



SUPPORT SMALLHOLDER FARMER REPRESENTATION IN POLICY DIALOG

31 January, 2018

AUTHORS: LAURENT LIAGRE, JEAN-MARIE BRUN, IRAM¹



CONTENT

1. Context.....	2
2. Justification for a proactive policy on Farmer Organizations strengthening.....	4
3. Policy Recommendations.....	5
3.1. Principles and rationale.....	5
3.2. Conditions for an effective FOs support program on advocacy.....	5
3.3. Longer term views and recommendations to consolidate representative FO Federations.....	7
3.4. Fields of action.....	8

ACRONYMS

AC	Agricultural Cooperative	FWUC	Farmer Water User Community
AFD	<i>Agence Française de Développement</i>	ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
CACA	Cambodian Agricultural Cooperative Alliance	IRAM	<i>Institut de Recherche et d'Application des Méthodes de Développement</i>
CFAP	Cambodian Farmers' Association Federation of Agricultural Producers	MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
CRF	Cambodian Rice Federation	MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finances
DACP	Department of Agriculture Cooperatives Promotion (/MAFF)	MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
FAEC	Federation of farmer associations promoting family Agriculture Enterprises in Cambodia	NF3	National Farmer Organization Federation Forum
FCFD	Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
FNN	Farmers and Nature Network	SNEC	Supreme National Economic Council
FO	Farmer Organization	SCCRP	Support to the Commercialization of Cambodian Rice Project
FWN	Farmer and Water Net	VAHW	Village Animal Health Worker

¹ www.iram-fr.org

1. CONTEXT

Production constraints affecting smallholder farmers in Cambodia are well known: exposition to a wide range of risks (climatic variations and climate changes, market price volatilities, health problems, etc.), limited technical and management capacities; limited access to technical and financial services, lack of social capital, lack of organizations and little capacities on collective action management by farmers. In regard on linking farmers to markets issues, farmers are confronted to absence of bargaining power due to asymmetries of position (atomization of their production, immediate cash needs, absence of market information, geographic isolation, etc.). In view of these, farmers' collective action is considered as one of the major options for improving farmers situation, by developing strategies and actions that could not be done on an individual basis, and allowing to get access to a wide range of services (extension, credit, etc.), to reinforce their bargaining power, to be a force of propositions in the policy making process at various spatial level (communal, provincial, national), etc.

A survey² done in the mid 2000' has estimated that they were about 13,000 FOs or farmer groups in Cambodia (mainly unformal), over 60 percent of which had been formed since 2000. This figure included various types of FOs which are most of the time engaged in an evolutive institutional process (Farmers Associations and Agricultural Cooperatives frequently evolved from grassroots Farmers Groups, FAs may evolve into AC, Federations regroup Farmers Associations, Communities or/and Cooperatives, etc.). One may estimate that a significant part of the 3 millions of farmers are members of an unformal local grassroot level organization, but only a relatively small proportion of them are affiliated to a formal organization (Associations, Agricultural Cooperatives, FWUCs). Today, the five national Federations – namely FAEC, FCFD, FWN, CFAP, FNN (see Box 1, next page) – regroup less than 100 000 farmers in total³.

Grassroots level organizations are more specifically involved into unformal mechanisms of saving and credit in cash or in kind, with the objectives to address hunger gap periods or investing in their agricultural production, while cooperatives are multi-purposes and may combine several economic activities (credit, trading of agricultural outputs, input supply and capacity building). However, it must be noted that collective action in marketing is not yet a wide developed practice among FOs in Cambodia, given that the majority of FO members purchase inputs and sell produce on an individual basis.

Young FOs Federations aim to implement services delivery to the benefit of their members, still very much in the framework of projects that are strongly depending from external / international financial resources funds and/or their sponsored agencies.

² Couturier, J., Savun, S. O. & Ham P. (2006), "Inventory of Farmer Organisations in Cambodia, Cambodia".

³ Based on the compilation of data provided by the 5 FO Federations or networks.

