**Brief Report**

Workshop on Network for Agriculture and Research Think-Tanks for Countries in Mekong Sub-Region (NARDT) at NAFRI, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, 13 November 2019

**I. Introduction**

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Dr. Chanhsamone Phongoudome, Deputy Director General of National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) and co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tung, Country Programme Officer of the International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD’s representative.

The meeting was attended by 29 people, representing the Government of Lao PDR (GoL), of the Development Partners (DPs) and the Civil Society Organization (CSOs) and the Vietnamese teamwork of NARDT project.

**II. Opening remarks**

The Chair (NAFRI, DDG) opened the meeting; he thanked all participants from all parties for being present at the meeting. He informed that this will be the first NARDT meeting before the NARDT project will have a diagnosis report updated by the end of December, after the workshop. Then, he warmly welcomed and expressed his best regards to His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tung, the Country Programme Officer of the International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD’s representative as co-chair of the workshop (NARDT).

He thanked again all DPs and stakeholders involved in bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation, IFAD Hanoi, IFAD Laos, NIER, MPI, NUoL, NAFRI-DSC, MAP,MAF, CDE and SAEDA for their cooperation and attending the important workshop.

He said that the NARDT project it is a national and regional research project, He also informed that the NAFRI has been assigned to coordinate the project implementation Network for Agriculture and Research Think-Tanks for Countries in Mekong Sub-Region (NARDT). This project is supported by the regional IFAD. With the aim of supporting scientific and empirical research. This will be the basis for development policies in the agricultural and rural development sectors. He then proceeded to give the floor to the co-chair, He Excellency Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tung, the Country Programme Officer of the International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD’s representative for his opening remarks.

The Co-chair (IFAD’s representative) said he was honored to take part in this workshop as a co-chair and he will contribute to it with the technical support of regional IFAD. He highlighted some similarities of Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos’s agriculture. He said that implementation of this project requires ownership and cooperation with stakeholders. Therefore, he said that let every parties and chance to discuss the identification of cooperation mechanisms and the need for capacity building. He mentioned other important issues that the NARDT project should better address such as policy issues and agriculture production that Laos would like to learn from Vietnam and Cambodia and also from other country.

The chair (NAFRI, DDG), congratulated the Vietnam country programe officer, NARDT project and IPSARD’s representative to support regional cooperation for 4 countries.

**III.** **Summary of the meeting**

**All presentations delivered during the workshop**

1. Mr. Bounthom Somiphompanya, representative from Horticulture Research Center (NAFRI). He has presented (1) the strategies need to be develop and find out the best way to support an entrepreneurs and make them to get strong and sustainable; (2) Rice, vegetables and fruit tree there is high demand in both national and international but lack of fund and lack of new technology and (3) we need to improve the quality of vegetable seeds and need to solve production problems.
2. Mr. SoulivanPhattivong, from IFAD country officer and he has presented (1) all farmers and entrepreneurs in Laos lack of fund and lack of new technology and (2) The bank loan credit is high interest rates and an entrepreneur cannot access credit and sometime they can access the credit but they do not want to borrow.
3. Dr. Vongpaphane MANIVONG, from DoPLA, MAF and he has presented that (1) the agriculture innovation data collection in Laos is not uncommon but there is already a repository for basic information and keeping at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and (2) The government lacks of a mechanism to encourage farmers, entrepreneurs and most of the poor farmers in Laos still lack of agriculture land.
4. Mr. Sukane, Representative from Livestock Research Center (NAFRI). He has presented (1) we have to do research why? And What? To find the best ways how to reduce the import of agriculture production from abroad. (2) Why Lao people more attractive for foreign consumers: (3) need to know about border trade issues especially for import and export agriculture products and (4) cattle and fish is high demand both national and international and China want to import a 500 cattle’s per year from Laos but why we cannot supply.
5. Dr. SithirothRaspone, from MPI and he has presented (1) we need to review the research data (information) that we can support and amendments for policy developments; (2) In some case of research no need to do a new research again but need a researcher to review of the results of previous research. What does the government need? What is mechanism? Because we have already done so much research in Laos. Only analyze the research results of what are the greatest strengths and weaknesses.
6. Mr. Manoluck, from Information Center (NAFRI) and he has presented (1) we need to be developing an integrated system between of the NAFRI and NARDT project for sustainability after the project is completed (2) the vast majority of farmer’s and entrepreneur’s production it is no survival and not sustainable and (3) How to develop our innovation lab in order to have a mechanism, the consequences (complication) and not complicated.
7. Dr. Kueangkham, a lecturer and researcher from (NUoL) and he has presented (1) Lack of collaboration between policymakers and researchers; (2) lack of strategic planning developers, lack of qualified researchers and also lack of researcher in both quantity and quality and (3) Experimental research is done according to the donor’s needs that the results are unlikely and make the strategic that we needs do not match with our country need.
8. Dr. Latsamy, a researcher from NAFRI and she has presented (1) Entrepreneur is lack of technical skills on manufacturing, decorating, packing, storage, transportation and marketing; (2) The government also lacks of the necessary laboratories and equipment for research that is why the entrepreneur is not interested in doing cooperation research with government and (3) We need to develop and want to learn the step of designing, packing and marketing from Vietnam.
9. Mr. Lytoud, a lecturer and researcher from (NUoL) and has presented (1) we need to do a research on addressing internal agricultural production. Why is a high production cost? Why? And what? And (2) we need to know why organic produce in Laos is so expensive. Why? And What? We need to study.
10. Ms. Sengphachanh, Policy Think Tank, NAFRI-SDC and Dr. SithirothRaspone, from MPI they had presented (1) we need to review the agriculture develop planning and policy in the agriculture sector and also need to review a policy making for farmers and also for entrepreneurs in Laos and (2) need a policymakers and researcher to discuss and to collaborate together.

