



EVALUATION

Evaluation of the Semi-Intensive Low Input Peasant Agriculture (APICI) project in Cambodia

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Deliverable 4: Final report

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List of acronyms

AFD	Agence française de développement
AIMS	Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders
APICI	Semi-Intensive Low Input Peasant Agriculture
ASPIRE	Agricultural Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension
CARD	Council for Agriculture and Rural Development
CD92	Conseil Départemental Haut de Seine
CIRD	Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease 19
DSAC	Danrun Samaki Agricultural Cooperative
ECOFARM	Sovatepheap Thoamcheat Agricultural Cooperative
F3E	Fonds pour la promotion des études transversales, des études préalables et de l'évaluation
FICOL	Facilité de financement des collectivités territoriales
FUDAC	Farmer Unity for Development of Agriculture Cooperative
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IADA	“Agro-ecological intensification and diversification of peri-urban family farming in Siem Reap”
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OS	Specific Objective - Objectif Spécifique
PDoA	Provincial Department of Agriculture
PDoC	Provincial Department of Commerce
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
QSP	Quality Seed Production
SRA	Improved Rice System or <i>Système de Riziculture Améliorée</i>
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
SVG	Saving Groups
TFS	Territorial Food System
TWGFSN	Technical Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition
UNESCO	Organisation des Nations unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture
USD	United States dollar

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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the results of the external evaluation of the Low-Input Semi-Intensive Peasant Agriculture (APICI) project in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. This study, co-financed by GRET and F3E, was carried out between June and November 2023 and is the third evaluation conducted since the project began in 2011. Its overall aim is to contribute to the preparation of future projects currently being prepared by the various partners in Siem Reap province. It aims to confirm, deepen and enrich future orientations, based on achievements and lessons that can be mobilized for the future.

Introducing APICI 4

The Low-Input Semi-Intensive Peasant Agriculture (APICI) project aims to improve and secure the living conditions of family farmers in Siem Reap by promoting agro-ecological practices. Led by GRET and CIRD, with financial support from the Conseil Général des Hauts-de-Seine, the project focuses on a range of activities including vegetable and rice production, chicken farming, small-scale irrigation systems, and access to savings and credit systems. Launched in 2011, the project has gone through four phases, evolving towards the organization of farmers into cooperatives to strengthen links with markets. The APICI 4 phase, revised in 2022, focuses on supporting the construction of a territorial food systems development plan in collaboration with provincial authorities, aiming to scale up results and integrate the territorial dimension for sustainable agricultural and food systems.

The current specific objectives of APICI 4 are as follows:

- OS1: Promote agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production
- OS2: Strengthen producer organizations and structure local agricultural value chains to secure production and facilitate the sale of products on markets.
- OS3: Support provincial players in the construction and implementation of a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems.

The direct beneficiaries of APICI 4 in Siem Reap province are:

- 2,400 farmers, 75% of them women, in 54 villages in the two districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong.
- 35 groups of vegetable and chicken producers.
- 3 agricultural cooperatives with 301 members, including 214 women (71%), 13 of whom are members of the cooperative's board of directors.
- 36 savings and credit groups with 2,642 members, including 2,031 women (77%), and 90 women on the management committees of 120 members of these groups.
- 1 weekly market for local produce, involving 18 cooperatives (supported by APICI and IADA, but also by other projects and the provincial department of agriculture).

The following points summarize the evaluators' main observations and analyses.

Relevance of the founding pillars of the APICI project

Although the agricultural sector in Cambodia is in decline, dropping from 43% of GDP in 1996 to 23.5% in 2018, with a reduction in the rural population from 80% in 2009 to 60% in 2019, it is an essential pillar of the economy. Family farming, while facing challenges such as climate change, poor access to services and limited access to markets, retains a central role in food security, natural resource management and biodiversity preservation. National agricultural policies, focused on supporting priority commodity chains, are not always adapted to the risk minimization strategies of small-scale producers. The evaluation therefore underlines the relevance of supporting family farming, in particular through agroecology, which fosters the empowerment of farming households, the diversification of production, and the reduction of the negative impacts of conventional agriculture on health and the environment. The structuring of producers and small and medium-sized enterprises is also crucial to the sustainable development of innovative value chains. Finally, the gender dimension is fundamental in the Cambodian rural context, given the socio-economic, environmental and climatic changes that could alter the role of women in agriculture.

Analysis of specific objective # 1: promote agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production

The project's objective is to improve the viability and resilience of family farms in the face of climate, food security and income risks. **Agroecology** is the preferred means implemented by APICI to achieve this objective, with the emphasis on crop diversification, the use of local resources for the manufacture of a wide range of composts and integrated pest management, and the valorization of family labor and farmers' know-how. The project also encourages the adoption of a wide range of irrigation systems to overcome the constraints of erratic rainfall. By 2022, the project will have nearly 640 producers who have adopted agroecological techniques for market gardening, producing around 40 tons of market garden produce and fruit annually. One of the main challenges in this area is to assess the profitability of agro-ecological production in terms of the time required to invest and possibly lower yields than conventional production, even if, in this case, purchased inputs are increasingly expensive.

In addition, the project has supported **sustainable rice production**, using intensive (SRI) and/or improved (SRA) rice-growing techniques, as well as by promoting the use of quality seeds produced by producer groups. However, the adoption of these rice-growing techniques has been negatively affected by constraints unfavorable to agroecological intensification, such as the low availability of labor polarized by urban centers, and the accentuation of risks such as irregular climatic conditions and competition from cheap rice imports. The production of high-quality farmers' rice seed is a relevant option, enabling better production without having to modify cultivation practices. However, given the scattered nature of small plots of land, which are prone to cross-fertilization with neighboring rice plots, the challenge lies in consolidating a production system that guarantees the desired quality.

Support for the improvement of **poultry farming** to produce eggs and meat with a view to marketing has also had its ups and downs. After a period of success, broiler production was faced with competition from cheap imports and the high cost of animal feed, including that produced on farms. Egg production, on the other hand, remains attractive and meets market demand.

Advisory support for small-scale farmers is relevant in a national context where these issues are poorly addressed in national agricultural policies. The project is based on the establishment of a network of 60 pilot farmers, who work with the project teams to provide training and support to farmers. The strategy is based on co-construction with farmers, with a view to providing them with a technical toolbox. The challenge is to make any adjustments that may be necessary in order to scale up and reach a greater number of farmers and consolidate the system over the long term (internalization within cooperatives, assumption of costs, capacity-building for pilot farmers, etc.).

Analysis of specific objective # 2: Strengthening producer organizations and structuring local agricultural value chains to secure production and facilitate the sale of products on markets

From the outset, the project has supported the creation of low-cost **local savings and credit groups** offering loans based on social guarantees, thus providing an alternative to the conventional banking sector, which is not very accessible to small producers due to the requirement for tangible guarantees. This activity enjoys a high level of recognition among beneficiaries, with the project recording rapid growth in the number of savers (2,660 people by 2022), through the creation of 35 savings groups, thanks to attractive interest rates for savers. The provision of loans to non-members of these groups was noted, despite the operating principles based on prior savings, as well as cases of late repayment of loans. Loans are also being used for non-agricultural purposes, despite the project's stated ambition. The main challenge is to ensure the sustainability of these financial systems, given the rapid growth in the number of members, the limited capacity of group managers and supervisory committees to manage the increasing amounts and savings and credit operations, and the handwritten management of account books. In addition, there is the need to comply with Cambodian banking legislation, which requires informal microfinance institutions to become institutionalized above a capital holding of 100 MRiel (approx. US\$24,000). Fifteen of the 35 groups are currently in this situation.

The **sale of vegetables and fruit produced using agroecological methods, through a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)**, is another of the project's flagship activities. In theory, the PGS is a tool aimed at consumers, informing them about the production techniques used, and guaranteeing that these comply with a set of specifications. Producers can use the PGS to differentiate their products from the conventional offer (logo, label). This makes it possible to justify a quality premium and thus obtain a better price, to remunerate the extra work generally required in agro-ecological approaches. Through peer visits to farms, PGS are also tools that encourage exchanges between farmers, thereby enhancing their knowledge and technical practices (advisory function). The scheme has effectively established the collective sale of certified products at prices allowing higher margins (between 15 and 20%) compared with conventional products. By 2021, almost 50 producers had been certified, representing around 15% of the 640 vegetable producers applying agroecological practices. PGS-certified products are sold through a variety of commercial channels, including the Weekly Farmers Market in Siem Reap, set up in 2019 jointly by IADA/Agrisud and APICI/GRET, which enjoys the highest profile but does not represent the largest volumes. The main challenge lies in the possibility of increasing the market share of certified agroecological products in Siem Reap, to sell larger shares of agroecological vegetables already available, and also to create the conditions for increasing the number of producers engaging in certified agroecology. Another challenge

concerns the possibility of widening access to this type of "healthy" produce to meet the potentially growing demand from consumers of all income levels.

Supporting the creation of **chicken producers' groups** is particularly relevant from the perspective of providing collective services such as training, input purchasing, market research and product sales. The project enabled the creation of 8 local chicken producer groups, which at one point represented 146 farmers, including 97 women. However, this number dropped to 92, including 60 women, as farmers became disaffected by their low competitiveness. The production and sale of chickens certified by a Participatory Quality Guarantee system - based on specifications aimed at animal welfare and product health quality - could prove a possible way of standing out in a competitive market with chickens imported from Thailand and rising production costs. However, in addition to high production costs, consumer demand seems to have recently shifted towards specific products (chickens with yellow legs and beaks) corresponding to imported chickens.

Support for the **structuring of agricultural cooperatives** from 2019 onwards, based on the large number of grassroots producer groups supported since the start of the project, is of course relevant and fundamental to the strategy of sustaining the results of the APICI project. As professional rural institutions, cooperatives will be able to facilitate access to financial resources, carry out training initiatives, and facilitate collection operations and market access, including through commercial partnerships with downstream players. In addition, the aim is to support long-term local institutions capable of understanding farmers' needs and translating them into autonomous development actions. Three cooperatives have been created with the project's support between 2019 and 2021, registering an increase in membership each year, mainly from women (298 members currently). These cooperatives have acquired a form of technical specialization with the production of healthy vegetables and rice seeds for ECOFARM, the supply of agricultural inputs for FUDAC, and chicken farming and poultry-related services for DSAC. These cooperatives are still relatively young, and the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the learning and support processes. Cooperative board members show real commitment, but there is room for improvement in the flow of information, member participation in decision-making, and respect for the roles defined by the bylaws for boards of directors and supervisory commissions. The skills of board members still seem limited, and medium-term strategic and business plans are lacking. Cooperatives have technical skills to support their members, but these services are still informal.

Analysis of Specific Objective # 3: Support provincial stakeholders in drawing up and implementing a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems

This new specific objective helps to consolidate the internal coherence of a project. The new agreement between CD-92 and GRET defines this objective as supporting provincial actors in the **construction of a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems**, as well as its implementation. This is in line with CD-92's willingness to cooperate with territorial authorities at provincial level, possibly transferring project management to provincial authorities.

However, the relevance and external coherence of the project depend on clarification of the scope of the "Territorial Food System". Although the involvement of territorial institutions is considered relevant, the exact scope of the concept is not yet clear, as its current presentation seems to be closer to an approach aimed at setting up value chains for healthy, environmentally

friendly products from family farms. It is therefore suggested that we adopt a more systemic framework for thinking about the provincial food system, identifying, and taking into account the various interactions between production, environmental and resource management aspects, in relation to the determinants of food demand.

Exploring synergies with other institutions with expertise on the subject to strengthen the coherence and governance of the project and mutually enrich concepts and practices is also an important focus, whether at provincial level (e.g. Tonle Sap Authority), or at national level (e.g. Council for Agricultural and Rural Development / CARD, Technical Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition / TWGFSN, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries/MAFF).

Analysis of APICI project management and programming methods

The **initial strategic framework** is relevant but needs updating. The APICI project aims to improve farm resilience through innovation in farming practices and the production of quality products. Initial diagnostics had highlighted various types of constraints, such as production systems based on monocultures, difficult access to technical advice and agricultural financing, low levels of collective organization, and modes of market integration unfavorable to small producers. The project has achieved observable results on these different fronts, but more thought needs to be given to the impact on the resilience of farming households and the sustainability of the actions undertaken, to enable the project's intervention logic to be updated.

Technical programming is essentially carried out on an annual basis, within a multi-year framework of around 4 years defined by the agreements between GRET and CD92. Each agreement specifies general and specific objectives, indicators, and an annual breakdown describing the activities and resources required, without this being set down in a logical framework. The approach is flexible, encouraging innovation and the search for co-financing, but the "volatility" of the programming framework from one year to the next can make it difficult to understand the overall intervention logic.

The technical and budgetary programming process is carried out annually, to be in phase with CD92's budgetary programming exercises, but it appears to be temporarily out of step with internal evaluation and activity reporting mechanisms. Detailed activity reports provide a wealth of information, but the profusion of data makes it difficult to assess progress towards the project's strategic objectives.

Cross-cutting question on APICI's monitoring and evaluation system

Strategic framework for the monitoring and evaluation system: The objectives set out in the project's multi-year agreements are to improve the resilience of 1,500 producers for the first two phases APICI 1 and APICI 2, then 1,800 producers for APICI 3 and 2,500 for APICI 4 (2023). However, the monitoring and evaluation system makes it difficult to assess results at farm level, especially as the project is not based on a logical framework. It focuses mainly on farmers' participation in training courses or meetings, with additional modules on the economic analysis of activities within monitoring groups, but which cannot be extrapolated.

Operational dimension of the monitoring and evaluation system: The monitoring and evaluation tool is organized by tracking participants in training courses, supplemented by specific monitoring modules for each component (market gardening, poultry farming, rice growing, credit savings, etc.) and the carrying out of qualitative studies. The monitoring of the project's achievements and results suffers from a few identified shortcomings, such as the

absence of an identification code for farmers that would enable a link to be made between the various activities from which they benefit, making it difficult to determine the actual number of beneficiaries, and the lack of specific monitoring of the adoption of techniques from year to year or on a geographical scale.

Cross-cutting question on gender mainstreaming

The project has not implemented a specific gender strategy but has integrated quantitative indicators showing that women make up the majority of beneficiaries, representing 74% of farmers trained in 2021/2022. The cooperatives supported by the project also show a strong female representation. Although the project's activities appear to be tailored to the needs of women farmers, this needs to be contextualized within the general trend in Cambodia where women are more involved in agriculture, while men are moving more towards non-agricultural employment - this is linked to the gradual decline in agriculture's share of the national economy, the aging of the rural population and the migration of young people to the cities. The central question is whether women's involvement in these activities specifically increases their income, decision-making power and access to economic resources. It would also be interesting to understand the proportion of households headed by women, their level of poverty, and their access to education and the job market. The COVID crisis has led to a slowdown in urban migration, with a potential return of young people to agriculture, raising the question of whether this is aimed at accumulating capital for a sustainable return to farming.