BOX 1: A QUICK PICTURE OF THE FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN CAMBODIA

The Census of Agriculture done in 2013 estimated that there were about 2.13 million agricultural households in Cambodia⁴. A survey done in the mid 2000' has estimated that they were 13,011 FOs in Cambodia⁵, with a large majority (more than 10,000) of informal (unregistered, but possibly acknowledged by local authorities) grass root Farmer Groups, and at that time, about 600 Farmer Associations, Farmer Communities and 106 registered Agricultural Cooperatives as of 2016. More recent data regarding formal Farmer Organizations shows:

- **880 Agricultural Cooperatives** registered by MAFF as of May 2017 gathering a total of 89,474 affiliated farmers, that is to say an average slightly above 100 farmers per AC⁶.

- **450 Farmer Water User Communities** registered with the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology as of April 2015 (based on MOWRAM "Policy and Implementation Guidelines for sustainable FWUCs").

After the new law on Agricultural Cooperatives was passed in 2013 and the Prakas regarding **Unions of Agricultural Cooperatives** was issued by MAFF, the first Union of Cooperative was registered in Preah Vihear (with the support of SCCR project) in July 2016.

5 FO Federations with an inter-provincial or national vocation are identified:

- **Federation of Farmer Associations Promoting Family Agriculture Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC)**, created in 2008, federates in 2017 a total of 55 FOs in nine provinces, representing about 3,900 farmers.

- **Federation of Cambodian Farmers Organization for Development (FCFD)**, established on December 2010, affiliates in 2013 70 FO in five provinces, of which 24 agricultural cooperatives and 37 rice banks. It represents about 5,700 small-scale farmers.

- **Farmers Water Net (FWN):** This federation gathers 26 « Farmer Water User Communities », representing about 35,000 farmers distributed in 11 provinces.

- **Cambodian Farmer' Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP):** CFAP has been initiated with supports from IFAD. It gathers 21 FOs, for a total of more than 14,000 farmers a majority of which are located in Svay Rieng province.

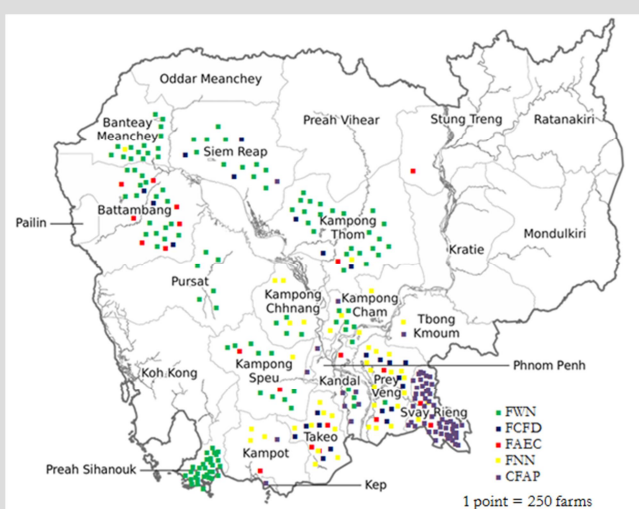
- **Farmer and Nature-Net (FNN):** This network has been initiated by CEDAC, a Cambodian NGO, and regroups grass root level Farmer Groups, most of them being informal, but also a number of ACs.

Those 5 Federations have recently (in July 2017) decided to strengthen their collaboration and to formally establish an apex body gathering FO Federations and possibly Unions of Cooperatives.

Moreover, based on the Law on Agricultural Cooperatives (2013), MAFF is planning to establish a "Cambodian Agricultural Cooperative Alliance" (CACA), which would gather all ACs at national level. But this Alliance is not established yet, and it seems the approach of MAFF on this matter is rather top-down and quite controlled (for instance it seems MAFF officers have worked on the drafting of the statutes of the Alliance on their own, instead of facilitating a process of statutes writing by AC leaders directly, which would be likely to result in a higher level of ownership by farmers).



Map: Indicative representation of the number of farmers affiliated to the 5 FO Federations per provinces across the country.



⁴ Census of Agriculture in Cambodia 2013 - National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – December 2015 ; p28.

⁵ Couturier, J., Savun, S. O. & Ham P. (2006), "Inventory of Farmer Organisations in Cambodia", Cambodia.

