Mission Report

Mission from the 13th to the 22th of September 2005

Cirad - Ciepac

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Content

Context of the mission ................................................................. 3
Objectives of the mission ............................................................. 3
Content of the mission ............................................................... 3
Main Results of the mission ......................................................... 4
Follow Up activities ................................................................. 6
Conclusion .................................................................................. 6
References .................................................................................. 7

Appendix 1: Detailed program of the mission .................................. 8
**Context of the mission**

The mission was carried out by MJ Dugue and JF Le Coq from the 13th to the 22nd of September 2005 in Cambodia. It takes place within the agenda of the FSP “Appui aux politiques sectorielles agricoles” (Component 2: Farmers’ Organizations). The methodology and objectives of the Cirad-Ciepac team support were presented during a first mission in Phnom Penh held in June 2005. The process encompasses several steps related to strengthening and capacity building of a group of agents of Farmers’ Organizations support agencies, so called Farmers’ Organisation Task Force – FO-TF (JF Le Coq, 2005)

**Objectives of the mission:**

The general objectives of the mission were the following:
- For the experts, to get a clear view of the FOs’ situation in Cambodia in order to propose relevant pedagogical tools during the following steps;
- To contribute to build a shared basis of analysis among stakeholders involved in support to FOs in Cambodia.

To achieve these goals, the following activities have been implemented:
- Meeting and interviews with a few selected Cambodian FOs and FOs support agencies;
- Support to the data analysis process of the Cambodian FOs Inventory, undertaken by the coordination team composed by Julie Couturier, Ham Phalla, and Savun Sam Ol;
- Facilitation of the first workshop of the support process by Cirad-Ciepac team to the FO-TF;
- Preparation of the following step of Cirad-Ciepac support process.

**Content of the mission**

The mission consisted of 3 main parts:
- From Tuesday, Sept. 13th to Thursday, Sept. 15th (3 days). (Phnom Penh, Takeo and Kampot Provinces)
  - Meetings with different stakeholders of the Farmers’organizations framework in Cambodia:
    - support agencies in Phnom Penh (DAES and CEDAC) and in the two provinces;
    - leaders and members of some different typical Cambodian Farmers Organisations such as Cooperative, Rice Bank, Community Based Organizations, Farmers’ Association, credit and saving groups, self help groups,.....
  - This “ground time” enabled experts to get some common references with the participants to the workshop (“to figure out what the words are saying”).
- From Friday, Sept. 16th to Sunday, Sept. 18th (3 days).
  - Work with the Coordination Team:
    - To support them in finalizing the presentation of the results of the Cambodian FOs inventory;

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1 For more detail, see detailed program of the mission in Appendix 1.
- To review and finalize the program of the first training workshop.
  
  - From Monday, Sept. 19th to Thursday, Sept 22nd (4 days).

Training Workshop in Phnom Penh on “Collective assessment of FO’s situation and Support to FO’s in Cambodia.

A last meeting has been held with Jean-Marc Bouvard (chief of the FSP Project) and Julie Couturier (Technical assistant on the FOs component of the FSP) to discuss the following steps. Experts also met Julien Calas, responsible of Agricultural sector of AFD in Phnom Penh, and Swan Fauveaud, from AFD too.

**Main Results of the mission**

- **Field visits and institutional interviews**

The field visits confirmed that the FOs in Cambodia are at an early stage since they are mainly small scale, mono functional, ... Nevertheless, many existing FOs are already active, although they still face problems in term of capacities, access to funding, etc…

From these visits and the institutional interviews with Chea Sareth (deputy director of DAE - MAFF) and Dr. Yang Sang Koma (director of CEDAC), it appears that:
- Ministries policy is mainly based on promotion of cooperatives, following the promulgation of the Royal Decree in 2001;
- NGOs have very diverse approaches, and objectives when developing FOs;
- Weak collaboration and coordination can be observed among the stakeholders involved in FOs support.

All those statements have been integrated with the results of FOs Cambodian inventory and the conclusions of participants working group in a “Synthesis on FOs Situation” that has been presented during the workshop (see Workshop report - (Dugue and Le Coq, 2005)).

- **Preparation of the workshop and institutional support to Coordination team**

The team in charge of Cambodian FOs has collected a large amount of information on FOs in Cambodia. Three types of information are available:
- the pre-study, which gives a precious insight of the activities of support agencies and their methodology, as well as their perception of the difficulties they face in supporting FOs;
- The survey which provides an impressive amount of quantitative data on FOs (probably not far from an exhaustive data base);
- The in-depth cases studies of some selected FOs.

As data collection has just finished, all the data were not yet captured to be analysed properly before the workshop. Thus, only the preliminary quantitative results were available. They were presented during the Workshop as well as a qualitative insight on the FOs’ situation (see WorkShop report).
In this process, the experts focused their support in helping the coordination team to develop these general qualitative information and to raise the related issues. They did not interfere so far with the precise content of the analysis and conclusions that have been raised by the coordination team. This methodological choice has been motivated by two concerns:
- To let the process of analysis “in the hand of the coordination team” who has a in-depth ground knowledge
- In fact, the time available to prepare the presentation for the workshop was too scarce to raise and test too much new hypotheses.

