head of Dev. Research Div.
6.	Somthong Philavanh	MoIC - Dept. of Trade Promotion and Product Development	DDG
7.	LaOngdao Sisomphou	Cooperation Division, DoP -MAF	

S.N.	Name	Organization	Title
8.	Naoki Tatsuzawa	JICA – MAF	Policy Advisor
9.	Michael J Jones	LEAP	CTA
10.	Rakesh Munankami	LEAP	TA / Secretariat sSWGAB
11.	Manivanh Moukda	NAFES	CETDU Team
12.	KhamOuan Khamphoukeo	NAFES - SHDP	NPD
13.	Pasonexay Insixiangmai	DoI	Planning and Cooperation Division
14.	Martin Greijmans	SADU	CTA
15.	Nalongsack Xayalath	SADU	Research assistant
16.	Aurelie Bres	AFD	Project Officer
17.	Annesophie Grindoz	Helvetas Swiss Intercorporation	Program Director
18.	Ratsamy Souvannamethy	OXFAM - HK	Program Manager
19.	Chitlatda Keomuongchanh	UNDP	Program Analyst
20.	Ole S Lederse	UNDP	Agro-biodiversity Project
21.	Sohlo Ilari	FAO	NRM Advisor
22.	Khankeo Oupravanh	GIZ	
23.	Viengxong Chitavong	SDC	NPO
24.	Somsack Chandara	SDC	NPO
25.	Akira Mizuno	JICA	Representative
26.	Phouthasone Ouanesamone	NAFRI	Technical staff
27.	Andrew Bartlett	NUDP	Agriculture Policy Advisor
28.	Sengphachanh Somthavixay	NUDP	Aid Effectiveness Expert

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Progress – September, 2011

This report reviews the progress of activities included in SWGAB Workplan for 2010/11 that was finalised by the SWGAB meeting on 27 September 2010.

1. Study on Farmer Organizations

- Study on typology of farmer's organisation is being done. Concept note for the study was developed by the Secretariat and shared with the members of SWGAB for comments. The study was organised jointly by LEAP/NAFES and SADU/NAFRI. The study team visited selected cases of farmers' organisation and organised a workshop to synthesise lessons learnt to the field practitioners. The preliminary findings of the study were presented to SWGAB members and draft report of the study is completed.
- Support to Lao representation in board meeting of ASEAN Centre for the Development of Cooperatives (ACEDAC) and ASEAN Sectorial Working Group on Agriculture Cooperatives. 2 participants from MAF attended ASEAN Cooperatives meeting in Manila, Philippines. 2 MAF representatives and 2 farmers representatives attended ASEAN-Japan farmers week (Indonesian Farmers Week) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

2. Capacity Building for Agribusiness Advisory Service (ABAS)

- Agri Business Task Force (ABTF) with NAFES has compiled potential list of participants for ABAS team members from all the Provinces. Organised meetings with projects under MAF for resource mobilisation for capacity building of ABAS team.
- Organised coordination meeting with different projects within MAF to support implementation of ABAS
- ABAS team members from 5 Provinces in Northern region were engaged in learning alliance on contract farming. The team of field practitioners is drafting a guideline on facilitating fair and equitable contract farming.

3. Study on Private Public Partnership in Agriculture

- Study on contract farming with an aim of identifying conditions and factors that make a contract farming successful is being done. Study team has completed field visit, organised workshop for district and provincial actors and presented preliminary findings of the study to SWGAB members. Final draft report of the study is available.
- A brief study on Public Private Partnership on agriculture extension was done as part of the inputs for developing NAFES strategy. Findings of the study were presented to the NAFES leadership and strategy drafting team.

4. Information sharing

- LaoFAB is institutionalised and operated under CLICK (Coalition for Lao Information, Communication and Knowledge). LaoFAB has more than 2550 members with a total of more than 12,500 messages posted. LaoLINK has more than 1350 members with a total of more than 7500 messages posted. The LaoFAB repository, launched in September 2008,

now holds more than 1300 documents and Lao44 host more than 1900 documents including more than 340 videos.