⁶ Data communicated by the Department of Agricultural Cooperative Promotion (MAFF).

2. JUSTIFICATION FOR A PROACTIVE POLICY ON FARMER ORGANIZATIONS

STRENGTHENING

Although FOs confront many constraints, existing experiences in various developed as well as developing countries in the world highlights the many interests of having professional and well organized farmers organizations. Specifically, since small farmers usually are embedded in an uncertain environment, they generally adopt defensive multi-risks reduction strategies. Farmers' collective action appears as one of the necessary condition for contributing to risk reduction, improving the benefits farmers can get from their access to markets, and becoming professional partners of upstream players of the agricultural markets. As a consequence, FOs development is a contributing factor for poverty reduction in rural areas. Being involved as actor in these various domains, it is therefore relevant for Farmers Organizations to be part of any related policy-making process targeting them.

Farmers Organizations (in a broad sense) can notably be parts of strategies and actors to implement various roles, such as:

■ **Risk management and resilience improvement:** Small farmer organizations at grass-root level (farmer groups, self-help groups, women groups...) can locally play an important socio-economical role by organizing mutual assistance between members. They develop a wide range of informal socioeconomic mechanisms allowing farmers to reduce risks, hazards impacts and develop small scale economic activities. In a general context where access to credit is seldom or expensive (MFI / local traders / money lenders), these groups often develop informal saving and credit system, in cash on in kind, targeting rice, animal banks or small cash loans. Combined with collective self-help actions, these mechanisms are contributing to farmers' strategies to manage risks, cope with hazards, and to launch small economic activities.

■ **Services provision:** Once they get developed and stronger, FOs may gain a comparative advantage in providing technical and economic services to small farmers, with potentially (but not automatically) a better inclusiveness and access for small farmers compared to private business-oriented service providers or inputs suppliers. However, reaching the small farmers remains costly, whoever is in charge of the services supplies. Therefore, it may be necessary to support collective investment and activities of the FO aiming to reach their members, at least in an "incubation" period necessary to develop skills, build the trust and reach a viable scale.

■ **Supply Chain Management partners:** Farmer Organizations appear to be fundamental to address smallholder farmers' markets access constraints⁷. As such, FOs are a key actors in promoting new institutional arrangements favorable to small farmers as well as acting as a professional partner in the Supply Chain Management by securing sourcing for downstream player:

- Collective organization allows one to structure a sufficient critical mass of producers making it possible to negotiate better or to make contract with other actors. For example, due to their in-depth knowledge of their members, FOs can internalize certain transaction costs through the organization of inputs purchase, marketing of crops, implementation of norms and standards systems, or because they can offer collective guarantees (access to credits) The development of a vast organic paddy supply chain by the Union of Cooperatives in Preah Vihear, accompanied by SCCR project, is very illustrative of that – Cf. SCCR Case Study No 2 "Contract Farming for organic paddy supply in Preah Vihear province";
- As regard to vertical coordination, when FOs get enough technical and economical capacities to engage in the primary commercialization area (buying inputs and marketing crops), they will gain in bargaining power allowing to capture added value in the processing of agricultural products. The more they develop their skill and get experience in terms of collective organization and bargaining power with other actors, the more they will be in a position to develop vertical coordination strategies.

■ **Representation and advocacy stakeholders:** Regarding the field of agricultural production and marketing, FOs (and notably FO Federations) are in position to be relevant partners of public sector to contribute in policy making process, taking into consideration FO representative intimate knowledge and understanding of local situations, as well as their experiences and the expertise they gained through the implementation of services to farmers. As a

⁷ Barriers to entry a new market (knowledge, knowhow, equipment etc.), natural and market risks, transaction costs (market information, negotiation, transfer/transport, enforcement), bargaining power, lack of social capital and capacities, etc.

result, FOs being part of the process, policies and measures are likely to be better understood and owned by FOs and their members, and implementation of policy and measures will thereof be fostered.

