

Final summary report of SUSPER (Sustainable Development of Peri-Urban Agriculture in South-East Asia)

Rapport final de SUSPER

Edited by
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SUSPER

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2.11 Vegetable Market Information and Consultation Systems in the Mekong Region

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From May 9-13, 2005, a regional workshop on Market Information and Consultation Systems (MICS) was held at RIFAV (Hanoi). The workshop used the SUSPER experience in presenting methods for collecting, processing and disseminating market information suitable for use by private and public stakeholders involved in vegetable marketing to make decisions.

Dr Paule Moustier gave a presentation on objectives, method and problems of MICS at the international level. Various authors in the economics and marketing field have highlighted the importance of market information for adjusting supply and demand and enhancing farmers' bargaining power in dealing with traders. Yet an overview by the FAO showed that most market information systems around the world are little used, especially by farmers. The reasons include the low reliability and lack of timeliness of collected price data, especially for perishable products and the poor dissemination of information. Certain conditions explain the success of some market information systems, e.g. MIS in Indonesian or MANOBI in Senegal. These include speedy dissemination, keeping the system simple and inexpensive and combining market information with technical information. Equally important are consultations with stakeholders about strategies to take advantage of market opportunities, conducting a preliminary assessment and an impact assessment, along with combining public and private funding.

Vegetable MICS from three participating countries (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) were presented. The SUSPER Market Information System in Hanoi was presented by the three institutes involved. They are the RIFAV for data collection and system management, ICARD for data storage and dissemination on TV and websites and finally, DA for data dissemination to farmers in four Hanoi project sites, as well as an impact assessment. (A summary of the system is available in the annotations of the individual presentations.) Fruit and vegetable market information systems in southern Vietnam were also presented by ICARD and results on fish marketing, which can serve as a base for establishing a fish market information system in Ho Chi Minh City, were presented by the HCMC University of Agriculture and Forestry. Vegetable price market information from the Agriculture Marketing Office (MAFF) of Cambodia was presented, as well as a stakeholder workshop organised by SUSPER to disseminate and discuss vegetable marketing opportunities in Cambodia and Laos.

The presentations for the three countries showed a combination of market information collection for mid-term planning objectives (a supply calendar for crop planning) and information for short-term decision-making (daily price data for price bargaining). In the first two years of the SUSPER project, the focus was on mid-term planning objectives by gathering information on market seasonality, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia; then consulting with farmers and traders through stakeholder workshops. This enabled us to identify the demand for short-term decision-making information, which led to the establishment of the daily price information system in Hanoi. Parallel to this ICARD/MISPA was setting up fruit and vegetable market systems in southern and later in northern Vietnam with CIRAD methodological support. In Cambodia and Laos, weekly price information was gathered by the Planning Division of the Ministry of Agriculture with the support of the FAO (and the ADB in Cambodia), so SUSPER focused on trying to improve methods for the collection, analysis and dissemination of price data.

The tools of price statistical analysis presented by Dr Ludovic Temple from CIRAD enable us to go further in terms of the analysis of trends and seasonality and instability of prices. This price information can help influence public and private decision-making relating to production and

marketing. The AgriMarket software from the FAO introduced by Ms Chan Sipana (MAFF) is another tool that makes the presentation of price data more user-friendly.

Participants also had a night market visit in Hanoi to discuss with contact traders involved in SUSPER MICS and practised the control of price information in working groups and compared data with that collected by RIFAV via telephone on the same day.

The workshop enabled us to establish some clues to avoid the various pitfalls involved in the setting up and running of market information and consultation systems. These pitfalls explain the present limited use by farmers of these systems. The positive feedback from farmers using the Hanoi vegetable MICS set up by SUSPER shows the efficiency of having an adequate protocol for data collection, particularly in terms of frequency of collection (daily prices) and a grading system that takes account of quality variations. Also highlighted was the preferential method for data dissemination adapted to the capacities of stakeholders (television for Vietnam, radio in Cambodia and Laos).

2.12 Basic Information on Project Sites in Hanoi Peri-urban areas

Author(s): Mai Thi Phuong Anh, Nguyen Thi Tan Loc, Le Nhu Thinh, Ho Thanh Son, Paule Moustier

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In order for the SUSPER studies to be more efficient and effective, the evaluation sites have been concentrated. Four communes have been chosen according to different criteria: (1) importance and regularity in vegetable production and Hanoi market supply; (2) willingness of authorities to develop vegetable production; (3) location in the peri-urban area, less than 30 km from city centre; and (4) possible off-season production owing to a location in non-flooded areas.

According to these criteria, four communes were selected in four districts, two in Hanoi province and two in surrounding provinces : Dong Du (Gia Lam district, Hanoi Province), Dong Anh (Tien Duong district, Hanoi Province), Tien Phong (Me Linh district, Vinh Phuc Province), Vo Cuong (Bac Ninh Province).

This report generated detailed data that will be useful for researchers in the immediate environment. The criteria for the project sites are explained with particular reference to the supply chain in Hanoi. The data is statistical in nature and provides a useful toolset for further study.