5 NAFES strategy

Meeting with SWGAB members was organised to get inputs on developing NAFES strategy. NAFES strategy emphasises on previous capitalisation studies conducted by the SWG (e.g. farmers organisation, contract farming etc) and issues discussed in sharing forum e.g. LaoFAB.

Secretariat SWGAB, 29 September 2011

Workplan – 2011 / 2012¹

1. Support on development of Farmer Organizations (FOs)

Objectives

- Support in promotion of autonomous and voluntary farmers organisation

Plan

- 1.1 Support in organising learning alliance on farmers organisation to share experiences and identify issues for the development of farmers organisations from the field practitioners
- 1.2 Organise a high level policy dialogue capitalizing on earlier studies and lessons learned from the field for promoting autonomous farmers organisation
- 1.3 Support Lao representation in the ASEAN Working Group on Agricultural Cooperatives
- 1.4 Support in development of MAF guideline on Agricultural Cooperatives in line with the PM Decree on Cooperatives

2. Capitalisation on position of non-state agencies on delivery of extension services

Objectives

- To analyse the synergies between public and non public sectors (private and civil society organisations) on delivery of agriculture extension services for the improvement of livelihoods of the smallholders

Plan

- 2.1 Study on the role of private sector and civil society in the delivery of agriculture extension services
- 2.2 Establish working group with potential collaborators to carry out the studies
- 2.3 Online discussion of issues and cases
- 2.4 Synthesis workshop to draw conclusions and finalise report

3. Capacity Building for Agribusiness Advisory Service (ABAS)

Objectives

- To support NAFES in the planning and coordination activities aimed at improving agribusiness knowledge and skills within provincial and district offices under MAF.

Plan

- 3.1 Compile available agribusiness training / extension materials and best practices
- 3.2 Networking through learning alliance at the Provincial and District level for sharing experiences
- 3.3 Design training programme with aim of developing a critical mass of agribusiness advisory staff at Province
- 3.4 Provide further support to Agribusiness Task Force throughout 2011/12, based on agreement with NAFES

4. Indebtedness of farming household

¹ Approved by the sSWG meeting on 4th October 2011 at NAFES

Objective

- To analyse the factors leading to and impact of indebtedness of farming household - a challenge faced by the smallholder farmers in transition from subsistence farming to commercial production

Plan

- 4.1 Establish a working group with potential collaborators to carry out the study
- 4.2 Compile cases of farming households in indebtedness
- 4.3 SWG members to compile problematic cases of contract farming where small holders are losing
- 4.3 Organise a study to analyse size, impacts and coping strategy of farming households in debt. Explore factors leading to it and how it can be prevented.
- 4.4 Share the findings of the study and make further plan of action in a workshop

5. Revision of TOR and inclusive sSWGAB

Objective

- Enhanced representation and contribution from different actors as development partners within sSWGAB

Plan

- 5.1 Review the status of sSWG and revisit TOR of sSWG to share with the members
- 5.2 Secretariat to present sSWGAB to civil society, private sector and farmers associations and invite interested organisations to join the sub working group

6. Information sharing

Objective

- Support rural development in Lao PDR by providing decision-makers with better access to information, analysis and stimulate critical discussions

Plan

- 6.1 Continue posting agribusiness news on LaoFAB and LaoLink
- 6.2 Continue uploading relevant reports to the LaoFAB repository for sharing with the members
- 6.3 Share contract farming agreements used in different parts of the country through document repository
- 6.4 Distribute offline version of repository in form of the 'wisdom box'

Secretariat sSWGAB, 19 October 2011

Activities	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep
1.Support development of farmers organisation												
1.1 Support in organising learning alliance on farmers organisation												
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2.Capitalisation on position of non-state agencies on delivery of extension services												
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5. Review TOR and Inclusive SWGAB												
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