In this perspective, one may consider two domains:

- Farmers' participation with other private and public stakeholders in the policy making process regarding their market access reinforcement and the market environment enhancement (that includes for example negotiation for policy elaboration, formal recognition of specific product quality, negotiation in commercial policies, support measures for the development of the national production). Upstream of the policy making, a broader reflection on the place of agriculture and agriculture development models and on national socio-economic objectives conferred to that sector is desirable, in which Farmers shall also have a say.
- Farmers' participation in the conception and the decision making of the programs and projects that concern them in specific sectors (for instance: strategy / programs for agriculture extension and production services access);

3. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. PRINCIPLES AND RATIONALE

To place FOs in the policy making processes as a strategic choice: FOs inclusion in policies making process and in their implementation has to be strategically fostered by public sector. This is likely to improve the relevance and adaptation of the policy measures to the reality of smallholder farmers' situation, and also to improve the efficiency at the stage of policy measures implementation.

National farmers leaders are permanent interlocutors and partners of the policy makers: this involves to respect several principles of action in the policy making process and to strengthen institutional and analytical capacities of the farmers organizations within a medium to long term process.

Policies, instruments and tools aiming to support farmers development and professionalization are conceived and implemented within a concerted and demand driven approach as a mean to foster agricultural sector: such strategic approach suggest that extension programs, and adequate financial resources, might be delegated to Farmers organizations – possibly in partnership with MAFF - who would have therefore the leadership in their implementation and logically would be accountable of it.

Specifically for the rice sector, proactive policies allow growing number of rice producers to get increasing advantages of being linked to quality rice export markets: rice production sectorial support should allow to strengthen technical & economic capacities of the specific farmers having structural capacities to produce rice surplus in order to make them performing, reliable and, finally, preferred partners for the downstream players engaged on these specific export subsectors. In parallel, it is necessary to lift progressively the entrance barriers to this rice subsector in order to increase as much as possible the number of rice producers benefiting of these specific markets.

3.2. CONDITIONS FOR AN EFFECTIVE FOs SUPPORT PROGRAM ON ADVOCACY

Two conditions are important to take into considerations in order to ensure a representation of smallholder farmers in policy dialog worthy of being called a farmers' representation:

- **Representativeness:** to advocate to other private stakeholders and public sector on FOs behalf, it is necessary that the various Federations involved (taken all together) fairly represent the diversity of FOs⁸ and farmers. One should avoid having only a few groups of FOs defending specific interests, yet claiming to speak on behalf of all famers; it is desirable to mobilize in the policy dialog various FO organizations or network in order to better capture the diversity of situations (in term for instance of FOs objectives, level of organization and professionalization, etc.) and take this diversity into account in the development of

⁸ FOs features widely differ in their conditions of creation (local initiative, external impulse, ...), their objectives (local development, natural resources management, marketing, etc.), their membership features (women, young, small to large farmers), the various financial and technical supports they may receive, their dynamic of evolution, etc.

policies and support measures. Yet one should be pragmatic: as shown in previous pages (Cf. BOX 1: A quick picture of the Farmers' Organizations in Cambodia) existing FO Federations and networks in Cambodia only gather about 100,000 farmers (whereas there are close to two to three million farmer households throughout the country). But even with this limitation, those FO Federations are probably, for the time being at least, the most representative formal bodies to represent Farmer Organizations.

- **Legitimacy:** One is to be recognized by the authorities to participate in the various policy making arenas⁹. But to legitimately advocate on behalf of FOs before other stakeholders, it is also necessary that representatives receive a mandate of a broader basis of FOs/farmers to speak on their behalf. Obviously farmers who did not receive a mandate from a significant number of other farmers, but who were brought in the consultation process by other entities (private sector, public institutions) shall not be considered to speak as representatives of farmers¹⁰. Moreover, the opinions/ideas those delegates will defend should be previously discussed and elaborated among the FOs' / Federations' members. This requires proper internal governance, procedures and practices. But this also requires that the conditions are fulfilled to make internal consultation (within FOs' network) possible before leaders are asked to speak on behalf of their members.

OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES TO SET UP APPROPRIATE CONSULTATION CONDITIONS:

Too often, in so-called consultation process (often consisting in one single workshop only) regarding public policies, strategies or regulations, participants (including farmer representatives) are invited to join a workshop only few days before the event and receive the draft documents on which they have to express opinion at the same time in the best cases, and more often on the morning of the workshop when they register, and then have to provide opinions / comments during the workshop, after what the consultation process is considered as done. This cannot be called a public consultation process and is only a sham.