Although incomplete, the presentation of those preliminary results during the workshop enabled to get fruitful reactions from the participants. Nevertheless, some refinements of the analysis remain to be finalized after the workshop. It would be especially useful to develop a qualitative analysis on the Cambodian FOs leaders’ perception about the problems they are facing, beside the perception of the support agencies, it would give a basis to draw the main lines of the needs in term of capacity strengthening…

Another question has still to be addressed in detail: the “offer of services” appears to be diverse and the cover to be heterogeneous according the regions, what are the driving factors of this heterogeneity: diversity of farming systems, differences in the recent history, or other factors as presence of leaders…? An analysis of the existing data at the district level (crossing data of the inventory with demographic or other statistical data if any available, by using for example GIS) might give ideas on this topic. It would help when discussing later about coordination between support agencies…

It has to be highlighted that the National Inventory cannot give precise answers to all the questions, but it’s a valuable tool that the TF FO has to use as a basis to design its future work plan, especially because it’s a source which provides information about the FOs and the support they can get throughout the whole territory of Cambodia.

- **The Workshop “Collective assessment of FO’s situation and Support to FO’s in Cambodia”**

(For the presentations made during the workshop and the products of collective work, see the specific detailed report - (Dugue and Le Coq, 2005))

To summarize, the workshop enabled:

- To initiate a capacity building process on FOs. The pedagogical methodology combines both working groups’ activities managed by participants (collective works) and pedagogical inputs from the experts. Thus, some guiding principles on FOs have been presented (diversity and complexity of FOs) and a typology of Cambodian FOs focusing on the activities and functions endorsed by Cambodian FOs has been proposed.

- To strengthen the new Task Force on FOs, through exchanges between members, either NGOs’ or administration staffs, to put in place the bases to develop a common strategy to support FOs in the future.

- To identify the main issues faced by Cambodian FOs and their support agencies, so that the choice of case studies to be used in the following steps would be relevant to Cambodian reality.
Follow Up activities
Coordination team and Ciepac- Cirad team agreed on the following tasks:

- Activities of Coordination Team:
  ⇒ Synthesis of the individual evaluation of the workshop by the participants
  ⇒ Finalization of the report on the National Cambodian FOs Inventory

- Activities of Cirad-Ciepac Team:
  ⇒ Preparation of selected worldwide FOs case studies
  ⇒ Writing a detailed program for Mission 2 and Workshop 2

Conclusion

This mission confirmed the interest of the current process, since the discussions during the workshop have highlighted the need:
- To build an arena to exchange experiences between Cambodian practitioners
- To provide information about foreign experiences as FOs development in Cambodia is quite new and FOs dynamics is abundant (and difficult to grasp).

It also confirmed the relevancy of a methodology based on the presentation of « concrete » examples of FOs experiences, since the translation in Khmer of some conceptual words is still an impediment for understanding.

Moreover, the analysis of the situation of FOs and FOs support system highlights the need for stronger coordination between the numerous stakeholders involved in FOs development. Thus the creation of a FO-TF set the foundation of this necessary dialogue and coordination.

The staffs of support agencies who attended the first workshop, and will constitute the FO-TF members, have heterogeneous skills in FOs knowledge, and in training methodology. The expectations of this group are large and not yet “refined”. A lot of them are waiting for THE solution (“miracle one”) to choose the “Good FOs” to build “sustainable FOs”. A definition of “what a FOs is” was also one of their expectations.

This first workshop enabled to refine their questioning and to introduce several key concepts related to diversity and complexity of FOs. It makes it possible to build a new, genuine and constructive reflection on FOs support strategy in Cambodian. Moreover, this workshop was the occasion to begin a team building process. At least, this group of people, who were not working together before, are setting some common language.

Although the process has just begun, some questions have to be addressed to insure good conditions for the follow up activities. First, the departure of the Junior technical assistant at the end of November raises a risk of discontinuity. The project should pay attention to secure the presence of a technical assistance to prepare the last phase (especially the third workshop – training to trainers – scheduled in January 2006). Moreover, the facilitation of the FO-TF and its support should be addressed in institutional terms beyond January 2006. At least, the last workshop in January could include a reflection on what could be a long term support project for FOs strengthening in Cambodia.
References


**Appendix 1: Detailed program of the mission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Phnom Penh</th>
<th>Field surveys, Takéo</th>
<th>Field surveys, Kampot</th>
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| Tuesday, Sept 13th | 11:45 Arrival in Phnom Penh  
|                | 3:00 pm Review mission program (Julie Couturier / Jean-Marc Bouvard)  
|                | 4:00 pm MAFF, DAE (Mr Chea Sareth, Deputy Director)  
|                | 6:30 Leave Phnom Penh  
|                | 8:30 Cooperative at Prey Koba district, Chief of Office of Agricultural Extension  
|                | 2:00 pm: Farmer association in Tam Kak district with CEDAC  
|                | 4:00 pm Rice bank with AVSF (Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières)  
|                | Night in Kampot  
| Wednesday, Sept 14th | 8:30 : CBO CIDSE (district Chum Kiri)  
|                | 2:00 : Saving and credit group and Farmer water user community with Department of Agriculture (FAO project), Chum Kiri district, Chres commune  
|                | Back to Phnom Penh  
| Thursday, Sept 15th | 8:30 : Work with coordination team on inventory  
|                | 5:00 pm : CEDAC (Dr. Yang Saing Koma, Director)  
| Friday, Sept 16th | PP : work with coordination team on inventory  
| Sunday, Sept 18th | PP : work with coordination team on inventory  
| Monday, Sept 19th | Workshop 1 with FO – Task Force  
| Tuesday, Sept 20th | Workshop 1 with FO – Task Force  
| Wednesday, Sept 21st | Workshop 1 with FO – Task Force  
| Thursday, Sept 22nd | Morning : Workshop 1 with FO – Task Force  
|                | Afternoon : debriefing, planning next activities and workshop 2  
|                | 6:20 pm : departure from Phnom Penh  