Cross-cutting question on partnerships

With its ambition to tackle the theme of the territorial food system, the APICI project, after more than 10 years of action, is entering a new strategic phase. Building on the results and achievements of the previous phases, an evolution of the implementation mechanism should be envisaged for the next phases. The guiding idea would be to revise the project-based approach that has prevailed until now, and to position it in a logic of support in the "faire faire" and transfer of skills to actors with a long-term vocation in Siem Reap Province. Several approaches could be explored, such as anchoring the Territorial Food System component at provincial level, a more ambitious partnership with the provincial departments of agriculture on the theme of advisory support to strengthen the resilience of farming households, and the strengthening and support of cooperatives in terms of professionalization and member services. A dedicated technical assistance scheme would be set up to support this institutional structuring, with permanent experts at provincial level and technical units at district level, to provide support in strategy definition, technical assistance and skills transfer to district teams, and coordination of the monitoring, evaluation and capitalization system. This paradigm shift would automatically entail the obligation to initiate reflection on the construction of scaling-up tools, and to ensure the appropriation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned by the players themselves.

Summary of recommendations

The report puts forward several recommendations, the main ones of which are summarized below.

1. Strategic evolution of the project

- Implement an intervention logic focused on transferring the skills acquired by the project to sustainable local or provincial players, such as provincial public technical services and producers' organizations.
 - Emphasize the functions of capitalization, consolidation of acquired knowledge, training, and transfer of technical skills.
 - Maintain the project's innovation and action-research function as required.
- 2. Agroecological vegetable production**
- Regularly consolidate market garden production plans within and between agricultural cooperatives working in the province.
 - Strengthen cooperatives' internal control systems for agroecological production.
 - Consider actions to transform unsold production surpluses.
- 3. Marketing vegetables under the participatory guarantee system (SPG)**
- Study the reasons for low producer participation in PGS processes.
 - Advocate the transfer of the "Sovathapheap Siem Reap" collective trademark from the Provincial Department of Commerce to the Farmers Weekly Market.
 - Ensure that this collective brand meets the "healthy vegetable" standards implemented by the producers supported by the IADA & APICI projects.
 - Conduct market research and promotional campaigns to expand market share and increase supply.
- 4. Rice production**
- Assess the interest for small-scale farmers in developing proposals for agroecological rice cultivation, incorporating the reasoned and limited use of synthetic fertilizers (e.g. urea at tillering stage).
 - Explore the feasibility of implementing the Sustainable Rice Production initiative, paying particular attention to the possibility of cooperatives using the label.
- 5. Production and marketing of poultry products**
- Carry out a preliminary market study before developing a production, certification, and marketing strategy for broiler chickens (SPG).
 - Explore other possible speculations (pigs, fish farming) if the market is no longer promising for local chicken production.
 - Consolidate the specific support strategy for local egg production and marketing.
 - Continue to support family chicken production for the most vulnerable farming households.
- 6. Advisory support system**
- Develop an integrated strategy and system for farmer advisory support by consolidating the network of pilot farmers within cooperatives on a long-term basis.
 - Consider "farm management consulting for small farmers" approaches adapted to the diversity of farmer types, going beyond the "toolbox" approach.
- 7. Support for savings and credit groups (SVGs)**
- Update all governance, management and monitoring rules and tools to professionalize practices and create the conditions for future institutional consolidation.
 - Introduce IT management tools to produce instant information and analysis.
- 8. Support for agricultural cooperatives**
- Work with cooperative members on the collective development of a shared vision of cooperative roles, principles, and objectives, backed by multi-year programming and regularly updated business plans.

- Design and implement a meaningful strategy to strengthen the institutional capacity of cooperatives.

9. Territorial food systems

- Clarify the scope and objectives of the territorial food systems (TFS) concept.
- Plan to mobilize resources commensurate with the ambitions of the future project, particularly in terms of thematic expertise and the collection and analysis of data on food and nutrition in the province.

10. Project management and programming methods

- Update district-level diagnostics on changes in farms and their production systems since the start of the project (2011).
- Structure project interventions within the framework of building a systemic intervention logic (problem tree).

11. Monitoring and evaluation system

- Link the monitoring and evaluation system to the project's logical framework.
- Draw up a monitoring and evaluation procedures manual.
- Introduce a farmer coding system to consolidate and multiply the possibilities for analyzing project results.

12. Gender

- Enrich the project's knowledge of the dynamics of demographic change in the target districts, focusing on the changing role of women and young people in the agricultural economy.

Résumé exécutif

Introduction

Le présent rapport présente les résultats de l'évaluation externe du projet Agriculture paysanne semi-intensive à bas intrants (APICI) dans la province de Siem Reap au Cambodge. Cette étude, cofinancée par le Gret et le F3E, a été réalisée entre juin et novembre 2023 et il s'agit de la troisième évaluation menée depuis le démarrage du projet en 2011. Son objectif général est de contribuer à la préparation des futurs projets en cours de préparation par les différents partenaires dans la province de Siem Reap. Elle vise à confirmer, approfondir et enrichir les orientations futures, sur la base des réalisations et des enseignements mobilisables pour l'avenir.

Présentation d'APICI 4

Le projet Agriculture paysanne semi-intensive à faibles intrants (APICI) vise à améliorer et sécuriser les conditions de vie des agriculteurs familiaux à Siem Reap par la promotion des pratiques agro-écologiques. Porté par le GRET et le CIRD avec le soutien financier du Conseil général des Hauts-de-Seine, le projet intervient sur diverses activités telles que la production de légumes et de riz, l'élevage de poulets, les petits systèmes d'irrigation, et l'accès aux systèmes d'épargne et de crédit. Lancé en 2011, le projet a connu quatre phases, évoluant vers l'organisation des agriculteurs en coopératives pour renforcer les liens avec les marchés. La phase APICI 4, révisée en 2022, s'oriente vers le soutien à la construction d'un plan de développement des systèmes alimentaires territoriaux en collaboration avec les autorités provinciales, visant à mettre à l'échelle les résultats et à intégrer la dimension territoriale pour des systèmes agricoles et alimentaires durables.

Les objectifs spécifiques actuels d'APICI 4 sont aujourd'hui les suivants :

- OS1 : Promouvoir l'intensification agro-écologique et la diversification de la production agricole ;
- OS2 : Renforcer les organisations de producteurs et structurer les filières agricoles locales pour sécuriser la production et faciliter l'écoulement des produits sur les marchés ;
- OS3 : Appuyer les acteurs provinciaux dans la construction et la mise en œuvre d'un plan de développement de systèmes alimentaires territoriaux performants et durables.

Les bénéficiaires directs d'APICI 4 dans la province de Siem Reap sont :

- 2400 agriculteurs, dont 75% de femmes, dans 54 villages des deux districts de Sotr Nikum et Prasat Bakong ;
- 35 groupes de producteurs de légumes et de poulets ;
- 3 coopératives agricoles avec 301 membres, dont 214 femmes (71%), 13 d'entre elles étant membres du conseil d'administration de la coopérative ;
- 36 groupes d'épargne et de crédit avec 2 642 membres, dont 2 031 femmes (77%), et 90 femmes dans les comités de gestion de 120 membres de ces groupes ;
- 1 marché hebdomadaire de produits locaux, impliquant 18 coopératives (soutenues par APICI et IADA, mais aussi par d'autres projets et le département provincial de l'agriculture).

Les points suivants synthétisent les principales observations et analyses des évaluateurs.

Pertinence des piliers fondateurs du projet APICI

Bien que le secteur agricole au Cambodge connaisse un déclin, passant de 43% du PIB en 1996 à 23,5% en 2018, avec une réduction de la population rurale de 80% en 2009 à 60% en 2019, il constitue un pilier essentiel de l'économie. L'agriculture familiale, bien que confrontée à des défis tels que le changement climatique, un faible accès aux services et un accès limité aux marchés, conserve un rôle central dans la sécurité alimentaire, la gestion des ressources naturelles, et la préservation de la biodiversité. Les politiques agricoles nationales, axées sur le soutien aux filières prioritaires, ne sont pas toujours adaptées aux stratégies de minimisation des risques des petits producteurs. L'évaluation souligne donc la pertinence de soutenir l'agriculture familiale, en particulier à travers l'agroécologie, qui favorise l'autonomisation des ménages agricoles, la diversification des productions, et la réduction des impacts négatifs de l'agriculture conventionnelle sur la santé et l'environnement. La structuration des producteurs et des petites et moyennes entreprises est également cruciale pour le développement durable de chaînes de valeur innovantes. Enfin, la dimension de genre est fondamentale dans le contexte rural cambodgien, compte tenu des changements socioéconomiques, environnementaux et climatiques qui pourraient modifier le rôle des femmes dans l'agriculture.

Analyse de l'objectif spécifique n° 1 : promouvoir l'intensification agroécologique et la diversification de la production agricole

L'objectif du projet est d'améliorer la viabilité et la résilience des exploitations agricoles familiales face aux risques climatiques, de sécurité alimentaire et de revenus. **L'agroécologie** est le moyen privilégié mis en oeuvre par APICI pour cet objectif, avec l'accent mis sur la diversification des cultures, l'utilisation de ressources locales pour la fabrication d'une large gamme de composts et la gestion intégrée des ravageurs, la valorisation de la main d'œuvre familiale et le savoir-faire des agriculteurs. En complément, le projet encourage également l'adoption d'une large gamme de systèmes d'irrigation pour lever les contraintes de pluviométrie erratique. En 2022, le projet enregistre près de 640 producteurs ayant adopté les techniques agroécologiques pour le maraichage et produisant annuellement environ 40 tonnes de produits maraichers et de fruits. L'un des principaux enjeux dans ce domaine est d'apprécier la rentabilité de la production agroécologique au regard du temps à investir et possiblement des rendements inférieurs au regard de la production conventionnelle, même si, dans ce cas, les intrants achetés sont de plus en plus onéreux.

Par ailleurs, le projet a soutenu la **production de riz durable**, à travers le recours aux techniques de riziculture intensive (SRI) et/ou améliorées (SRA), ainsi qu'en promouvant le recours à des semences de qualité produites par des groupements de producteurs. Toutefois, l'adoption de ces techniques rizicoles a été négativement affectée en raison de contraintes peu favorables à l'intensification agroécologique, telles que la faible disponibilité de la main-d'œuvre polarisée par les centres urbains, et l'accentuation des risques tels que les conditions climatiques irrégulières et la concurrence des importations de riz bon marché. La production de semences paysannes de riz de qualité est pertinente, permettant une meilleure production sans avoir à modifier les pratiques de culture. Toutefois, compte tenu de la dispersion des parcelles de petite taille propice aux fécondations croisées avec les parcelles de riz voisines, un enjeu réside dans la consolidation d'un système de production garantissant l'obtention de la qualité recherchée.

Le soutien à l'amélioration de **l'élevage avicole** pour la production d'œufs et de viande dans une perspective commerciale a également connu des aléas. Après une période de succès, la production de poulets de chair a été confrontée à la concurrence des importations bon marché et les coûts élevés de l'alimentation animale, y compris celles produits au niveau des exploitations agricoles. La production d'œufs reste par contre intéressante et permet de répondre à une demande du marché.

L'appui conseil aux petits agriculteurs est pertinent dans un contexte national où ces questions sont peu abordées dans le cadre des politiques agricoles nationales. Le dispositif du projet reposant sur la mise en place d'un réseau atteignant à ce jour 60 fermiers pilotes qui assurent avec les équipes projet les formations et l'accompagnement au niveau des exploitants, la stratégie reposant sur une logique de co-construction avec les agriculteurs, dans une logique de boîte à outils techniques. Les enjeux concernent les ajustements éventuellement nécessaires dans une perspective de mise à l'échelle, pour toucher un plus grand nombre de producteurs et consolider durablement le dispositif (internalisation au sein des coopératives, prise en charge des coûts, renforcement de capacités des fermiers pilotes, etc.).

Analyse de l'objectif spécifique n° 2 : Renforcer les organisations de producteurs et structurer les filières agricoles locales pour sécuriser la production et faciliter l'écoulement des produits sur les marchés

Le projet soutient depuis son démarrage la constitution de **groupe d'épargne et de crédit locaux**, à faible coût et proposant des crédits reposant sur les garanties sociales, offrant ainsi une alternative au secteur bancaire conventionnel peu accessible aux petits producteurs du fait de l'exigence de garanties tangibles. Cette activité bénéficie d'une forte notoriété au sein des bénéficiaires, le projet enregistrant une croissance rapide du nombre d'épargnants (2660 personnes en 2022), à travers la création de 35 groupes d'épargne, ce grâce à des taux d'intérêt attractifs pour les épargnants. La fourniture de prêts à des non-membres de ces groupes a été relevée, malgré les principes de fonctionnement basés sur l'épargne préalable, ainsi que des cas de retards de remboursement de prêts. Le constat porte aussi sur une utilisation des prêts à des fins non liées à l'agriculture, malgré l'ambition affichée du projet. L'enjeu fort concerne la durabilité de ces systèmes financiers, au regard de la croissance rapide du nombre de membres, les faibles capacités des responsables de groupe et des comités de surveillance au regard de la croissance des montants et opérations d'épargne et de crédit à gérer et la gestion manuscrite des livres de comptes. En outre, se pose le besoin de se conformer à la législation bancaire cambodgienne, qui impose aux institutions de microfinance informelles de s'institutionnaliser au delà d'un capital détenu de 100 MRiel (env.US\$24 000). Quinze groupements sur les 35 sont dans cette situation à ce jour.

La vente de légumes et de fruits produits selon les méthodes agroécologiques, à travers un Système Participatif de Garantie (SPG), constitue une autre des activités phares du projet. En théorie, le SPG est un outil s'adressant aux consommateurs, permettant de les informer sur les techniques de production utilisées, et de leur garantir que cela est conforme à un cahier des charges. Le SPG peut ainsi être utilisé par les producteurs pour différencier leurs produits par rapport à l'offre conventionnelle (logo, label). Cela permet de justifier une prime à la qualité et d'obtenir ainsi un meilleur prix, en particulier pour rémunérer le travail supplémentaire généralement nécessaire dans les approches agroécologiques. Les SPG sont

également, à travers les visites d'exploitation par les pairs, des outils favorisant les échanges entre paysans, permettant ainsi d'enrichir leurs connaissances et leurs pratiques techniques (fonction de conseil). **Le dispositif** a effectivement permis d'établir la vente collective de produits certifiés à des prix permettant des marges plus élevées (entre 15 et 20 %) par rapport aux produits conventionnels. En 2021, près de 50 producteurs ont été certifiés, représentant environ 15 % des 640 producteurs de légumes appliquant des pratiques agroécologiques. Les produits certifiés SPG sont vendus à travers divers circuits commerciaux, dont le Weekly Famers Market à Siem reap, créé en 2019 conjointement par IADA/Agrisud et APICI/GRET, qui bénéficie de la plus grande notoriété, sans pour autant représenter les volumes les plus importants. Le défi principal réside dans la possibilité d'augmenter les parts de marché des produits agroécologiques certifiés à Siem Reap, afin de vendre de plus grandes parts de légumes agroécologiques déjà disponibles, et aussi créer les conditions pour accroître le nombre de producteurs s'engageant dans l'agroécologie certifiée. Un autre défi concerne la possibilité d'élargir l'accès à ce type de produits « sains » pour répondre à la demande potentiellement croissante de consommateurs de tous niveaux de revenus.

Le soutien à la mise en place de **groupements d'aviculteurs** est pertinent notamment dans une perspective de fourniture de services collectifs tels que la formation, l'achat d'intrants, la recherche de marché et la vente de produits. Le projet a ainsi permis la création de 8 groupes locaux de producteurs de poulets, qui représentaient à un moment donné 146 agriculteurs, dont 97 femmes. Cependant, ce nombre a chuté à 92, dont 60 femmes, en raison de la désaffection des agriculteurs compte tenu de leur faible compétitivité. La **production et la vente des poulets certifiés par un système de Garantie Participative de Qualité** – basé sur un cahier des charges visant au bien-être animal et la qualité sanitaire des produits - pourrait s'avérer une piste éventuelle pour se démarquer sur un marché concurrentiel avec des poulets importés de Thaïlande et des coûts de production en hausse. Toutefois, outre les coûts élevés de production, la demande des consommateurs semble également se porter depuis quelques temps sur des produits spécifiques (poulets aux pattes et bec jaune) correspondant aux poulets importés.