**The regional research topic**

1. Vietnam has a lot of experience about agriculture production so many partners would like to go to learn from Vietnam and also from other country.

**For the innovation lab**

Need to be developing an integrated system between of the NAFRI and NARDT project for sustainability after the project is completed.

**Summary of the meeting**

1. A priority of research is required and need to integration mechanisms between government and private sector.
2. Need to make a research plan and how to expansion works.
3. Summarize important issues and make a policy development research plan.

**The future plan**

Writing a diagnosis report study.

**IV. ENTATIVE AGENDA**

**COUNTRY LAUNCHING WORKSHOP OF PROJECT “NETWORK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT THINK-TANKS IN MEKONG SUB-REGION” 13th November 2019**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time** | **Content** | **Speaker** |
|  | Morning section |  |
|  | Workshops objective | *KhamphouPhouyyavong* |
|  | - Opening speeches  - Remark | *DDG of NAFRI*  IFAD Hanoi |
|  | Introduction of the NARDT | *KhamphouPhouyyavong* |
|  | Introduction of innovations and highlighted impacts from projects funded by IFAD, possibilities and expectation for the institutionalization of such innovations through NARDT activities | Mr. SoulivanPattivong, IFAD country officer to Laos |
|  | NARDT member in Laos | Representative from the Co-facilitating partner  Dr. PhanxayInxay or his representative, DoPLA, MAF  Dr. SaykhamVoladeth or Dr. AlounPhonvisay, NIER  Dr. SithirothRaspone or his representaive, MPI  Dr. BounlertVanalath or his representative from NUoL |
|  | Afternoon section |  |
|  | The break-out sections   1. Country’s priority list of agriculture development policies 2. NARDT-country management and operational structure 3. Financing mechanism | *All participants* |
|  | Summarizing the discussed points and works to be done | *KhamphouPhouyyavong* |
|  | Concluding remarks | *Chair person* |

**V. Participants**

IFAD in Laos

1. Mr. SoulivanPhattivong, IFAD country officer

IFAD in Hanoi

1. IFAD Mekong Hub representative

NARDT Regional

1. Regional coordination broad representative
2. Regional Facilitator

NAFRI, MAF

1. Dr. ChansamonePhongoudome, DDG of NAFRI
2. Dr. XaysongkhamPhimmasone, DDG of NAFRI
3. Mr. ChanphasoukTanthaphone, D of ERDRC
4. Mr. KhamphouPhouyyavong, DD of ERDRC
5. Mr. ManoluckBounsihalath, D of Information Center
6. Representative from Forestry Research Center
7. Representative from Maize and Commercial Crops Research Center
8. Representative from Horticulture Research Center
9. Representative from Livestock Research Center
10. Representative from Rice Research Center
11. Representative from Living Aquatic Research Center
12. Representative from Planning and Cooperation Division
13. Ms. SengphachanhSonethavixay, Policy Think Tank, NAFRI-SDC

Department of Planning and Finance, MAF

1. Dr. PhomyInthichack, D of International Cooperation

Department of Policy and Legal Affairs, MAF

1. Dr. PhanxayInxay, Director of Legal Affair Division
2. Representative from Division of Socio-economic and Marketing Policy Division

Rural Development and Cooperative Department, MAF

1. Representative from RDCD

National Institute of Economic Research

1. Dr. SaykhamVoradeth, DG of Center for Socio-Economic Science and Policy Research, NIER
2. Dr. AlounPhonvisay, DDG of Permanent Secretary Office, NIER

Ministry of Planing and Investment

1. Dr. SitthirothRasaphone, Acting Director General, Center for Development Policy Research, Ministry of Planning and Investment

National University of Laos

1. Dr. BounlerthVannalath, Lecturer and researcher, NUoL
2. Dr. Kueang, Lecturer and researcher, NUoL
3. Dr. PiyaWongphit, Lecturer and researcher, NUoL

Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA)

1. Mr. ThongdamPhongphichith, SAEDA (co-director)

Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)

1. Mr. Micah Ingall or representative from CDE