A decent public consultation of FOs requires to put in place appropriate conditions allowing FO representatives to organize internal consultation process within their organization, in order to elaborate and build a consensus among farmers on the opinions and ideas they want to convey back. Practically, this requires that:

- Documents related to the object of consultation (draft policies, draft laws or regulation, etc...) shall be provided well in advance (months, preferably), so FO Federations can organize an extensive consultation process with their members prior to conveying back their views and suggestions. Ideally FOs representatives shall get a soft copy of the documents so they can easily work on them and propose amendments, or present their comments in front of relevant parts of the text.
- If possible, FO Federations could get budgetary support to contribute to cover the costs of the organization of extensive consultation process (decentralized workshops, sessions to centralize and compile workshop outcomes, etc...).
- External support and facilitation can be helpful, not to substitute to the reflection and formulation of comments by farmers themselves, but to provide information on the context, and help to analyze the documents and identify stakes. Such facilitation shall be provided by an independent body, having no conflict of interest with the subject of the consultation.

⁹ For a long time, MAFF did not really took in consideration the FO Federations, claiming that they were registered with the Ministry of Interior and not with MAFF (which is not a valid reason for MAFF not to work with them). But recently, some positive change in the attitude of officers in MAFF could be noted. For instance the endorsement by the Department of Agriculture Cooperatives Promotions of the results of the elections of FO representatives in Cambodian Rice Federation in June 2016 (jointly organized by 5 FO Federations).

¹⁰ They may still have interesting point of view or opinion to express and to be listen to, but not to be considered as the expression of the point of view of a larger base of farmers.

BOX 2: AN EXAMPLE OF COMPREHENSIVE CONSULTATION PROCESS: THE CONSULTATION OF VILLAGE ANIMAL HEALTH WORKERS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT OF NEW REGULATIONS FOR VETERINARY SERVICES IN THE LATE 90'S

In the late 90's MAFF's Department of Animal Health and Production was developing a new regulatory framework for rural animal health services in Cambodia (with the support of World Bank funded "Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project (APIP)", notably defining the requirements and condition of exercise for Village Animal Health Workers.

At that time, already more than 2,000 Village Animal Health Workers (VAHW) had been trained and were already active throughout Cambodia, with a number of VAHW associations established (generally at communes or district level). For those active VAHW to be able to have a say in the elaboration of this new regulation, the French NGO *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières* has initiated an extensive consultation process: series of workshops were organized in different provinces with active VAHW: 1st series of workshops to read and understand the proposed regulations, then follow-up workshops to identify stakes, risks, and propose modifications to address those risks or issues. Ultimately, delegates were selected by VAHW from the different provinces. Those delegates met to combine and consolidate their recommendations, and a Workshop was organized at national level to formally convey back the recommendations / suggestions elaborated through this bottom-up process.

This has proven to be very fruitful and consistent, with high quality inputs contributed by grassroot level.

3.3. LONGER TERM VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSOLIDATE REPRESENTATIVE FO FEDERATIONS

Current limits of existing FO Federations' (or networks') capacities and professionalism are identified and well acknowledged. The purpose of this note is not to deny these current limits and idealize FOs, but to embed the above recommendations into a longer term and more ambitious perspective.