Le soutien à la **structuration des coopératives agricoles** à partir de 2019, à partir des très nombreux groupements de producteurs de base appuyés depuis le début du projet, est bien sûr pertinent et fondamental dans le cadre de la stratégie de pérennisation des résultats du projet APICI. En tant qu'institutions rurales professionnelles, les coopératives pourront faciliter l'accès aux ressources financières, mener des actions de formation, faciliter les opérations de collecte et d'accès aux marchés, y compris à travers des partenariats commerciaux avec les acteurs de l'aval. En outre, il s'agit de soutenir des institutions locales à vocation pérenne susceptibles de comprendre les besoins des agriculteurs et de les traduire en actions de développement de manière autonome. Trois coopératives ont été créées avec le soutien du projet entre 2019 et 2021, enregistrant une augmentation des adhésions chaque année, principalement de femmes (298 membres actuellement). Ces coopératives ont acquis une forme de spécialisation technique avec la production de légumes sains, la production de semences de riz pour ECOFARM, la fourniture d'intrants agricoles pour FUDAC, l'élevage de poulets et les services liés à l'aviculture pour DSAC. Ces coopératives sont encore relativement jeunes, et la pandémie de COVID-19 a eu un impact sur les processus d'apprentissage et de soutien. Les membres des conseils d'administration des coopératives montrent un réel engagement, mais il y a des améliorations possibles dans la circulation de l'information, la participation des membres aux prises de décision, et le respect des rôles définis par les

règlements pour les conseils d'administration, les commissions de supervision. Les compétences des membres des conseils d'administration semblent encore limitées, et il manque des plans stratégiques à moyen terme et des plans d'affaires. Les coopératives disposent de compétences techniques pour soutenir leurs membres, mais ces services sont encore informels.

Analyse de l'objectif spécifique n° 3 : Soutenir les acteurs provinciaux dans l'élaboration d'un plan de développement de systèmes alimentaires territoriaux efficaces et durables et dans sa mise en œuvre

Ce nouvel objectif spécifique contribue à consolider la cohérence interne d'un projet. La nouvelle convention entre CD-92 et GRET définit cet objectif comme le soutien aux acteurs provinciaux dans la construction d'un **plan de développement pour des systèmes alimentaires territoriaux** efficaces et durables, ainsi que sa mise en œuvre. Cela s'aligne sur la volonté du CD-92 de coopérer avec les autorités territoriales au niveau provincial, pouvant éventuellement transférer la maîtrise d'ouvrage du projet aux autorités provinciales.

Cependant, la pertinence et la cohérence externe du projet dépendent de la clarification du champ d'application du "Système Alimentaire Territorial". Bien que l'implication des institutions territoriales soit considérée comme pertinente, la portée exacte du concept n'est pas encore claire, sa présentation actuelle semblant se rapprocher davantage d'une approche visant la mise en place de chaînes de valeurs de produits sains et respectueux de l'environnement, issus des exploitations agricoles familiales. Il est ainsi suggéré d'adopter un cadre de réflexion plus systémique sur le système alimentaire provincial, identifiant et prenant en compte les différentes interactions entre les aspects de production, environnementaux et de gestion des ressources, en lien avec les déterminants de la demande alimentaire.

L'exploration des synergies avec d'autres institutions ayant compétences sur le sujet pour renforcer la cohérence et la gouvernance du projet et enrichir mutuellement les concepts et pratiques est également un axe important, que ce soit par exemple à l'échelle provinciale (p.ex. Tonle Sap Authority), mais aussi au plan national (p.ex. le Conseil pour le Développement Agricole et Rural / CARD, le Groupe de Travail Technique sur la Sécurité Alimentaire et la Nutrition / TWGFSN, le Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Forêt et des Pêches/MAFF).

Analyse des modalités de gestion et de programmation du projet APICI

Le **cadre stratégique** initial est pertinent mais mérite d'être actualisé. Le projet APICI vise à améliorer la résilience des exploitations agricoles par l'innovation dans les pratiques agricoles et la production de produits de qualité. Les diagnostics initiaux avaient mis en exergue différents types de contraintes, telles des systèmes de production basés sur des monocultures, un accès difficile aux conseils techniques et au financement agricole, des niveaux faibles d'organisation collective, et des modes d'intégration au marché défavorables aux petits producteurs. Le projet a atteint des résultats observables sur ces différents registres, mais une réflexion sur l'impact sur la résilience des ménages agricoles et la durabilité des actions entreprises mérite approfondissement, pour permettre d'actualiser la logique d'intervention du projet.

La **programmation technique** est essentiellement menée sur une base annuelle, dans un cadre pluriannuel d'environ 4 ans défini par les conventions entre GRET et CD92. Chaque convention précise les objectifs généraux et spécifiques, des indicateurs, et un découpage

annuel décrivant les activités et les ressources requises, sans que cela soit réellement inscrit dans un cadre logique. L'approche est flexible, favorise l'innovation et la recherche de co-financements, mais la "volatilité" du cadre programmatique d'une année à l'autre peut rendre difficile la compréhension de la logique d'intervention globale.

Le processus de programmation technique et budgétaire se fait annuellement, de manière à être en phase avec les exercices de programmation budgétaires de CD92, mais il apparaît en décalage temporaire avec les mécanismes internes d'évaluation interne et de rapports d'activités. Les rapports d'activité détaillés fournissent une abondance d'informations, mais la profusion de données complique l'évaluation de la progression vers les objectifs stratégiques du projet.

Question transversale sur le système de suivi et d'évaluation du projet APICI

Cadre stratégique pour le système de suivi et d'évaluation : Les objectifs fixés dans les accords pluriannuels du projet sont d'améliorer la résilience de 1 500 producteurs pour les deux premières phases APICI 1 et APICI 2, puis 1 800 producteurs pour APICI 3 et 2 500 pour APICI 4 (2023). Cependant, le système de suivi et d'évaluation permet difficilement d'évaluer les résultats au niveau des exploitations bénéficiaires, d'autant que le projet n'est pas adossé à un cadre logique. Il se concentre principalement sur la participation des agriculteurs aux formations ou aux réunions, avec en complément des modules additionnels portant sur l'analyse économique des activités au sein de groupes de suivi, mais ne pouvant pas être extrapolée.

Dimension opérationnelle du système de suivi et d'évaluation : L'outil de suivi-évaluation est organisé en suivant les participants aux formations, complété des modules de suivi spécifiques par volets (maraîchage, aviculture, riziculture, épargne-crédit, etc.) et la réalisation d'études qualitatives. Le suivi des réalisations et résultats du projet souffre de certaines lacunes identifiées, telles que l'absence d'un code d'identification des agriculteurs qui permettraient de faire le lien entre les différentes activités dont ils bénéficient, ceci rendant difficile la détermination du nombre réel de bénéficiaires, et le manque de suivi spécifique de l'adoption des techniques d'année en année ou à l'échelle géographique.

Question transversale sur la prise en compte du genre

Le projet n'a pas mis en place de stratégie spécifique en matière de genre, mais a intégré des indicateurs quantitatifs montrant que les femmes constituent la majorité des bénéficiaires, représentant 74% des agriculteurs formés en 2021/2022. Les coopératives soutenues par le projet montrent également une forte représentation féminine. Bien que les activités du projet semblent adaptées aux besoins des agricultrices, cela doit être contextualisé dans la tendance générale du Cambodge où les femmes sont plus impliquées dans l'agriculture, tandis que les hommes se dirigent davantage vers des emplois non agricoles ceci en lien avec la baisse progressive de la part de l'agriculture dans l'économie nationale, le vieillissement de la population rurale et la migration des jeunes vers les villes. La question centrale est de savoir si l'implication des femmes dans ces activités augmente spécifiquement leurs revenus, leur pouvoir de décision et leur accès à des ressources économiques. Il serait également intéressant de comprendre la proportion de ménages dirigés par des femmes, leur niveau de pauvreté, leur possibilité d'accès à l'éducation et au marché du travail. La crise du COVID a entraîné un ralentissement de la migration urbaine, avec un retour potentiel des jeunes vers l'agriculture, ce

qui soulève la question de savoir si cela vise à accumuler du capital en vue d'un retour durable à l'agriculture.

Question transversale sur les partenariats

Avec l'ambition d'aborder le thème du système alimentaire territorial, le projet APICI, après plus de 10 ans d'actions, entre dans une nouvelle phase stratégique. En outre, s'appuyant sur le bilan et les acquis des phases précédentes, une évolution du mécanisme de mise en œuvre devrait être envisagée pour les prochaines phases. L'idée directrice serait de réviser l'approche par projet prévalant jusqu'à présent, pour un positionnement dans une logique d'accompagnement dans le faire faire et le transfert de compétences aux acteurs à vocation pérenne de la Province de Siem Reap. Plusieurs modalités peuvent ainsi être explorées, telles que logiquement l'ancrage du volet Système Alimentaire Territorial au niveau provincial, un partenariat plus ambitieux avec les départements provinciaux de l'agriculture sur la thématique de l'appui conseil pour le renforcement de la résilience des ménages agricoles, et encore le renforcement et l'accompagnement des coopératives en matière de professionnalisation et dans leur fonction de services aux membres. Un schéma d'assistance technique dédié serait mis en place pour soutenir cette structuration institutionnelle, avec des experts permanents au niveau provincial et des unités techniques au niveau des districts, pour fournir un soutien dans la définition des stratégies, l'assistance technique et le transfert de compétences aux équipes de district, et la coordination du système de suivi, d'évaluation et de capitalisation. Ce changement de paradigme entraînerait automatiquement l'obligation d'initier une réflexion sur la construction d'outils de mise à l'échelle, et d'assurer l'appropriation et la diffusion des bonnes pratiques et des leçons apprises par les acteurs eux-mêmes.

Synthèse des recommandations

Le rapport propose plusieurs recommandations, dont les principales sont synthétisées ci-après.

1. **Evolution stratégique du projet :**
 - Mettre en place une logique d'intervention axée sur le transfert des compétences acquises par le projet à des acteurs locaux ou provinciaux durables, tels que les services techniques publics provinciaux et les organisations de producteurs.
 - Accentuer les fonctions de capitalisation, de consolidation des connaissances acquises, de formation et de transfert de compétences techniques.
 - Maintenir la fonction d'innovation et de recherche-action du projet selon les besoins.
2. **Production maraîchère agroécologique :**
 - Consolider régulièrement les plans de production maraîchère au sein et entre les coopératives agricoles travaillant dans la province.
 - Renforcer les systèmes de contrôle interne des coopératives pour la production agroécologique.
 - Envisager des actions pour transformer les surplus de production non vendus.
3. **Commercialisation des légumes sous le système participatif de garantie (SPG) :**
 - Étudier les raisons de la faible participation des producteurs aux processus SPG.

- Plaider en faveur du transfert de la marque collective "Sovathapheap Siem Reap" du Provincial Department of Commerce au Farmers Weekly Market.
 - Veiller à ce que cette marque collective réponde aux normes de "légumes sains" mises en œuvre par les producteurs soutenus par les projets IADA & APICI.
 - Mener des études de marché et des campagnes de promotion pour élargir les parts de marchés et entraîner l'accroissement de l'offre.
4. **Production de riz :**
- Apprécier l'intérêt pour les petits agriculteurs de faire évoluer les propositions en matière de culture du riz agroécologique, en intégrant le recours raisonné et limité aux engrais de synthèse (p.ex. urée au stade tallage).
 - Explorer la faisabilité de mettre en place l'initiative Sustainable Rice Production en accordant une attention particulière à la possibilité pour les coopératives d'utiliser le label.
5. **Production et commercialisation de produits avicoles :**
- Réaliser une étude de marché préalable avant d'élaborer une stratégie de production, de certification et de marketing de poulets de chair (SPG).
 - Explorer d'autres spéculations possibles (porcs, pisciculture) si le marché n'est plus porteur pour la production locale de poulets.
 - Consolider la stratégie de soutien spécifique à la production et commercialisation d'œufs locaux
 - Continuer à soutenir la production familiale de poulets pour les ménages d'éleveurs les plus vulnérables.
6. **Dispositif d'appui conseil**
- Développer une stratégie et un dispositif intégré pour l'appui conseil aux agriculteurs en consolidant de manière pérenne le réseau des fermiers pilotes au sein des coopératives
 - Considérer des approches de "conseil en gestion agricole pour les petits agriculteurs" adaptées à la diversité des types d'agriculteurs, allant au-delà de l'approche « boîte à outils ».
7. **Soutien aux groupes d'épargne et de crédit (SVG) :**
- Mettre à jour toutes les règles et outils de gouvernance, de gestion et de suivi pour professionnaliser les pratiques et créer les conditions de la consolidation institutionnelle future.
 - Introduire des outils de gestion informatique pour produire des informations et des analyses instantanées.
8. **Soutien aux coopératives agricoles :**
- Réaliser un travail avec les membres des coopératives sur le développement collectif d'une vision partagée des rôles, principes et objectifs des coopératives, adossé à une programmation pluriannuelle et des plans d'affaires régulièrement mis à jour.
 - Concevoir et mettre en œuvre une stratégie significative pour renforcer les capacités institutionnelles des coopératives.
9. **Systèmes alimentaires territoriaux :**
- Clarifier la portée et les objectifs du concept des systèmes alimentaires territoriaux (TFS).

- Prévoir de mobiliser les ressources en adéquation aux ambitions du futur projet, notamment en termes d'expertise thématique, ainsi que de collecte et d'analyse de données sur l'alimentation et la nutrition dans la province.

10. Méthodes de gestion de projet et de programmation :

- Actualiser les diagnostics au niveau des districts sur les changements dans les exploitations agricoles et leurs systèmes de production depuis le début du projet (2011).
- Structurer les interventions du projet dans le cadre de la construction d'une logique d'intervention systémique (arbre à problèmes).

11. Système de suivi et d'évaluation :

- Lier le système de suivi et d'évaluation au cadre logique du projet.
- Élaborer un manuel de procédures de suivi-évaluation.
- Introduire un système de codage des agriculteurs pour consolider et multiplier les possibilités d'analyse des résultats du projet.

12. Genre :

- Enrichir les connaissances du projet sur la dynamique du changement démographique dans les districts cibles, en mettant l'accent sur l'évolution du rôle des femmes et des jeunes dans l'économie agricole.

1. Introduction

This external evaluation of the Semi-Intensive Low Input Peasant Agriculture (APICI) project in Cambodia, the third since the project began in 2010, is co-financed by GRET¹ and F3E¹.

Its aim is to contribute to the preparation of future projects by partners CD92 and GRET in Siem Reap Province. It aims to enable the partners to confirm, deepen and enrich future orientations, on the basis of achievements and lessons that can be mobilized for the future.

The report is structured around two first chapters, which present the context of the study and the evaluation methodology. Chapter 3 analyses the 3 specific objectives of the project in its current phase. Two cross-cutting questions on the monitoring and evaluation system and gender are then addressed. The penultimate chapter deals with the question of partnership arrangements. The final chapter summarizes the recommendations.

