



**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

Farmer's network Model in Lao PDR

1. General information

Lao Farmer Network (LFN) was established on 20 February 2020. There are 164 members, 42,685 people, 20,090 women, covering 16 provinces that include agricultural production groups, agricultural cooperatives, and agricultural producers' associations, the network has been active in the strengthening of farmers' organizations, agricultural business development, learning from farmers to farmers and policy contributions.

2. Model development

To strengthen the organization, LFN helps the network to create a production network according to the product. Under LFN, there are sub-network including Vegetable Farmers Network, Rice Farmer Network, Industrial Crops Network, NTFP Farmers Network, Coffee Farmers Network, Tea Farmers Network, and Livestock Farmer Network. LFN also supports sub-network to improve group management, better financial management, and update the group database. LFN helps members promote their products through seminars, websites, YouTube, Facebook, and the like.

LFN supports the network to improve farming techniques through experimental research by the farmers themselves, group learning, and disseminating information.

3. Opportunities and challenges

Several innovations are developed by the LFN. LFN has a network with business partners by helping farmers to connect to sell vegetables to Mueng Lao Food, rice to Phoun Nguen, and asparagus to Genera. Farmers have a certain amount of production according to the contract with business partners of LFN. In addition, LFN supports rice farmers in Jaeng village to have a contract with a rice mill factory. Regarding the contract, farmers earn more than the market price around LAK 500/Kg and farmers tend to be more commercialized because of the price incentives.

LFN supports Jhai Coffee Cooperatives to access finance. The purpose of lending is to use as working capital during the coffee collection period. LFN totally lent 200,000 USD to the JCFC with 3% interest for 6 months.

In the case of vegetables, LFN supports seeds, training, materials, and funds to the members. The vegetable network had a huge impact on the restriction policy during the Covid-19 pandemic. The estimated total loss was LAK 17 billion. LFN recommended to the network collect seeds rather than overproduce the vegetable.

LFN also connect Thongmung Farmer Cooperatives and customer through direct sales. Thongmung Organic Agriculture Cooperative (TOAC) delivers vegetables in a set menu such as bamboo soup set, chicken soup set, and suki set to customers. However, TOAC signed a contract with CP company to supply vegetables of around 50 Kg per day and TOAC is not able to continue delivering the set menu to customers.

There are many challenges for LFN to support the members as the number of members is increasing while the budget is limited. It is difficult to offer new technology and innovation to the members as they are used to traditional production. The budget of LFN relies on donors, but LFN has a target to be self-sufficient by 2025.

4. Conclusion

This is a model of farmer concentration so that the body can overcome difficulties in the production process and create connections with other actors in the industry value chain. Especially the cross-linking to improve the efficiency of harmonized production and receive scientific and technical advances as well as the consumption of agricultural products by farmers. /