- **To engage long term process:** Support to FOs involvement into policy making process is a long term process, that require important means of capacity building for the Federations leaders, in order to be qualified and recognized as such by the other stakeholders; FOs emerging and strengthening is a continuous and dynamic back and forth between the grassroots level (Farmers groups) and upper national level (Platform of FOs Federations), where, on the one hand, Federations become stronger as long as they are based on numerous and well organized FOs, and on the other hand, Federations channel technical and financial support to their members. These process of FOs organization and professionalization may be fostered and accelerated through specific programs supported by Public sector and donors agencies;
- **To promote financial ownership:** While it appears difficult for FOs (and even more for FO Federations / apex bodies) to base their development on their own resources only, which are initially very limited, it is relevant that public resources allocations feel the gap to support / incubate FOs and FO Federations and support development of their structure and services / activities at the initial stages. This is justified considering that FOs are expected to assume various functions of public goods delivery (See Box 3). However, it is desirable that this subsidy option is balanced by 3 majors conditions:
 1. FOs / Federations demonstrate a financial ownership and commitment, based on significant membership fees / service fees (i.e. by own resources gathered from their members, as direct contribution or payment of services);
 2. FOs / Federations demonstrate a willingness and commitment to progressively increase their financial autonomy and reduce their dependency to subsidies (but, especially at National Federations level, it has to be acknowledged that the pace for this transition is a matter of decade and not of few years).
 3. FOs / Federations are accountable for any public resource and have to report about the activities that have been engaged and their results;

BOX 3: SHOULD FOs AFFORD INTERNALIZATION OF THE TRANSACTION COSTS NECESSARY TO REACH THE SMALL FARMERS?

“If FOs can develop public goods provision such as infrastructure provision, market information services, economic service delivery, rural credit management system that may benefit all farmers, as other types of organizations they also entail cost of maintenance. Therefore, to sustain services provision, (...) to mitigate the risks of exclusion of small farmers and/or to enhance integrative functions of FOs, the additional specific costs involved to include small farmers (in the case of collective goods management and access), to reach them (in the case of services, information broadcasting...) and to ensure public goods provision, should be taken into account when designing public policies. For being costly, FOs' effective services provisions to small farmers should be negotiated between existing FOs and the State and, if necessary, publicly supported.”

Source: « Linking smallholder farmers to markets: lessons learned from literature review and analytical review of selected projects ». March 2004. World Bank/IRAM-CIRAD. E. Bienabe, C. Coronel, JF. Le Coq, L. Liagre. p. 71.

3.4. FIELDS OF ACTION

Proactive policies in favor of FOs strengthening should combine various fields of action.

FIELD OF ACTIONS N°1: TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL POLICIES TOWARDS A FARMERS DEMAND DRIVEN PERSPECTIVE AND FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBILITY / EMPOWERMENT

Farmer Organizations (notably Agricultural Cooperatives, but also FWUC and other FOs) are a cross-cutting theme in numerous policy and strategy documents. But Cambodia may still lack a comprehensive and horizontal strategy to bring coherence in the way roles of FOs in general is integrated in government policies and strategies and lack a comprehensive program to structurally support FOs development and hence contribute to the success of other various policies and strategies in which FOs are seen as partners/stakeholders. (A “National Policy for Agricultural Cooperative Development” was expected to be prepared by MAFF, which is good, but maybe the policy should go beyond ACs only and be enlarged to a broader scope of FOs in Cambodia, including at local level ACs as well as other FOs such as FWUCs for instance, and also at larger scale the Union of Cooperatives and the FO Federations and apex bodies... To date it seems this policy has not been developed yet).

A transversal policy update process could be conducted, which could include:

- An assessment of the main Policy documents with a focus of the existing strategies, action plans, measures aiming to strengthen Farmers Organizations and to develop technical and financial services access for the farmers (Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018, Agricultural Extension Policy, Formulation of the Rice Policy, Master Plan for Agricultural Research, etc.);
- Based on the lessons from this policy review + on additional extensive consultation with FO representatives, a cross-cutting policy framework on FOs strengthening could be consolidated, enhancing demand driven principles and farmer organizations ownerships on the one hand, and coordination, monitoring from MAFF technical services on the other hand.

This framework would precise the respective roles of each one of the stakeholders: FOs Federations, FOs (grassroots organizations, associations, cooperatives, communities...), local, provincial and national MAFF staff as well as other government agencies, technical and financial services providers (NGO, MFI, privates, etc.), research on agriculture, etc.

Ultimately this could lead to an integrated and comprehensive plan of action to consolidate farmer organizations, including a clear benchmarking of the different stakeholder roles, and budget allocation.