¹ There were a mid-term evaluation in 2012 and a final evaluation in 2013 when the project was funded by EU

2. Scope of the study

2.1. The agricultural context of Siem Reap province: issues, challenges and problems

Although its share of GDP has fallen sharply in recent decades (23.5% of GDP in 2018 versus 43% in 1996), Cambodia's agricultural sector still represents a major challenge in terms of food, social and environmental issues. 60,6% of the population still lives in rural areas in 2019, compared to the 80,5%, ten years before². Rural population depends mainly on agriculture for its livelihood. “*The total number of household agricultural holdings in Cambodia is estimated to be 1,726,338*”³.

Siem Reap's Province is located in north-western Cambodia, just over 300 km from Phnom Penh on National Road 6. The namesake capital of Siem Reap province is located in the south of the Province on the shores of the Tonle Sap Lake, the greatest sweet water reserve in whole Southeast Asia. The province is the gateway to the world-famous Angkor temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which generates a high level of tourist activity structuring a significant part of the local economy (hotels, handicrafts, construction), complementing growing business activities. The province's economy ranks second nationally. The completion of the new Siem Reap international airport, due to open at the end of 2023, testifies to this economic dynamism. Cambodian authorities plan to boost tourism economy with an objective of 4-6 millions of international tourist per year in 2035⁴ (against 1 to 2 million today).

Siem Reap's population is estimate in 2019 at 1.006.512 people⁵ and remains predominantly rural. Despite the huge touristic potential, the province still remains among the poorest in the country. According to World Bank, 45% of the population under the poverty line, which, for

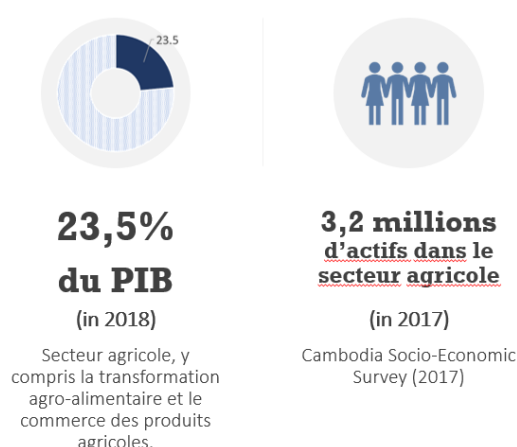


Figure 1: Overview of the role of agriculture in the Cambodian economy

² Poverty assessment. Toward A More Inclusive and Resilient Cambodia. Wendy Karamba and Kimsun Tong. November 2022. World Bank Group

³ Cambodia Inter-Censal Agriculture Survey 2019 (CIAS19) - Final Report- National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. FAO – USAID – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

⁴ Tourism Development Master Plan in Siem Reap 2021-2035. Royal Kingdom of Cambodia; 2021

⁵ General Population Census of the Kingdom of Cambodia 2019. National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning.

rural areas is approximately 3,200 riel per day – roughly equivalent to \$0.75USD⁶. While rural dwellers living close to urban and tourist centers can diversify their sources of income, the further away the villages are, the more rural dwellers rely on agriculture for their livelihood and benefit relatively little from the region's tourism potential. Like the rest of Cambodia, Siem Reap's rural areas remain underprivileged, characterized by lack of access to health care and difficult economic living conditions linked to low-remuneration farming activities, limited by land fragmentation, low technical standards and lack of capital. Agriculture is largely subsistence farming, characterised by small family farms and farming systems based on rice, mainly rainfed rice. In addition to rice, (small-scale) family livestock farming is fairly widespread.



Figure 2: Siem Reap Province in Cambodia

The country suffered severe economic and social repercussions as a result of the COVID 19 crisis. Locally, the crisis totally devastated the province's tourism sector, due to the closure of borders. The crisis also led to price disruptions, and in particular a rise in the price of agricultural inputs.

However, Siem Reap's population potentially represents - even before Covid - a larger market for food products than the tourism sector. Consumers' growing awareness of food safety issues is reflected in greater concern for product quality, particularly regarding pesticides.

⁶ Siem Reap Population: Facts and Figures. <https://www.siemreap.net/guides/siem-reap/siem-reap-population/>

2.2. APICI project presentation

2.2.1. General framework of the project

The Semi-Intensive Low Input Peasant Agriculture (APICI) project aims to improve and securing the living conditions of family farmers through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province. The approach relies on technical and financial support to promote a wide scope of activities appropriated to the small farmers (vegetable and rice production, chicken livestock, small scale irrigation devices, access to saving and credit systems, etc.) as well as farmers structuration as a mean to improve the linking of the farmers to markets and to deliver services to their members.

The project takes place in a context characterized, among other things, by a political will to encourage and support the development of agricultural cooperatives, with the creation of a dedicated Department within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, even though most of the cooperatives set up in the country are the result of initiatives supported by agricultural development projects and the work of NGOs.

The project's promoters are GRET and its partner, the Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD), a Cambodian NGO founded in 2009 with a focus on agricultural and rural development, which receive financial support from the Hauts-de-Seine Departmental Council as part of a decentralized cooperation initiative with Siem Reap Province. The Provincial Department of Commerce (PDoC) and the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDoA) are also involved in the decentralized cooperation approach, with the latter, a part-time contribution from a technician from the Provincial Department of Agriculture.

The first decentralized cooperation agreement was signed in 2010 between the Hauts-de-Seine Department and Siem Reap Province. This agreement has been renewed three times, the latest on March 15, 2021 for a further 4 years, running until 2025. The project implemented over this long period targets family farms and focuses on improving and diversifying agricultural production through agroecology, and enhancing the value of local products by improving access to Siem Reap markets.

It should be noted that as part of its decentralized cooperation policy in Cambodia, the Hauts-de-Seine department is supporting another project in the same province of Siem Reap. Implemented by the NGO AGRISUD-International, this project “Agro-ecological intensification and diversification of peri-urban family farming in Siem Reap” (IADA) pursues some objectives comparable to those of the APICI project, and is distinguished in particular by its complementary geographical scope (in terms of targeted districts and communes, cf. **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**) and also a specific focus on support for communal authorities in participatory local planning with a view to the emergence of sustainable agriculture. Both APICI and IADA projects have established collaborative relationships both in strategic planning and technical exchanges areas.

2.2.2. Main evolution in the project's intervention rationale since 2010 to 2021

The project's intervention rationale has evolved over the years, with 3 distinct phases since its launch in January 2011 (cf. Annex 1: Summary of APICI's objectives and activities since its inception).

APICI 1- January 2011 to June 2013: The original general objective of the APICI 1 was to Improve the income and living conditions of farmers in the Siem Reap region, Sotr Nikum District, by increasing production, diversifying farming and supporting the creation and strengthening of producer groups. The aim was to support family farming, by targeting a limited number of activities: village development strategies, improved production of rice, vegetables and chicken, better marketing of agricultural products and targeting the poorest farming households. 1500 beneficiaries were targeted, throughout the Sotr Nikum District. Approaches included securing access to irrigation water (collective ponds, individual boreholes) and promoting village savings groups.



Figure 3: Intervention districts for the APICI and IADA projects in Siem Reap province: APICI in red, IADA underlined in green

APICI 2 - June 2013 to June 2017: The APICI 2 project objective evolved through the introduction of vegetable and poultry marketing support in the general objective. It has extended its area of intervention to 50 villages in the two districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong (cf. Figure 3), again targeting 1,500 beneficiaries. The project then focused more structurally on promoting agroecology within farming households, as a lever for securing and ecologically intensifying production, and organizing systems of marketing for those productions on Siem Reap markets.

APICI 3 - June 2017 to June 2021: From APICI 3 onwards, the choice was made to position agroecology across all components, whether in terms of production, marketing, advisory support systems or producer structuring. Targeting has also been extended to 1,800 beneficiaries in 54 villages in the two districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong. To achieve this, APICI 3 worked to structure agricultural cooperatives in order to concentrate the supply of products and services to members. Targeted approaches have been initiated to promote short circuits for restaurants, the setting up of specialized markets, and the introduction of participatory guarantee systems for products derived from agroecology techniques.

In summary, APICI 3's activities have targeted family farms, through advice and training, support for structuring and market integration, to enable them to generate stable, sustainable incomes. In operational terms, the aim is to work at farm household level:

- Continued improvement and diversification of agricultural production (market gardening, rice, chicken) through agroecology, a vector of agricultural productivity, better coverage of the food and nutritional needs of rural populations, preservation of the environment and consumer health;
- By developing the value of local products through better access to Siem Reap markets, based on support for the organization of producers and integrating the introduction of "agroecological" quality signs based on participatory certification, according to a territorial approach including local authorities and the organized players in the supply chains. The activities also focus on setting up a weekly retail market with IADA/AGRISUD and the Provincial Department of Commerce, supplied by numerous cooperatives in the province, in addition to those supported by APICI;
- Access to services integrating technical, economic and organizational aspects. In particular, capacity-building for leading producers is based on a "farmer-to-farmer" approach, with the project focusing on the mobilization of social networks and digital technologies. In addition to supporting the organization of producers for access to technical services and marketing, which has led to support for the establishment of three cooperatives (ECOFARM⁷, FUDAC⁸, DSAC⁹), the project has also continued to set up and support savings and credit groups to support investment in agricultural activities.

The following diagram illustrates the wide range of activities addressed by APICI between 2010 and 2020 and the main results achieved.

⁷ Sovatepheap Thoamcheat Agricultural Cooperative

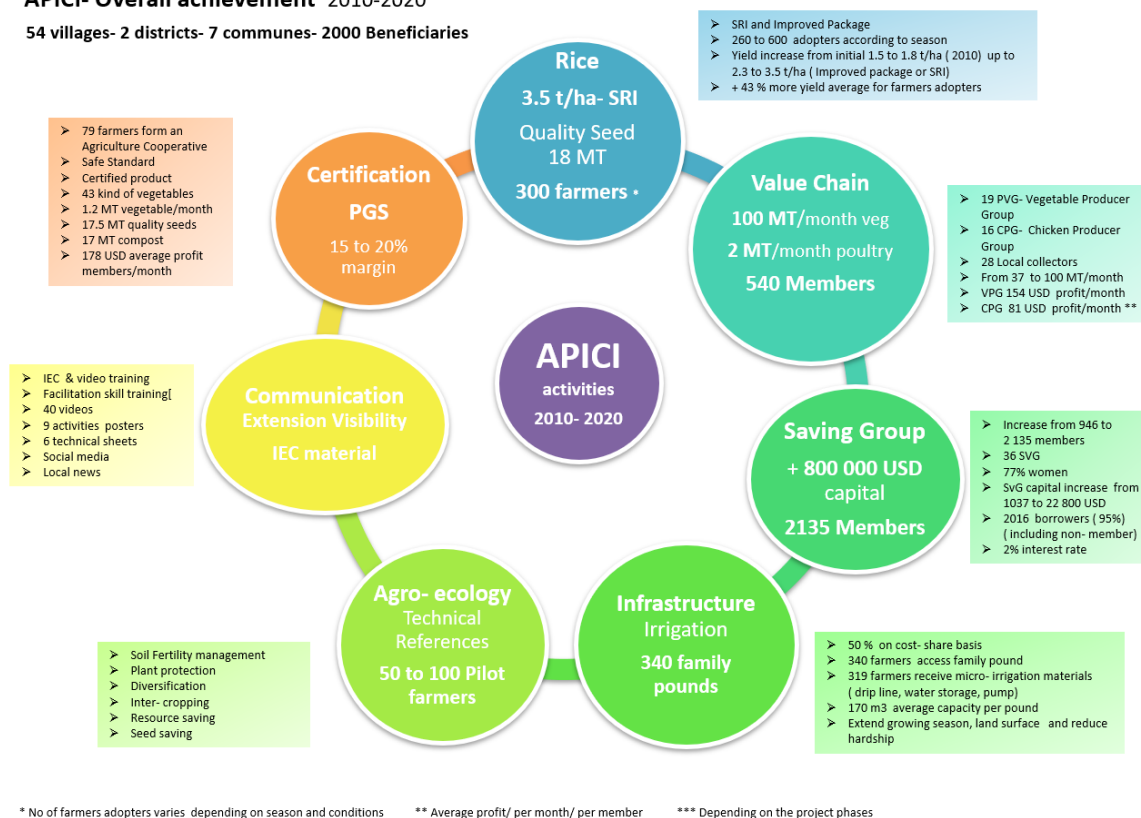
⁸ Farmer Unity for Development of Agriculture Cooperative

⁹ Danrun Samaki Agricultural Cooperative

Figure 4: Overall achievement of APICI project - 2010-2020

APICI- Overall achievement 2010-2020

54 villages- 2 districts- 7 communes- 2000 Beneficiaries



Source : Capitalization report APICI project - Farming system evolution - Program tool box Agroecology performance & Case study - Future prospect - Period 2010-2020. Prepared by Stephane Fayon, - September 2020 - GRET CIRDC

2.2.3. Revised APICI 4 project objectives

The current 2021-2025 phase of the APICI project is funded to the tune of €477,560. The first year of APICI 4 (mid 2021-mid 2022) was part of the logical chain of APICI 3. Its overall aim is to improve and secure the living conditions of small family farms through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. More specifically, the aim is to improve and secure the living conditions of almost 2,400 farmers through the development of more efficient production and marketing systems for agricultural products, via support for agroecology, the structuring of professional agricultural organizations and improved access to markets.

However, following the technical monitoring mission by the Hauts de Seine Department in May 2022, the specific objectives of the APICI 4 project were revised in order to introduce the support to the construction of a territorial food systems development plan in collaboration with the Provincial Authorities. The intention is therefore to scale up the project results and better integrate the territorial dimension into the development of healthy and sustainable agricultural and food systems at provincial level.

Consequently, the current specific APICI 4 objectives are as follows:

- OS1: Promote agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production;
- OS2: Strengthen producers' organizations and structure local agricultural value chains to secure production and facilitate the sale of products on markets;
- OS3: Support provincial stakeholders in the construction and implementation of a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems.

The new objective OS3 should lead to the development of a provincial food plan articulating political choices, strategic decisions and actions to be taken in terms of production and distribution of this production to guarantee healthy and sustainable food for the territory.

The direct beneficiaries in Siem Reap Province are:

- 2,400 farmers, 75% of them women, in 54 villages;
- 35 groups of vegetable and chicken farmers;
- 3 agricultural cooperatives with 301 members, including 214 women (71%), 13 of whom are members of the cooperative board;
- 36 savings and credit groups with 2,642 members, including 2,031 women (77%), and 90 women on the 120-member management committees of these groups;
- 1 weekly market for local produce, involving 18 cooperatives (supported by APICI and IADA and also by other projects and Provincial Department of Agriculture).

- ☞ **The evaluation addresses specifically the APICI 4 phase. Some specific focus on actions conducted during the previous phases could be done according to the needs of the analysis.**

2.3. APICI evaluation: objectives, approach and timetable

2.3.1. Evaluation objectives and challenges

The objectives of the evaluation are closely linked to recent changes decided by the APICI partners.

In its current phase, the project has started to give new impetus to the implementation of efficient and sustainable territorial food systems (OS3), and the partners intend to strengthen their efforts in this area by moving from a project-based approach to a territorial approach and capacity building - as public project owners - for Siem Reap province.

