



**PROJECT «NETWORK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
THINK-TANKS FOR COUNTRIES IN MEKONG-SUB-REGION (NARDT)»**



***Regional research***

***Agricultural innovations review in Sub-Mekong region countries***

**Model of Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture in Cambodia (CPSA)**

## **1. Introduction**

Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture, known as CPSA, is a multi-stakeholder platform, compared to a networking group having many parties involved, established by Grow Asia in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Cambodia in 2016. CPSA works in collaboration with the Cambodian government, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Commerce, private sectors, Farmer Organizations, Finance Institutions, Civil Societies, and other key stakeholders. They work together to address food security system issues in Cambodia, according to Mr. Ly Sereyrith, Manager Director of the Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture (CPSA).

CPSA is primed to improve the productivity, inclusiveness, and competitiveness of Cambodia's agriculture sector and to equip farmers (growers) with market intelligence and business linkages towards high-value exports where price and volume will not be hindrance. To achieve these, CPSA provides a platform for collaboration which adheres to its principles, such as (1) multi-stakeholder and inclusive, (2) market-led, (3) smallholder focused, (4) and locally-driven.

## **2. Model development**

To scale up its work to a broader level, CPSA formed three working groups which focused on various sectors, including (1) Cashew Working Group – Cashew production in Cambodia was relatively stable between 2004 and 2013. Cambodia had increased land for Cashew cultivation since 2014, from 97,613 to 203,807 hectares in 2018. (2) Agri-Food SMEs Working Group – Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in Cambodia's economy, contributing to 70 percent of the total employment and 58 percent of the sales value in industry (Ministry of Industry and Handicraft, Department of SMEs). Additionally, 33 percent of MSMEs are women-owned. (3) and Fruits & Vegetable Working Group – Currently, more than 50 percent of fresh fruits and vegetables consumed in Cambodia are imported from Thailand, Vietnam, and China. Due to the stable economic growth in recent years, Cambodia's rising middle-class is driving demand for safe and locally produced fruit and vegetables. Moreover, within these three groups, there are more than one hundred partners or networks. CPSA also works on project implementations for its donors, namely Khmer Enterprise - Apprenticeship program for youths with a six-month training from CPSA related to entrepreneurship, leadership, business skill, business planning, to work with targeted communities. And from

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) - mostly short-term projects, including case study on Contract Farming along the Mekong Region, Voluntary Sustainability System, Responsible Agricultural Investment, Agtech Innovation, and Women Economic's Empowerment. CPSA can provide any consultation regarding agricultural concerns to its donors, government, NGOs, civil societies as well as its networking groups.

Until now, CPSA cannot define its specific targeted cooperating partners or regions as its scope of work is wide, working across the country. Mostly those who involved with [CPSA] live in Phnom Penh, but they have their sectoral networking (farmers) along the provinces such as Kampong Thom, Mondulkiri, Kratie, Rattanak Kiri, Bantea Meanchey, Steung Treng, Preah Vihear, Kampong Cham, Siem Reap, etc... Approximately more than ten thousand people, including farmers (key suppliers) and other representatives, are working closely with these four working groups. Each group has its own networking along the provinces, for example Cashew Working Group - it has networking in Mondulkiri, Kampong, Preah Vihear, etc. The term “networking” refers to small-scale farmers, the main suppliers to CPSA’s working groups, obviously Cashew Working Group.

For the time being, CPSA focuses on three key strategic areas for the year ahead, including:

1. Contract Farming – Promote, discuss, and share experiences on the national contract farming mechanism and its role in modernizing, and support the government with the deployment of its legal framework.
2. Sustainable and Responsible Investment – Create an environment that enables responsible investments in agriculture both at a policy level and by raising awareness within our network. Investment in the agro-industry can support food and nutrition security, create jobs, tackle poverty, and achieve other important sustainable developments in Cambodia when implemented correctly. These are the reasons why CPSA began working in the field of responsible and sustainable investments in the agriculture sector.
3. Public Policy Engagement – Technology can help advance the agriculture sector, especially in a country like Cambodia. CPSA aims to progressively become a focal point for Khmer agribusinesses and partners; we have started to connect with key agriculture-technology (Agtech) experts in the country and internationally as well as educate farmers on the different types of technologies and their benefits to the sector.

### **3. Opportunities and challenges**

CPSA has challenges with its working groups and local communities as following:

- Financial access of those three working groups is still limited – lack of value collaterals to receiving loans from financial institutions, while expenses on electricity, fertilizers and pesticides are high. Moreover, users have little understanding regarding using those items.
- Human Resources (in communities) – lack of technical skill and cultivation techniques ( Land preparation, misuse of fertilizers and pesticides), paucity of harvest management skill, inadequate food security standard system.
- Products – the financial difficulties and lack of human resources bring many issues such as producing non-quality products, posing a safety hazard to consumers and cannot compete with other countries, especially neighboring countries in terms of prices, qualities and quantities.

However, CPSA really needs support from the Cambodian government and other stakeholders since they can engage CPAS in their projects, policy dialogues as well as introduce CPSA to donors in order to be involved in their program to work cooperatively. CPSA may be able to provide technical training or consultation on project designs and for forth. CPSA has visions and plans to improve the competitiveness of Cambodia's agricultural sector and to improve the livelihood of Cambodia's farmers. In addition, as mentioned above, the three working groups are the core points of CPSA, therefore CPSA wants these groups to be more independent, resilient and able to make decisions, initiate new ideas, make policy proposals to the government, join agricultural policy dialogues with other relevant parties on its own, not to wholly depend on CPSA. Furthermore, CPSA wants to increase its scope of work and seek support from the government, strategic partners as well as other stakeholders either big, medium, or small-scale businesses.

### **4. Conclusion**

CPSA along with its supporters and strategic partners work cooperatively to promote the agricultural sector. CPSA tries to link all stakeholders (the producers and customers) and integrate them to be more inclusive where businesses can work together at all levels. CPSA contributes to the development of agriculture through various means, such as, training on technical skills, cultivation techniques (the use of land and fertilizers, choosing

crops, etc.), the digital literacy with respect to making use of technology tools in agriculture to increase productivity. On top of these, CPSA provides consultations for business developments and project designs for its donors as well as partners.

The government remains as the top key player responsible for the development of Cambodia because they are the one who play a very effective role in facilitating all relevant parties together. Without support and approval from the government, any project cannot be implemented on the ground. Therefore, to CPSA, the government is the main actor as they can link CPSA to other key strategic partners in the field of Agriculture. Plus, CPSA would be able to broaden its scope of work to a wider level if there were unwavering support from the government and its partners. /