FIELD OF ACTIONS N°2: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT WITH THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED APEX BODY OF FO FEDERATIONS (“NF3”) A DEDICATED PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE CONSOLIDATION OF THIS PLATFORM AND OF ITS MEMBERS

A FO Federations Platform “National Farmer Federation Forum (NF3)” is currently being developed jointly by FAEC, FCFD, FWN, FNN and CFAP). A collective definition of a clear set of vision, objectives and strategies is on-going, and should then be operationalized in a plan of action. Without presuming at this stage what could be the result of this process and the way it could be financed, it could be relevant to develop a set of actions supporting the institutional strengthening of FOs and FOs Federations¹¹.

This program under the ownership of the NF3 could include 4 components:

FARMER LEADERS’ CAPACITY BUILDING ON ADVOCACY AND AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The proposal is to develop and implement a national experimental program of intensive capacity building on public policy on agricultural sector development for farmer leaders¹² to strengthen their capacities to undertake their advocacy role. FO Federations / platform could develop (in partnership with various partners¹³ such as NGOs, public institutions, researchers, universities...) various modules that could be proposed as a full curriculum or on a customized base to farmer leaders. Ideally, such a training offer could be made available on a permanent basis (with obviously a progressive evolution and development of modules proposed).

The capacity building program should be subsidized in order to be affordable and should aim at building capacities of dozens of FO leaders / representatives (investing notably on the young generation of farmer leaders) in order to constitute a large pool of resources within FO networks.

A specific attention should be paid to the organization of numerous interactive sessions between farmers’ leaders and resource persons from different institutional origins (public bodies, private operators, researchers and academics, international experts, donors’ representatives, etc.), whether it is in the framework of training sessions or during roundtables, seminars, etc. Beyond the acquisition of additional knowledge, this will provide the occasion for the farmers leaders to extend their social and professional network and to reinforce their self-management skills with persons from other origins.

As a matter of example, content of such a cursus could be based on different topics as sketched in Box 4 below.

¹¹ In order to ease integration at NF3 level, it would also be advisable that FO Federations tend to progressively harmonize their information systems and rules of contribution to the apex body.

¹² Inspired from the Program UPAFA in the 2000s implemented by CIRAD & al.

¹³ A number of training sessions have already been proposed and implemented with the support of SCCR project, targeting farmer leaders, on subject as Advocacy and policy dialog, Value chain approaches, etc.

BOX 4: EXAMPLE OF CONTENTS OF A CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS LEADERS

Module 1: Analysis of the agricultural policy context

- Evolution of the rural society
- Economic and institutional reforms of the past periods
- Policy making process?
- Agriculture sector development models (industrial agriculture vs. smallholder model, low-quality-high productivity vs. quality labels / niche market strategies, etc...)

Module 2: Positioning of the FOs in a changing world

- Policy of sustainable services provision to their members
- Financial autonomy
- Strategic and operational planning
- Negotiation in a multiplayer environment

Module 3: International regulation on agriculture and trade

- WTO and trade regulation for agriculture sector
- Subsidies / support to farmers and trade competition distortion.
- Technical barriers: e.g. SPS measures

Module 4: Value chain analysis and sub-sector policy process (with a possible focus on rice as an illustration and exercise for contribution to policy process)

- Statistic data and economic analysis of the rice commodity chain
- Different level of analysis and objectives depending on the points of views: e.g.: micro: the rice production in farmers' livelihood strategies, macro: rice sector contribution in national economy,...
- Reflection on various objectives of stakeholders and scenarios for an integrated rice policy in favor of the farmers development addressing various subjects such as seeds, irrigation, credit, land, quality labels, etc...

Module 5: Measures and tools fostering smallholder agricultural production and FOs development: from history of FO development in other countries and from the Cambodian context.

SUPPORT THE PRODUCTION OF INFORMATION RELATED TO FARMERS AND FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS (NOTABLY FOR THE RICE SECTOR OR MORE BROADLY)

As part of the representativeness and legitimacy prerequisites for FO Federations to act as representatives of their members, some efforts have already started (but need further support and improvement) for Federations leaders to be able to provide clear, comprehensive and up-to-date information on their basis and the farmers/FOs they represent. As already stated above, it would be desirable to harmonize data and develop a comprehensive information system, across all the members of NF3.