In this perspective, the Hauts de Seine Departmental Council will submit a project funding application to the AFD's Local Authorities Financing Facility (FICOL) in 2023, with a view to starting work in 2024. At the same time, GRET has applied for EU funding for a new project to be implemented in synergy with the FICOL-funded project. The overall objective of this project is to empower Cambodian civil society organisations to improve national sustainable, inclusive and safe food systems in partnership with the public sector. In summary, two specific objectives will be pursued:

- the acquisition by farmers' organizations, in Siem Reap province, of strong capacities to provide services to smallholder farmers and promote sustainable, inclusive and safe agri-food systems
- the involvement of farmers' and consumers' organisations in multi-stakeholder dialogue at provincial and national levels and their contribution to the implementation of plans for the development of sustainable, inclusive and safe agri-food systems.

This external evaluation is intended to contribute to the preparation of the future project. It should enable the partners to confirm, deepen and enrich the new orientations, based in particular on a review of the various underlying assumptions. Over the past 12 years, the project has diversified enormously, becoming more integrated and multi-sectoral, having succeeded in encouraging the emergence of institutions of various kinds with a long-term vocation. We hypothesize that the project's capacity-building and exemplary value (replicability, and influence on local public action) were important expectations in terms of results and will be given particular attention by the evaluation team. In this respect, the aim will be to put the project's actions into historical perspective, and to extract the lessons learned and lessons that can be applied in the future.

For GRET, the evaluation will specifically enrich its strategy of supporting stakeholders in the development of local public policies. For the Département des Hauts-de-Seine (CD92), it will feed into a broader strategic framework relating to its decentralized cooperation policy in Cambodia, and in particular its support for its partner, Siem Reap Province.

2.3.2. Evaluation methodology

It should be remembered that the evaluation's expectations were primarily focused on an overall analysis of the strategic framework of the project's interventions, through a targeted examination of their relevance and sustainability. The review of other usual evaluation criteria - such as coherence, effectiveness and efficiency - will therefore only be mobilised on an ad hoc and non-systematic basis, according to the needs of the analysis.

An analysis of the intervention system was also requested, both in terms of the governance and organisation of the intervention and in terms of the monitoring and evaluation system. Finally, a focus on the role of women and young people in the sectors and the impact of the project in this respect was also expected.

In order to carry out these analyses, the evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner to allow for shared reflection and ownership of the findings with the APICI project team. Following an initial scoping meeting, interviews were conducted with each member of the technical components, the project manager and the technical assistant.

A wide range of people were interviewed, either individually or as representatives of their respective institutions, both in the field at the farms level, at commune and provincial level, and in commune and provincial technical departments.

Wherever possible, and depending on the availability of each party, the observations and initial analyses resulting from these consultations and field visits were triangulated with the project teams in order to improve understanding, assess relevance and ensure joint ownership.

Priority was given to qualitative analysis, in line with the expectations expressed in the Terms of Reference. However, certain quantitative criteria were of course taken into account where necessary, with the evaluation team mobilising existing data from the project's monitoring and evaluation system.

Finally, a collective restitution took place, associating for this occasion the GRET team of the APICI project as well as the AGRISUD team of the IADA project.

2.3.3. Conduct of the evaluation

The evaluation, which started at the end of April 2023, was organised in 3 successive phases (see Table 1 for more details):

- The preparatory phase, with the holding of the inception meeting and the steering committee, the launch of the literature review and the first scoping interviews with the GRET headquarters teams and the head of the international cooperation department of the Département des Hauts de Seine. This phase led to the preparation of the inception report (Deliverable 1), which detailed the evaluation questions to be addressed during the fieldwork;
- The fieldwork phase, conducted throughout Siem Reap Province, lasted two weeks from 18 June and included visits to APICI project sites and data collection from various stakeholders. It culminated in the above-mentioned debriefing session with the GRET and AGRISUD teams. This phase resulted in the delivery of a mission brief (Deliverable 2);
- The analysis consolidation and feedback phase included the drafting of preliminary (Deliverable 3) and final (Deliverable 4) evaluation reports in September/October 2023, as well as a wider public feedback session based on the presentation of a power point (Deliverable 5).

Table 1: Organisation and timetable of the APICI project evaluation

Phases	Activities	Dates/periods	
Phase 1: Study preparation	Activity 1.1. Kick-off meeting	Thursday	27/04/2023
	Activity 1.2. review of project bibliography	-	09/06/2023
	Activity 1.3. Meeting with steering committee	Wednesday	31/05/2023
	Activity 1.3. Framing interviews	Friday	09/06/2023
	Activity 1.4. Drafting and validation of the scoping memorandum (D1)	Friday	09/06/2023
Phase 2: Field data collection and analysis	International and national experts outward journey	Saturday	17/06/2023
		Sunday	18/06/2023
	Activity 2.1. Site visits, data collection with stakeholders	Monday	19/06/2023
	Kick-off meeting for field mission	Tuesday	20/06/2023
		Wednesday	21/06/2023
		Thursday	22/06/2023
	Interviews with : - project beneficiaries - technical and institutional partners - other downstream/marketing players.	Friday	23/06/2023
		Saturday	24/06/2023
		Sunday	25/06/2023
		Monday	26/06/2023
		Tuesday	27/06/2023
	Activity 2.2. Data analysis and preparation of feedback workshop	Wednesday	28/06/2023
		Thursday	29/06/2023
	Activity 2.3. In situ participatory analysis and feedback workshop	Friday	30/06/2023
Phase 3: Consolidation and presentation of the study	International and national experts return trip	Saturday	01/07/2023
		Sunday	02/07/2023
	Activity 2.4. Drafting and delivery of the aide-memoire (D2)	Wednesday	04/07/2023
	Activity 3.1. Drafting of interim evaluation report (D3)	-	September
	Activity 3.2. Handover of draft evaluation report	-	September
	Activity 3.3. Submission of final report & summary document (D4)	-	September / October
	Activity 3.4. Extended public feedback (D5)	-	Before end of 2023

2.3.4. Sources of information and organisation of information gathering

The main sources of information used are as follows:

- Documentary resources:
 - Project documents ;
 - Implementation reports ;
 - Technical mission and capitalisation reports;
 - Documents relevant to the context (studies, public policy documents, etc.).
- Data from the project's Monitoring & Evaluation system;
- Interviews, group discussions, meetings, etc:
 - Meetings and interviews with the entire APICI project team (individual and/or focus group);
 - Interviews and/or group or individual discussions with beneficiaries (in the various crops and/or activities targeted by the project: chicken, vegetable, rice production, saving group, irrigation, etc.);
 - Interviews with pilot farmers;

- Group discussions with leaders or board members of ECOFARM, FUDAC and DSAC cooperatives;
- Interviews with Siem Reap provincial authorities and technical services:
 - o Provincial administration department,
 - o Provincial international cooperation department,
 - o Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
 - o Provincial Department of Commerce
- Interviews with the administrative authorities and technical departments of agriculture in the districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong
- Interviews with commune and village authorities: commune of Danrun, villages of Chrey Khang Tboung & Chrey Khang Cheung;
- Interviews with retail sellers and buyers at the Farmer Weekly Market,
- Interview with the market manager of the Siem Reap Farmer Market shop.

- Direct observations in the field at producers' homes and in situ in their cultivated plots

The choice of people or groups met in the field was made with a view not to being statistically or geographically representative, but rather, given the time and logistical constraints, to covering the diversity of stakeholders and situations in terms of technical support themes and activities.

For additional information, a full list of the people we met is presented on Annex 6.2, while Annex 6.3 presents interview guidelines for each type of stakeholders.

3. Analyses and answers to evaluative questions

3.1. Relevance of founding pillars of the APICI project

An expected introductory question of the evaluation concerns the analysis of the robustness of the basic postulates of GRET's actions and on which the design of the APICI project is based, both globally and with regard to the agricultural context of Siem Reap Province and its evolution.

Box 1: The agricultural model promoted by GRET

The agricultural model promoted by GRET is based on the development of agroecology, the support for peasant and family farming, the support for small and medium-sized enterprises, the promotion of empowering and inclusive economic models for women and young people and institutional strengthening of collective structures.

Source: based on Terms of reference

Despite a steady decline in its importance, Cambodian agriculture still plays a major role in supporting economic growth. Most of the sector is based on family farming, which provides employment, food and basic income. However, this sector is highly dependent on the vagaries of the climate, and is often exposed to floods and droughts. It faces significant challenges in terms of an ageing population, land fragmentation and the difficulty of securing access to arable land. Adequate remuneration for the products sold is hampered by difficulties of access to markets, due to remoteness, the atomization of the products sold, and the lack of information on prices and expected qualities.

Faced with this situation, national agricultural policies struggle to offer advisory and training services, and access to inputs and equipment, that are adapted to the constraints of the majority of small-scale producers. Indeed, they are mainly oriented towards specialized approaches for specific products and cash crops, particularly for export, and promote larger-scale, capital-intensive agriculture, often accompanied by environmentally unsustainable practices.

The relevance of supporting family farming:

It is important and necessary to support family farming for the following main reasons:

- Small-scale farmers possess irreplaceable knowledge and know-how in terms of agricultural production, natural resources management and biodiversity preservation;
- Family farming is a major contributor to food security at local, regional and national levels, and provides important socio-economic safety nets in a country where poverty rates are still high;

- Maintaining family farming, if possible viable and prosperous, contributes to good land management and occupation, whether in terms of maintaining agrarian landscapes, natural spaces, or keeping populations in rural areas;
- In this respect, the shaping of rural landscapes contributes to the attractiveness of rural areas for tourism, a point of particular importance for Siem Reap province, a world hot spot for tourism.

The relevance of supporting agroecology:

- Agroecology is based on the ecological intensification of natural production processes, with tolerances for the use of chemical inputs under certain conditions (uncontrollable insect and parasitic attacks on crops, products authorized by official regulations, compliance with technical prescriptions);
- As such, agroecology allow on the one hand to mitigate climate change by reducing green house gaz and increasing carbon storage in soil, and on the other hand to adapt to climate change by improving water retention in soils (reducing vulnerability to drought);
- Overall, agro-ecological approaches contribute to reducing the negative externalities of conventional agriculture, both in terms of health, for farmers and consumers alike, and the preservation of natural resources (water, forests, biodiversity, etc.);
- This approach is particularly well-suited to family farming under certain conditions (availability of labor force, adequate management of soil fertility and risks to household food and monetary security, existence of an informed and remunerative market for the benefits of this type of agriculture);
- In their cruising phase, agroecological approaches theoretically enable a certain degree of security in agricultural production, due in particular to the reduced use of chemical inputs. In a larger scale, it should contribute to an improvement of the trade balance due the chemicals inputs imports reduction.

The relevance of supporting producer structuring:

- Overall, it is understood that structuring producers, whether formally or informally, is a source of progress on various fronts, based on the creation of capacity to collectively develop innovations and options that would be impossible on an individual basis (knowledge sharing, farm advisory services, saving and loan, marketing, etc.).
- On a more institutional level, the aim is to empower producers to defend the promotion of agricultural development strategies adapted for small-scale farming, and to defend their interests.
- In a national context where support for the establishment of agricultural cooperatives is particularly strong, and where the logic is unfortunately all too often top-down, it is pertinent to develop and propose strategies for structuring farmers, starting from the grassroots level and thus enriching the reference frameworks in this field;

The relevance of support for small and medium-sized enterprises:

- When it comes to marketing products bearing agro-ecological quality labels, it makes sense to rely on small economic structures - whether cooperative, as in the case of APICI, or private, as in the case of IADA - to take charge of creating links with markets. These structures, which often emanate from the initiatives of the rural players concerned, share common interests with producers in the development of value chains. They have the capacity to take into account and adjust to the constraints of supplying producers, and to ensure the transmission of information on the state of demand, and thus to co-construct with them solutions to meet them.

The relevance of the gender approach.

- In Cambodia's rural areas, the gender issue has many facets: ownership and transfer of agricultural land¹⁰, socio-economic conditions for women's participation in production and marketing activities, remuneration of labour on the labour market, role in farm management, participation and power within local governance bodies, etc. The fragility of family-run farms, cyclical crises such as the COVID and structural crises such as climate change, are leading to changes in the way these farms are run.
- The economical fragility of family-run farms, conjunctural crises such as COVID, and structural crises such as climate change, are leading to structural changes in the agricultural sector, resulting in increased migration, often by men, and the disinterest of younger generations in continuing farming after their parents.
- These developments are likely to change the role of women farmers, who in many cases are gradually finding themselves in the position of having to take charge of farm management.
- Understanding and supporting these changes - which are taking place in Siem Reap Province and have repercussions for the activities of the APICI project - is undoubtedly a strategic challenge.

3.2. Analysis of the APICI 4 project components: relevance of the objectives and activities, sustainability of the results

In order to answer the questions posed in the terms of reference, the following analysis is based on a non-exhaustive review of a selection of activities, based in particular on their

¹⁰ According to a study conducted in 2014 by USAID, "Women-headed households are more vulnerable to shocks, have fewer income generation opportunities, and have smaller land holdings. Gender is a main determinant of land ownership for agricultural use, with the Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey (CSES) 2014 noting that men own 88 percent of land. Few women hold individual land titles, although some do hold joint titles. Some respondents and research note that joint registration risks constraining women's decision-making power on land use, sale, and transfer of land and that women who divorce may struggle to gain claim to the land. Women-headed households, which make up 22 percent of households in Cambodia, face even greater constraints. On average, women-headed households own 55 percent less land than a male-headed household, which is just slightly more than one-tenth of agricultural land".- USAID/CAMBODIA - CAMBODIA GENDER ASSESSMENT' - SEPTEMBER 2016 - Contract No.: AID-442-TO-16-000001. p33.

importance since the start of the project. In the absence of a EU/AFD type logical framework, these activities are classified arbitrarily under each of the Specific Objectives as presented in the GRET CD92 -APICI 4 phase 2 annual financing agreement, corresponding to the 2022/2023 period (cf. 6.1. Annex 1 – Table APICI - Phase 2).

For each group of activities, the analysis covers a review of relevance, a summary of the main observations made during the mission, and recommendations.

These recommendations are summarized at the end of the report.

3.2.1. Specific Objective # 1: Promoting agroecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production

This objective of promoting agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production is part of the general framework of support for family farming by proposing alternatives and/or innovations likely to improve the viability and resilience of farming households. The aim is to strengthen their ability to cope with climate and agricultural risks, food security and income (market risks). The approach should therefore ensure that, in each of these areas, the proposals developed and/or implemented represent an improvement on the situation prevailing at the start of the intervention.

The principles of agro-ecological intensification are particularly well-suited to contributing to this viability and resilience. Diversification of production, particularly within the framework of rotations, valorization of local resources (increased biomass), valorization of family labor and peasant know-how are the pillars of the resilience of this model.

Below, we provide an analytical overview of some of the activities carried out by APICI within the framework of this strategic objective 1.

a. Support to Agroecological production (vegetable - irrigation):

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - The agroecological vegetable production techniques developed by the APICI project are simple and adapted to farmers with small plots of land.
 - They are based on intercropping, the production of solid and liquid compost using available local resources, integrated pest and disease management, table-top techniques for vegetable cultivation, conservation of local vegetable seeds, and so on.
 - Siem reap Irrigation is commonly used by growers, especially during the dry season and particularly in market gardening. With a view to intensifying production, the aim is to introduce and test different irrigation systems to save water and reduce the labor required to water vegetables, such as macro sprinkler, micro sprinkler, spray tube and drip irrigation, combined with electric or solar pump systems.
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*

- The mindset of small-scale farmers has clearly evolved, moving from the usual practice of producing a limited number of vegetable species to the diversified production of vegetables using agroecological techniques, recognized as healthy for both health and the soil;
- According to APICI 2023 activities report, in 2022, 640 producer households (mainly members of the Ecofarm cooperative, but also of the FUDAC cooperative) grow agroecological vegetables and sell them on specific markets (Siem Reap Farmers Weekly Market, Amarak in Phnom Penh) or conventional markets for surpluses (local weekly markets)¹¹;
- About 40 tons of agroecological vegetables and fruits are currently sold annually in the 2021-2022 period;
- According to the presentation during the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue workshop "How to produce local, healthy and certificated products in Siem Reap" on 28th June, 2023, the implementation of agroecological techniques by farmers is fragmented: 373 producing households produce liquid compost, 138 households solid compost, 431 households use biopesticides;
- A small number of farmers are unable to produce vegetables all year round, due to their limited availability of farmland (forcing them to grow rice in the rainy season and vegetables in the dry season), limited investment capital (irrigation system, greenhouse, etc.) and access to water (especially in the dry season).
- Growers with large-scale vegetable family farms find it difficult to apply agroecological practices, due to a lack of manpower, the low effectiveness of biopesticides in controlling pests, and lower yields during the first years compared with the conventional system, due to the change in soil fertility management methods, with a transition from an intensive system relying on chemical fertilizers to a system favoring the use of organic matter to gradually reconstitute soil fertility on the basis of natural cycles ;
- The majority of growers seem to have abandoned the use of agrochemical inputs (insecticides, synthetic fertilizers). This applies above all to market gardening, while field crops (notably rice) appear to be grown using conventional methods. The "watertightness" of the various agroecological and conventional production workshops with regard to chemical inputs can be questioned in certain cases, without becoming too general: risk of cross-contamination due, for example, to the absence of sufficient buffer zones between the different crops, crop rotation alternating conventional and agroecological production on the same plot (residual effect of chemical inputs applied to the previous crop), compartmentalization of treatment product storage, possibility of using chemical inputs on agroecological crops, etc. ;
- To date, the project has supported the construction and rehabilitation of 420 family ponds, promoted several types of irrigation systems to meet the needs of each and trained farmers in the installation, use and maintenance of irrigation systems. This component is the subject of intensive farmer training (use of different irrigation systems according to cropping systems, maintenance and protection of ponds) and action research with farmers to assess the conditions for adopting the numerous proposed techniques (plot size, type of crops, ease of use, etc.).

¹¹APICI PROJECT REPORT June 2023 – p14. : Table 3: General information of comparison on vegetables production since 2011 until 2022

- *Sustainability and future challenges*

- The price paid to producers for agro-ecological produce is only slightly higher than that for conventional vegetables, even though it is assumed that yields are lower than for conventional produce and that agro-ecological practices require more time (labor); even if agro-ecological production requires less expenditure on (chemical) inputs, this observation could contribute to weakening the objective of economic profitability of the activity, and its attractiveness to producers;
- The specifications for the market garden production of the two cooperatives ECOFARM and FUDAC include:
 - Requirements in terms of agroecological production techniques, conditions and limits on the use of chemical fertilizers, and harvesting;
 - Consequences of non-compliance;

On the other hand, the system for verifying good practices, either with a view to granting the guarantee to the producer, or for subsequent monitoring of compliance with practices, is addressed in principle, but remains imprecise in institutional (who issues the certificates?) and operational terms (what mechanisms? what control point?).

- Most vegetable seeds are bought on the market, at a high price; they are sometimes of poor quality, and mixed with chemical substances (pre-treated seeds) not consistent with agro-environmental practices;
- The irrigation systems installed appear to be suitable mainly for medium-and large-sized family farmers. Micro-sprinkler and drip irrigation techniques appear to be better suited to the conditions of small-scale farmers, but their characteristics (system and pumping capacity) mean that cultivation systems need to be adapted to the technical characteristics of the systems (spacing and size of beds, ease of operation, etc.). The determinants of system adoption by farmers and the question of the cost and profitability of investment appear to be subjects that require further investigation¹².

- *Recommendations*

- The internal control systems for agroecological production practices should be reviewed and fully implemented within cooperatives and with their downstream buyers. It would aim to control the risks of contamination between agroecological and conventional products, as well as from the production stage through to marketing. This tool would help build trust between members and also with consumers. It would have to be designed transparently by the stakeholders, and applicable autonomously and at low cost by the cooperatives. The participation of consumers or downstream players in value chains could be included in the controls, to contribute to the confidence and reputation of production;
- Capacities of ECOFARM and FUDAC to elaborate Vegetable production plans (who produces what, in what areas, at what periods according to the market price fluctuation, in what quantities) could be assessed; but more globally, it might be fruitful to organize larger marketing working groups with ACs working with NGO in the area of intervention, (such as those of the Farmers Weekly Market) together with the buyers to build vegetable production global plan to respond to the dynamics of market demand (type of vegetable, periods, quantity) and also to regulate the risks of occasional overproduction at given periods;

¹² Micro irrigation systems testing results in APICI project. Draft paper. APICI

- ACs members mentioned that in certain situations, surplus production of market garden products sometimes might occurred. The mission did not have the opportunity to examine in depth if it were confirmed that there was a structural surplus justifying processing / preservation actions. But, above all, if there was a potential for increasing supply at producer level, in line with market demand for processed products, actions to support product processing and preservation could be envisaged. The aim would be to boost production and generate greater added value for producers.

b. Support to sustainable rice production

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - Over the years, the project has carried out extensive action research and farmer training to propose improved technical itineraries for wet season rice cultivation, in line with the general objective of supporting sustainable agriculture for small-scale farmers. Based on SRI (“système de riziculture intensive”) principles and their adaptation to farmers' production conditions, the aim was to provide options for significantly increasing rice yields through seed selection, nursery techniques, transplanting young plants in rows with wider spacing, early weeding and natural fertilizers.
 - In addition, a group of producers of improved rice seeds (Quality Seed Production/QSP) has been formed since 2015, the aim was to enable farmers to improve the quality and production of their rice without changing their usual practices, by adopting and using better quality seeds, contributing as such in the incomes increasing. The production costs are usually affordable, and the system allows to produce important quantity. However, one of the main challenges is to secure and to guarantee the seeds quality.
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*
 - Several hundred farm households have benefited from SRI training since the project began; unfortunately, the promising results of the first few years then saw a significant decline; thus, in the first year, 100 rice growers tested the techniques during the rainy season, a figure that peaked at 600 rice growers in 2016. From 2017 to 2018, there were just 100 rice growers adopting the techniques, the explanation coming from the robustness of the techniques in the face of increasing rainfall irregularity and the lack of manpower for this of the trend towards modern farming technology. From 2019 to 2023, a large number of SRI training courses have been renewed with several hundred growers, based on growers' proposals and the technical support of the project (consultant), in an attempt to adapt the SRI technique to SRA (such as abandoning row seeding). However, only 50% of growers would apply them fully and the other 50% partially.

In general, the principles of SRI backed by agroecological practices are sound, but they do make a number of technical and labor-intensive demands, such as transplanting in rows and collecting a large volume of natural fertilizer/compost. In addition, farmers are increasingly confronted with irregular rainfall (late or early rains, dry spells during the rainy season), an increasingly limited availability of farm labor in the province due to its low remuneration in favor of jobs in town and migration outside the province. This is typically a situation in which farmers have to make a trade-off in terms of opportunity cost between the large-scale mobilization of labor on rice plots for a

hoped-for but limited profitability at the end of the rice season, and a certain, immediate or even higher monetary gain from the use of labor on other crops or by selling it on the labor market;

- Regarding seed production, the number of rice seed producers has decreased from 65 producers in 2015 to a relatively stabilized number of 23 producers from 2017, producing an average of 16 tons of seed per year between 2017 and 2022. As producers are unable to sell all the quantity produced themselves, since 2019 ECOFARM has supported the sale of seeds by seeking outlets. Since 2021, the cooperative has been directly selling rice seeds purchased from producers. From now on, it will also be involved in inspecting the quality of the seeds produced. In fact, there are problems with the purity of the seeds produced, mainly as a result of the numerous, small and scattered production plots adjoining plots of "off-the-shelf" rice, generating risks of cross-contamination and mixing (in 2021, the cultivated area aggregated per farmer was on average 0.28 ha per farmer, for a total of 6.47 ha).

- *Challenges and sustainability*

- To date, there doesn't seem to be a clear-cut strategic approach to supporting rice production based on agroecological principles. In fact, there is no specific local market for this type of rice, so for the time being it is difficult to put a value on the extra work imposed by these techniques. Furthermore, repeated training sessions (or reminders of the principles) do not necessarily seem to be the right approach, given that farmers have more or less abandoned the proposed techniques, and in the absence of good technical practices actually adopted by smallholders;
- Similarly, the market for improved rice seed remains to be built up, both at producer level (better yield), and possibly at consumer level, provided that the improved rice offers them an attractive taste quality. In addition to this aspect, it is also important to ensure that the production and certification system for improved seeds maintains their genetic quality. At last, it should be noted that the seed quality inspection committee operates on a voluntary basis, and its members receive no benefits. This aspect could jeopardize the sustainability of the mechanism (operating costs, compensation for time spent, etc.);
- It should be noted that one of the avenues envisaged by the project is to support producers in joining the Sustainable Rice Platform initiative that could provide market perspectives through mechanism of assurance scheme based on the respect of 40 sustainable production principles.

- *Recommendations*

- Assuming that there is room for improvement in this area, a review of the strategy for supporting small and medium scale farmers in agro-ecological rice growing, including the rational and limited use of chemical fertilizers (for example at the tillering stage), could be carried out with interested members of agricultural cooperatives, and by mobilizing experts on these subjects. The aim is to develop itineraries that are better adapted to farmers' constraints, while at the same time creating the conditions for marketing that will enable better value to be placed on quality in terms of price; Feasibility of the connection with the SRP initiative is of course to be explored, knowing that specific institutional arrangements will have to be conceived and implemented in order to guarantee the possibility for the cooperatives to use the SRP

label, as well as the implementation of a premium price system for the famers ; Considering these challenges, this type of innovative value chain could be build settled with the upstream buyers on the basis of a shared vision, but if not, directly by the cooperatives on their own;

- Seed production must be based on a rigorous technical itinerary to ensure quality, and on a reliable quality control and guarantee system to enable an aggressive marketing approach. On this basis, the introduction of a label - designed and managed by ECOFARM - would make it possible to explore a larger and possibly more lucrative market, all the more so if the type of seed produced corresponds to specific taste qualities. The control and guarantee system, as well as market research, must be able to operate autonomously, i.e. cover their own operating costs.

c. Support to Chicken production

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - Poultry production is carried out by almost all small farm households. Through the production of eggs and meat, it contributes to household food supplies (self-consumption of eggs and meat) or to occasional cash income (sale of products). However, this type of farming receives little attention and is not very productive, whether for family use or for marketing.
 - Farmers faced a high poultry mortality rate, poor keeping conditions, lack of technical know how and support regarding veterinary services and breeding techniques (feed, incubation, care). The project's interventions aim to address these constraints, through training and technical support, the initial aim being to bring willing breeders into a semi-intensive production with a commercial vocation.
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*
 - About 250 chicken raisers have been supported by the APICI project. Three types of poultry production have been promoted: broilers, eggs and chicks;
 - Before and during the Covid-19 pandemic, the poultry business was buoyant, with strong market demand for broilers and chicks. Annual sales were around 2 tons of broilers, 5,200 head of chicks and 35,000 eggs through DSAC; It should be noted that the chicken collectors supported in the past by the project have played an important role in collective buying and selling on behalf of the Chicken Producers Groups;
 - But after the pandemic, many farmers gave up production, especially broilers, due to the difficulty of competing with cheap imported chickens from Thailand and the high cost of feed; the drop in demand is also the result of the collapse in tourist numbers due to the closure of borders and the reduction in travel;
 - Egg production, on the other hand, is more profitable for the chicken farmer, due to greater demand and a higher price (900 riel/egg for the producer and 100 riel/egg for the collector).
- *Challenges and sustainability*
 - It is necessary to refine a realistic strategy on this component given the economical constraints faced by the raisers (high cost of import and local feedings, with competition from imported chickens) and their disengagement.

- *Recommendations*

- An on-going market study has been launched by the project - based on consumers' preference assessment (restaurants, consumers, collector, grilled business - to assess if the chicken produced by DSAC answer to market demand or not. If the conclusion confirm there is no more space for local broiler chicken production, other speculations – as for example fish raising or pig production - might be explored as far as there is a specific demand for quality products that small scale farmers could produce. Beside, specific support strategy on local egg production still seem to be relevant;
- Although support to chicken production has not increased the incomes of farming families over the past two years and might be abandoned by the project if financial simulations (business plans) are not good, poultry farming nevertheless plays an important role in the daily consumption of farming families and in improving malnutrition, and it's worth continuing to support at least the most vulnerable farmers in this segment.

d. Device for advice and support services: training of farmers, pilot farmers,

- *Technical relevance of the activity*

- In a national context where advisory policies aimed at improving the resilience of small-scale farmers are difficult to address, it is entirely appropriate for agricultural development operators such as NGOs to tackle this area..

- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*

- APICI's approach has focused on developing technical options adapted to local contexts and the constraints faced by small-scale farmers. The process is based on the principles of co-construction, testing of options with the farmers themselves, as future beneficiaries or adopters, and capitalization for educational purposes in the form of technical data sheets and posters -for safe vegetable production such as vegetable production, liquid and solid compost making, bio pesticide, etc.);
- Training for farmers is at the heart of APICI's intervention, based on training-the-trainer mechanisms, with a network of 60 pilot farmers trained since the project began (on vegetable techniques, on chicken raising, on rice production technique, etc.) and acting as intermediaries, as well as local farmers advisers, and numerous exchange visits; Other direct training courses concern the implementation of PGS systems (safe vegetable product manual for producers, quality standards for fattening chicken and egg production), this organization allowed to trained about one hundred of farmers since the beginning of the project;
- The COVID crisis gave a boost to the development of social networking tools - designed by the farmers themselves following training in video tools via smartphones.