Capacity building, tools development and support should be provided to FO Federations in order to improve their skills, tools and procedures to gather, compile and present accurate and up-to-date data regarding:

- Their members (FOs – by types: ACs, FWUCS, Associations, groups... – number of farmers, etc...)
- Geographic coverage;
- Services provided (by FOs / by Federations): credit, extension, input supply, quality management, process, marketing (price information system), others (grocery, etc.);

- Per production (for instance rice, cassava, etc.): Number of FOs and producers involved, surface cultivated, product types (varieties), estimated production capacity (volumes), processing and marketing capacities...
- Donor supports, project types.

Related to this initial step, a permanent information system should be designed and implemented (permanent interconnected database of the members, possibly in connection with the business linkages). The Paddy Selling Platform which has been launched with the support of the SCCRP (and which is foreseen to be transferred to NF3) provides an interesting example (still to be consolidated) and lessons of what could be done in term of information on paddy offer among the FOs offer, that could be interconnected with this permanent information system.

DEVELOPING PROACTIVE POLICIES POSITION ON AGRICULTURAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Farmer representative organizations shall be considered by the government as partners in process of policies and regulation development for the agricultural sector. Therefore they should be associated and should be well aware in advance of the agenda and calendar for the development of new policies, strategies or regulations that relates to agriculture.

FO leaders should identify key issues / topics in the agenda of policies and regulations development and be supported to access documents, organize internal consultations (or even commission studies) and in order to elaborate proper policy positions.

It would be necessary to conduct a series of participatory studies and or workshops conducted under farmers' organizations ownership, with the technical support of technical services, researchers, experts, etc. in some selected relevant themes identified as up-coming subjects in the policy agenda.

Results of studies as well as draft policy or regulations documents would be presented through workshops (provincial or inter-provincial and national) for information sharing and discussion, writing of position papers, advocacy strategy conception and implementation.

OWNERSHIP AND FUNDING OF THE FO FEDERATIONS AND APEX BODY

Platform should be reinforced by a minimum and permanent team of officers and technical staff / advisors. It is acknowledged that it is very difficult for farmer organizations at national level to fully cover their costs from resources generated from their members only. In particular, consultation process and advocacy role are costly and are not easy to be financed as they are not seen by farmers as generating immediate economic return.

The constructive partnership between FO Federations and government being well understood, it would be desirable that FO Federations / apex bodies are partly funded by public resources and donor agencies, based on the accountability principle. However, minimum contribution of the Federations should be required to insure the ownership by the FOs themselves.

FO platform strategy, actions plan and business plan should be prepared and reviewed on a regular basis. Increasing the capacity of FO federations/platform to independently finance their structure and activities should be a long term objective or direction. But it should be acknowledged that the timeline to reach a full autonomy (given the present situation) is counted in decades and is not a matter of a few years.

FIELD OF ACTIONS N°3: TO SET UP A DEDICATED AND PERMANENT FUND FOR AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT TO ALLOW EXTENSION SERVICES DELIVERY AND CAPACITY BUILDING ACCESS FOR THE FOs AND THEIR MEMBERS

A feasibility study should be conducted to design the funds in details.

As a first contribution, we may consider that:

- This mechanism should be under the institutional umbrella of MAFF, but could be managed by a joint committee gathering relevant ministries (MAFF and MEF?) and representatives of the FOs Federations (/platform);

- Several thematic windows of funding could be provided: training and technical services , subvention for equipment /animal access, subvention for Small Scale Infrastructures (Irrigation scheme, warehouse, village tracks, etc.), institutional strengthening and information access (studies, ICT, etc.), etc.
- A specific budget line should be dedicated for project feasibility and fund demand preparation, which could be mobilized in the case of complex technical project preparation, or low capacity famers organization.

As this type of fund dedicated for farmers is quite unusual in Cambodia, iterative approach should be adopted, based on the conception, the test and the monitoring of this experimental mechanism.

It has to be noted that up-coming development-partners funded project could provide opportunities to test such a mechanism, possibly through a pilot stage with some possible restrictions regarding the types of services or investments that could be covered, or specific value chains, or geographical coverage.