- *Challenges and sustainability*

Despite its undeniable positive points, the advisory support component faces several challenges:

- The “Device for advice and support services” could have been the subject of strategic reflection:

- on the one hand, to increase the number of beneficiary producers – as farming households - over the years, through a scaling-up approach: the number of “trained famers” – as a targeted result – appears to be the sole logic of training (in the knowledge that the same farmer will be counted as many times as he has attended training courses); it might have been interesting to increase the number of producers reached (via new target communes or by increasing the number of beneficiaries within already-targeted communes),
 - and secondly, to ensure the long-term viability of the support system as a whole, for example through its long-term internalization within the cooperatives: at this stage, some FPs have been integrated into the cooperatives, but not all. There is no real recognized status for these PFs, who operate on a relatively informal basis; the question of the cost of support will also undoubtedly arise (how many advisors are needed?), as will that of the long-term training of advisors (maintaining and/or acquiring new skills to meet farmers' needs and expectations);
- Despite an approach based on technical options that are theoretically part of a systemic framework (vegetable, rice, chicken, irrigation, credit, etc.), the various activities implemented through the training courses and/or the pilot farmers ultimately resemble the gradual construction and provision of technical tools for each type of production/activity as part of a global "toolbox", but without an integrated approach emphasizing the advisory dimension for the farm as a whole. This would be a real innovation in a national context where farm advisory services are limited to technical and financial services within the framework of a product/plot approach aimed at increasing production in priority cash crops;
- In this respect, in conjunction with agricultural advisory approaches, feedback from training and technical support for producers could be improved in certain cases. This involves assessing the number of adopters of a given technical proposal, analyzing the causes of non-adoption or abandonment by farmers, but also identifying and integrating innovations developed by the farmers themselves. In certain situations, this may be more appropriate than many refresher courses, which will not fundamentally change the reasons why growers did not adopt the techniques initially proposed.
- *Recommendations*
 - To develop strategic thinking on the objectives of farmer advisory services and on how to implement them under AC framework, with a view to efficiency and sustainability;
 - To consider integrated “farm management advisory service for smallholder farmers” approaches adapted to the diversity of farmer types in the intervention zones (depending on the agricultural and non-agricultural activity systems present, agro-ecological zones, production factor endowments, proximity to the market, etc.), and not only based on a “tool box” approach; implementation of such device usually relies on subsidized approaches through NGOs, projects or public/national extension policy/services... However, approach based on "farmer to farmer" advisory system (within cooperatives for example) might also be interesting to explore;
 - Draw up an assessment of the Pilot Farmers system, taking into account a number of parameters: geographical coverage, level of knowledge, teaching skills, dynamism, time available, etc., and draw up a development plan for the individual (basic curricula, additional training needs), organizational (streamlining the system with supra-zone

advisors, supporting local advisors, etc.) and possibly institutional (issuing an agricultural advisor diploma, linking under ACs, etc.) levels. The coverage of the functioning costs should be considered in the analysis.

3.2.2. Specific Objective # 2: Strengthen producers' organisations and structure local agricultural sectors to secure production and facilitate the sale of products on the markets

a. Support to Saving and Credit Groups

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - Access for small farmers and rural families to saving and credit local systems at low cost and based on social guarantee systems is a real value added due to the fact that the conventional banking sector generally does not offer financial products adapted to the needs and access constraints (accessibility, insufficient guarantees, etc.) of rural households.
 - Right from the outset, the project therefore set out to develop financial products tailored to farmers' needs, in particular to support their working capital requirements for agricultural campaigns and investments in materials and equipment. The approach is based on the logic of building up initial savings before granting small loans and joint guarantee.
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*
 - The number of savers has grown rapidly over the years, thanks to the introduction of access mechanisms that are attractive (savings rate) and adapted to the constraints of rural households (joint guarantee by two people for loans of less than 4 million Riel until 2015¹³, but reduction of the ceiling to 500,000 Riel from 2015 onwards, obligation to provide a guarantee above these ceilings):
 - 35 Saving Groups (SVG) have been created and supported by the APICI project since its inception, currently representing a total of 2,660 members, including 2,051 women. The amount saved locally (villages) represents 1,067,110 USD at the end of 2022;
 - Pre-savings in cash have increased rapidly thanks to a high interest rate of 1.3%. Producers who are able to save significantly have been able to rapidly benefit from the advantages of the SVG (remuneration of savings and access to credit);
 - On the other hand, the interest rates charged by the SVGs supported by APICI (1.8 to 2.5% per month for members and 3% for non-members) are in line with the usual practices of MFIs in Cambodia. Similarly, they are consistent with banking practices in the country (banks and MFIs), i.e. there is no difference in rates between loans to finance agricultural activities or activities in other sectors, despite the specific risks inherent in agricultural production¹⁴.

¹³ At the exchange rate prevailing in June 2023, 4,000,000 and 500,000 Riel are equivalent to almost €880 and €110 respectively.

¹⁴ « Concerning annual interest rates, loans from banks are charged with lower interest rates than those from microfinance institutions. In general, the minimum interest rates of banks' loans ranged between 6% and 8%, and the maximum interest rates ranged between 9% and 11%, while the minimum rates of microfinance institutions ranged between 18% and 20%, and the maximum rate was higher than 23%. Agriculture loans are

- A growing number of loans have been granted to non-members, despite the fact that operating principles are normally based on prior savings: the number of loans to non-members now represents a third of the 2031 loans granted (consolidated basis¹⁵);
 - A growing number of SVGs are experiencing repayment delays (18 out of 35 SVGs according to the team at the time of the mission), with repayment delays in excess of due dates of around 91,555 USD; these delays concern 42 farmer-members and 92 non-members;
 - A significant number of loans were granted to finance income-generating activities or investments not related to farming.
- *Challenges and sustainability*
 - The visits and interviews conducted with SVGs during the mission highlighted a number of points that are risk factors in terms of their sustainability, in view of the growing and substantial number of members per group and the size of the sums of money involved (savings and credit):
 - The average size of SVGs has risen from 20 people in 2012 to 76 in 2022, which on the one hand weakens the basic principles of SVGs (small financial services between members who know each other very well) and methodology (all members decide on all SVG decisions), dilutes the possibilities for members to monitor activities and opens the door to risks of poor governance, including financial;
 - The capacities of group leaders, particularly in terms of management and accounting, appear to be fairly limited; moreover, these functions are concentrated in the hands of just one or two people;
 - Supervisory committees exist but do not exercise their control function, both for reasons of capacity, non-application of control procedures or lack of understanding of their role, and no doubt because of the difficulties of exercising social control on this scale; For example, this might be illustrated by the fact that an important number of SVGs have exceeded the legal capital limit for non-institutionalized savings groups, without real control from the supervisory committees (see below);
 - Each group manages increasingly significant sums of money, for a growing number of members, and accounts are kept by hand, in notebooks, without the aid of a computer system. This represents a very high risk of errors and makes it difficult and unreliable to monitor and control accounts, and more generally to understand and analyze the activities of each SVG; As an example, the average capital of SVGs jumped from US\$13,532 to US\$23,521 between 2018 and 2019, and the team has limited elements to analyze in detail on this evolution¹⁶;

charged with the same interest rates like other sectors, and most of the bank's loans had maturity of more than 3 years, while nearly half of microfinance loans had a maturity of more than 3 years. » Research Paper on agriculture financing. Mr. Heng Bomakara, Ms. Sarun Helyda. September 2016 – National Bank of Cambodia – Cambodia Rice Federation. pp 12-13..

¹⁵ Rapport Annuel du projet APICI – Période novembre 2021-Avril 2022– GRET Juin 2023

¹⁶ It has been reported to the mission that this evolution is mainly due to an increase in membership, combined with significant cash inflows for farming households who had to sell their land in the right-of-way areas for the construction of the international airport.

- Borrowers' collateral (land titles, other assets, etc.) is kept in the homes of group managers, as are cash coffers. These systems are not very secure, and can pose problems in the event of theft, fire, etc.
- Cambodian banking legislation recognizes the existence of informal MFIs, provided their capital does not exceed 100 M Riel (around €22,000 / US\$24,000). Above this threshold, they are obliged to institutionalize. The average capital held by the 35 SVGs was US\$31,099 in June 2022. The threshold is exceeded by 15 SVGs, with an average capital of US\$60,847. These SVGs are becoming increasingly visible, and the project team is keenly aware of the need to place them within a legal framework to guarantee their institutional sustainability.
- *Recommendations*
 - The APICI team is aware of the urgent need to ensure the technical, financial and institutional consolidation of the SVGs, for which diagnostic missions have already been undertaken in 2022. In view of the sums involved and the major questions weighing on the sustainability of this action - which is also very popular with producers, local authorities and technical services - it would appear necessary to set out a precise strategy to reduce all existing risks; it is undoubtedly a question of giving greater and specific importance to this component, including by equipping itself with the means of expertise and support adapted to the issues at stake;
 - Several scenarios for institutional evolution, which may be combined, are under discussion with the SVGs: regulating the evolution of SVGs that are still small so that they remain within the framework of the characteristics defined for informal systems, or in order to bring them into line with banking rules, making the larger SVGs evolve into ACs (existing cooperative or by creating a new establishment) or to register within the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD); additional option could be to propose the splitting up of the largest SVGs so that they can once again find themselves in line with the characteristics of informal systems; May be another option could also be the networking of SVG under mutualist entity;
 - In all cases, it will be necessary - in all the configurations adopted by each SVG - to update all the rules and tools for governance, management and monitoring, in order to avoid possible aberrations, professionalize practices and thus create the conditions for future institutional consolidation, whatever would be the adopted options;
 - Finally, internal information systems are not sufficiently systemic to monitor financial risks. It might be wise to consider commissioning audits for certain burning issues¹⁷. The introduction of an IT management tool that can be used by management committees also seems necessary.

b. Vegetable Marketing under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - Like certification systems, the PGS system is an information, guarantee and differentiation tool aimed at the consumer: it certifies that a producer has successfully passed the compulsory inspection stages guaranteeing compliance with the principles of the agroecological specifications, which leads to the award of the label. The label

¹⁷ These audits might be internal, without excluding the possibility of external audit if necessary, for the biggest SVG.

- informs consumers that the product is "agro-ecological", thus distinguishing it from conventional products;
- In this way, the PGS can be used to justify a quality premium and thus obtain a better price, in particular to remunerate the extra work generally involved in agro-ecological approaches;
 - Through peer visits to farms, PGSs are also tools that encourage exchanges between farmers, thereby enhancing their knowledge and technical practices (advisory function).
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*
 - PGS certification has made it possible to set up collective sales of PGS products at prices allowing higher margins - between 15 and 20%¹⁸ - compared with conventional products. In 2021, almost 50 producers were certified, including 43 ECOFARM members and 5 FUDAC members. Even taking into account another group of 50 producers who are members of these cooperatives and are themselves involved in the process and awaiting certification, we can see that the total number of producers involved in the PGS approach represents around 15% of the total 642 vegetable producers applying agroecological practices in 2021-2022¹⁹.
 - In 2021, the total annual volume of PGS-certified vegetable and fruit products was 37.3 tonnes for ECOFARM and 1.5 tonnes for FUDAC; For ECOFARM, the sales channels are divided between two stores in Siem Reap (Siem Reap Farmer Market and Khmer Community Shop), for 13.3 tons and 10.3 tons respectively, sales in Phnom Penh via the AMRAK store (10 tons) and sales on the weekly market in Siem Reap (Weekly Farmers Market) for 3.7 tons;
 - The Weekly Farmers Market has been set up jointly from 2019 by the APICI and IADA projects, and has been joined by several cooperatives supported by other projects (ASPIRE, AIMS). This market enjoys a high profile and is a prime "tool" for promoting agroecological products to a wide audience. However, the products offered by the ECOFARM and FUDAC cooperatives, as well as the Green Market company (IADA project), are indeed part of an PGS-certified agroecological approach, but the products offered by the other cooperatives may come from conventional systems, and they currently present no information or certification relating to production methods. Ultimately, the common denominators of all the products sold on this weekly market are (i) those produced by small-scale family farmers and (ii) those of local origin (sold in short circuits);
 - At present, not all vegetables produced under PGS can be sold on dedicated markets, and surpluses have to be sold on conventional channels at market prices. What's more, the majority of market garden produce is not PGS-certified, even though it largely complies with agro-ecological principles, so it too is sold on conventional markets.
 - *Challenges and sustainability*
 - Even if the initial project rationale was to develop at large scale agroecological vegetable, at this stage, the PGS component occupies a quasi-niche market that relies on (i) the pre-existence of a supply of products from conventional agriculture, from which it is

¹⁸ Capitalization report - APICI project – Period 2010-2020. September 2020. Stéphane Fayon – GRET CIRD

¹⁹ Rapport Annuel du projet APICI – Période novembre 2021-Avril 2022– GRET Juin 2023

seeking to differentiate itself, and (ii) the existence of a “wealthy” demand ready to “spend more to eat healthy”. It would be wise to ensure that the design of PGS support and development initiatives is consistent with a medium- and long-term strategic vision, enabling them to be scaled up to meet the growing demand from consumers of all income levels;

- A key challenge is to increase the market share of certified agroecological products in Siem Reap, in order to sell as many vegetables as possible that are already available, but also to create the conditions for a stronger dynamic of virtuous production, with knock-on effects in terms of the number of producers adopting the system (health impact) and the area under cultivation (environmental impact).

- *Recommendations*

- A key challenge is to increase the market share of agroecological products in Siem Reap, in order to sell as many vegetables as possible that are already available, but also to create the conditions for a stronger dynamic of virtuous production, with knock-on effects in terms of the number of producers adopting the method (health impact) and the area under cultivation (environmental impact). From this point of view, more detailed market studies should be carried out. They would enable us to develop strategies with, on the one hand, vegetable production plans to meet market demand (diversity, quality, seasonality, price) - designed in a coordinated way within and between the various producer groups - and, on the other hand, backed by commercial promotion campaigns for the consumption of agroecological products;
- The creation of a brand and logo specific to cooperatives and backed by their specifications should be envisaged to gain visibility in terms of information and guarantees on the application of agro-ecological approaches, and thus differentiate themselves from other products within the framework of a premium price strategy;
- It seems necessary to study the reasons why the involvement rate of producers in PGS processes is still low at this stage of the project, in order to identify and resolve potential obstacles to their development;
- It appears that PGS internal control mechanisms are not fully mastered by growers and group managers. Several cases of the application of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers were identified by the mission; the consolidation of these mechanisms and the monitoring and evaluation of their effectiveness must be priorities within APICI, all the more so if commercial promotion strategies are envisaged; particular attention must be paid to the financial and organizational sustainability of the control and certification systems (eradicating in the short to medium term the hidden costs borne by the project);
- Before the launching of the PGS initiatives, the Provincial Department of Commerce has driven the development of the label “Sovathapheap Siem Reap”. This could offer an interesting tool to develop market share for “safe vegetables” in Siem Reap. However, this process which integrates the various project stakeholders (APICI, IADA, ASPIRE, AIMS) would require certain clarification. At present the application to register the logo as a collective trademark has been filed by the Provincial Department of Commerce with the Department of Intellectual Property. This means that the collective trademark will be owned by the Provincial Department of Commerce, which has full command on the rules regarding the use of the trademark. Trademark ownership could be transferred, and from our point of view it would be preferable

to set a collective organization gathering the main stakeholder to retake the control of the Collective Trademark. Possibly it could be the same organization as for the weekly market.

A further point of attention concerns the risk of setting up a collective mechanism with few constraints that is accessible to all, but which encourages "free rider" strategies benefiting from the positive image built up by the APICI and IADA projects in terms of "safe vegetable", without assuming the constraints, which would ultimately be a threat to all producers in agroecological PGS.

c. Support to Chicken Producers Groups and marketing

- *Technical relevance of the activity*
 - Support for the establishment of breeder groups is of course relevant to the provision of collective services (training, input purchases, market research and product sales);
 - The production and sale of chickens certified by a PGS system is an interesting way of establishing a niche market in a context of strong competition from imported chickens (Thailand) and rising production costs.
- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*
 - The creation of 8 local chicken producer groups was supported by the project. In 2022, these groups - mostly affiliated to the DSAC - still represented 146 farmers, including 97 women. At the time of the present study, the number had fallen to 92, including 60 women, reflecting the disaffection of farmers for this activity in view of the economic constraints encountered;
 - The project has introduced in 2022 a differentiation strategy for local chickens sold through the establishment of specifications covering the zootechnical and veterinary principles to be respected by breeders - and backed by a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) - to ensure animal welfare and product health quality. For the time being, the project team is looking for potential buyers.
- *Challenges and sustainability*
 - Despite PGS approach is relevant to the objective of providing consumers with high-quality poultry products, this does not seem to be sufficient to ensure that it actually meets consumer demand - that seems to have moved since the beginning of the project - and justifies a price differential in favor of breeders: nowadays, urban consumers seem to prefer imported broilers because of the yellow color of their legs and beaks, whereas local chicken breeds have black legs and beaks; the quality of the chicken products on offer does not seem to be recognized or/and to meet market requirements; moreover, there is no logo or label yet for these chickens sold on the markets (Farmers Weekly Markets).
- *Recommendations*
 - Quality chicken production is a relevant approach to target potential niche markets, but the whole PGS approach should be designed to make sure that the quality of chicken meat is a unique/special product and/or requirements of market demand. Therefore preable market study should be part of the process to elaborate the production and marketing strategy;

- Based on market studies, and in particular on the characteristics of the potential demand for poultry products (type of quality, outlet channels, demand seasonality, propensity to pay more for quality products, etc.), the design of both strategic and business plans with producers / DSAC for the establishment of a quality chicken chain is also a prerequisite, considering that PGS approach might not be the only option or might be part of it;
- Local Egg production seem correspond to a specific market demand. Adapted commercial strategy could be conceived – based for example on safe production principles, small famers inclusive, short market circuits and local value added - to enlarge the markets for the benefit of the farmers.

d. Support to Agricultural Cooperatives

- *Technical relevance of the activity*

Supporting the emergence and structuring of agricultural organizations is fundamental to APICI's strategy. First and foremost, building collective institutional capacities - through agricultural cooperatives - makes it possible to implement actions and services that would remain inaccessible to individuals taken in isolation - thanks in particular to the reduction and pooling of transaction costs.

Box 2: Reasons for creating agricultural cooperatives in APICI

- *Facilitate group approach for financial resource mobilization, training, market access*
- *Facilitate linkage to partners , buyers and market actors*
- *Provide a collective platform for negotiating with buyers*
- *Provide aggregation of product and volume*
- *Deliver training business planning and capacity building to members*
- *Capture government support scheme (when available)*

Source : Capitalization report APICI project - Farming system evolution - Program tool box - Agroecology performance & Case study - Future prospect - Period 2010-2020. Prepared by Stephane Fayon, - September 2020 - GRET CIRAD

The aim is also to support the emergence of long-term local players who, in theory, will be best placed to understand farmers' needs and translate them autonomously into development actions, without the distortions "inherent" in the actions of external development operators. The challenge here is to ensure that a significant number of technical, organizational, economic and governance skills are put in place, while at the same time ensuring that the project supports innovation in areas where it is needed, particularly during the initial phases.

Lastly, support for cooperatives emerging from the grassroots, with strategic principles and visions translated into concrete actions in the fields of development and agricultural services for their members, enriches the reference base of agricultural cooperatives, offering a counterpoint recognized by public authorities to cooperative models resulting from top-down structuring injunctions, observed in Cambodia as in many other countries, and leading to structures with little autonomy.

- *Main findings in term of results, adoption, dissemination*

- Three cooperatives have been created with the support of the project between 2019 and 2021. They record new cooperative memberships every year (+10 to +20% per year) and bring together a large majority of women:
 - o Sovatepheap Thoamcheat (ECOFARM), an agricultural cooperative set up in 2019, now has a total of 110 members, including 85 women. Its main activities are the production of healthy vegetables and compost, as well as rice seeds;
 - o Farmer Unity for Development of Agricultural Cooperative (FUDAC), set up in 2020, now has 115 members, including 76 women. Its main activities are the supply of agricultural inputs, followed by the production of healthy vegetables, and the production of compost;
 - o The Danrun Samaki Agricultural Cooperative (DSAC), created in 2021, now has 73 members, including 55 women. Its main activities are chicken production and poultry production services, and the supply of agricultural inputs.
- Savings and credit activities are not directly linked to cooperatives, but SVG savings groups are often members of cooperatives, with some leaders assuming a variety of functions and responsibilities.

- *Challenges and sustainability*

Several observations can be made by the evaluation team. These must be seen in the light of the "youth" of these cooperatives, and of course in relation to the fact that two years of COVID have had a heavy impact on the support and learning processes in the technical, economic, organizational and governance fields:

- Board members' ownership of the cooperative approach is real, reflected in their strong involvement in the management and direction of the ACs; however, the circulation of information to other AC members, and their participation in decision-making or certain activities are still areas for improvement;
- Furthermore, members of AC boards of directors and supervisory committees do not appear to fulfill their roles and duties as written in the regulations (board roles versus supervisory committee roles). In practice, the members of these two bodies simply work together, so that supervisory committees cannot exercise their functions as a supervisory body.
- The skills and experience of board members still appear to be limited in view of the cooperatives' current activities, the functions to be performed within this framework and the challenges ahead. The accounting documents and financial reports consulted reveal errors and/or are not balanced (income statement, balance sheet). Furthermore, the cooperatives do not yet have a medium-term strategic plan/multi-year action plan or a business plan;
- Good specialized technical skills are now available within the cooperatives, for training and advisory support to members in the field of agroecological vegetable production, chicken rearing, rice production, compost production and so on. In fact, the advisors are essentially AC leaders and pilot farmers. However, advisory services are provided on a relatively informal basis, either in response to individual requests or through participation in training cycles organized by the project;
- The capital per AC is still limited, and does not really allow for the expansion of current activities or the development of new ones; there could also be risks of "porosity"

depending on needs between the funds of the ACs and those of the SVGs, the latter sometimes being managed by the same people, in the same places (in 2022, the capital of Ecofarm is 10,005 USD, that of FUDAC is 5,163 USD and 2,610 USD for DSAC).

- *Recommendations*

- A significant strategy for strengthening the institutional capacities (governance, strategy/leadership, financial management, etc.) of cooperative board members should be designed and implemented;
- Specifically, in view of their current activities, which are essentially focused on the support and sale of quality products, or the trade in inputs, capacity-building in commercial matters, contract farming, fund-raising, etc. deserves particular attention (value chain approach);
- The consolidation of technical advisory services within ACs could also be the subject of attention, focusing in particular on work on the role and status of farmer advisors within cooperatives, backed by additional efforts concerning their training (training programs to be designed) and technical partnerships on subjects to be explored in greater depth with external service providers;
- Finally, even if the economic results may not allow this option to be considered in the short term, it may be useful and necessary to envisage the eventual recruitment by the ACs of a salaried employee to support the members of the boards of directors, and to ensure the functions of organization, management, support for technical activities and governance; the option of a pooled position between the 3 cooperatives could possibly enable the financial constraint to be partially lifted;
- Finally, whatever activities are deployed by the ACs, it is important that they are built by the members, and that they have visibility with regard to their implementation. For each cooperative, in-depth work on the collective development of a shared vision of the cooperative's visions, roles, principles and objectives, backed by multi-year programming and regularly updated business plans, should be carried out and, if possible, applied, as part of an action learning process.

3.2.3. Specific Objective # 3: To support provincial stakeholders in the construction of a plan for the development of efficient and sustainable territorial food systems and its implementation

a. A new specific objective that could consolidate the internal coherence of the project

The new convention signed between the CD-92 and GRET encompasses a new objective worded as follows: *“To support provincial stakeholders in the construction of a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems and its implementation”*²⁰. This new objective is consistent with the will of the CD-92 to anchor its cooperation in a relation with the territorial authorities as

²⁰ In French in the text : « Appuyer les parties prenantes provinciales dans la construction d'un plan de développement de systèmes alimentaires territoriaux: performants et durables et sa mise en œuvre »

provincial level (Siem Reap province governorate). It could contribute, in a longer term, to transfer a part of the ownership on the project to provincial authorities.

Also, this strategic reflection at territorial level can be seen as a good **way to strengthen the relevance and internal coherence of the APICI project**, using the food system development plan as a guideline to mainstream project activities and make the convergence of their contributions to a larger objective more readable.

b. The relevance and external coherence depend on further clarification of the scope

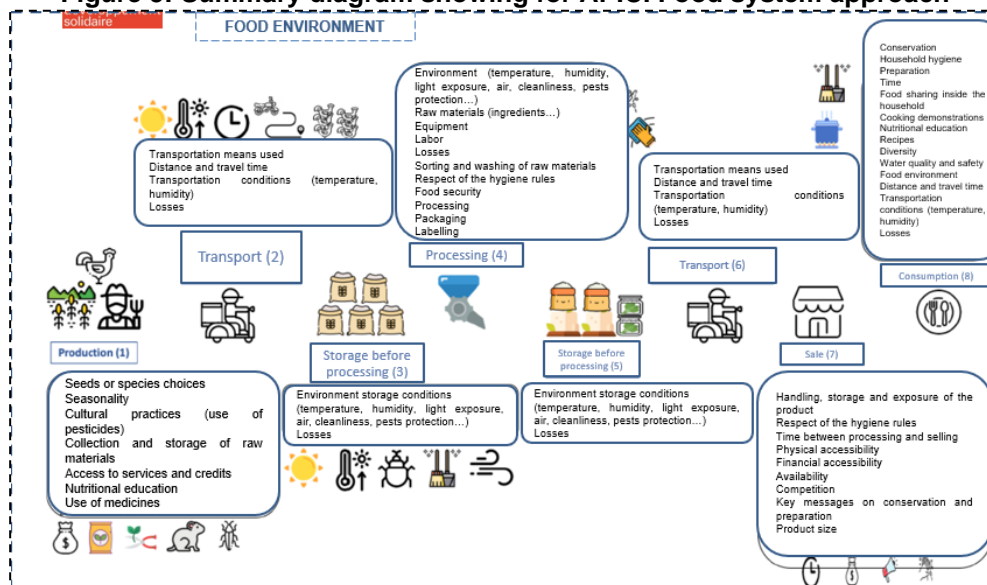
Overall, it sounds relevant to further engage the relevant territorial institution in the frame of the project and in particular at a strategic level of conception of agricultural and food systems. After more than 12 years of intervention, it is probably a necessary move to consolidate the appropriation by local stakeholders and to contribute to build the viability of the project outcome and confer them an additional dimension in term of local governance.

Nevertheless, the scope and delimitation of what shall be a « Territorial Food System » are not yet fully clarified.

- In the annex to the new convention signed between the CD-92 and GRET, the first element underlined in the description of this new objective is the construction of the new airport, and the impact this has on farmers supported by the project, notably in term of the loss of access to agricultural lands.
- On the other hand, at present, what is presented by APICI project team when introducing the concept of “Territorial Food System” is still very close to a supply chain approach (with a focus on food safety) – see below:

The Figure 5 below used in presentation of the Territorial Food System still very much shows a “linear” approach of the supply chain (for given products), from farm to consumers.

Figure 5: Summary diagram showing for APICI Food system approach



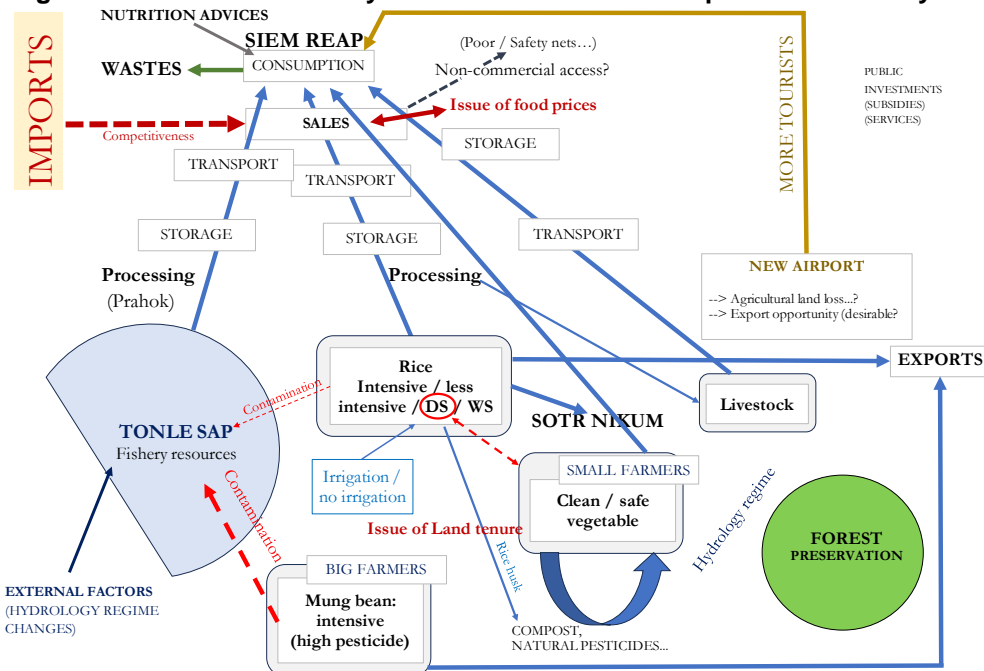
Source: Presentation meeting of the project for a territorialized food system with the Provincial Authorities – APICI Project - 20/12/2022

This presentation does not really show the link with – for instance – land management issues that are evoked in the convention in link to the building of the new airport. It is actually not really showing neither the territorial element of the reflection, nor its systemic dimension.

c. A quick and dirty tentative of representation of what could be a more systemic reflection

During the debriefing meeting of the evaluation held in Siem Reap, we have shown the bellow schema, just as an illustration of what could encompass a systemic reflection on food system at provincial level. We can still see the various supply chains (the blue arrows) but the schema tries to also show interactions between the different production, environmental aspects / resources management aspects, which, to us, shall be integrated in a reflection on a food system approach. It is in fact particularly relevant while working at the level of provincial governorate, as it can be the right institutional location to address the interactions. For instance: development of intensive dry season rice or intensive mung bean production around the Tonle Sap lake are likely to lead to water contamination and to affect Tonle Sap fisheries (a major stake speaking of food and nutrition around Tonle Sap region).

Figure 6 : First sketch of a systemic framework for the provincial food system



d. External coherence: need to explore possible overlaps with the prerogatives of other institutions

The concept of development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems comes with the idea that the food systems are governable, and that the provincial level is the relevant one for food system governance. This is of course only partly true, as there are elements of food systems that are difficult to control, and some important levers that are lying at other scale, and notably depending on national policies.

To ensure coherence with national level decision making, but also to possibly influence national policies by providing insights and inputs from Siem Reap province, it would be desirable to establish a link with supra-provincial institutions.

We think in particular about:

- The Council for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) and the Technical Working Group on Food Security and Nutrition (TWGFSN): CARD and TWGFSN have pivotal role in the elaboration of national strategies / roadmap for food systems. It is definitely needed to ensure coordination with this national level. There could be an opportunity also to root the national level reflection with more localized approaches, as it was suggested by a publication of OECD²¹ : “A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: the case of Cambodia”.

²¹ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264257108-5-en.pdf?expires=1689580663&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=060ADB499DA57FF4556622506FDD0784>

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF): which has obviously a major role in support to particular crops or production as well as on sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, among other issues.
- The Tonle Sap Authority: if Tonle Sap fisheries resources are considered as an important element in Siem Reap food system, then there could be an interest to liaise with the Tonle Sap Authority which is the “national institution for research studies and coordinate over the sustainable management, conservation, and development of Tonle Sap lake.”²²

More generally speaking, if the more ambitious approach of developing a really systemic thinking and governance of Siem Reap province food system, this requires to strengthen the coordination between the different programs engaged in agriculture, food and nutrition in the province, beyond the limited scale of the CD-92 support.

e. Recommendations for the Territorial Food system approach

- **Clarify the scope and objectives**

As seen above, the scope and purpose of “the construction of a development plan for efficient and sustainable territorial food systems and its implementation” is not yet well delimited. In GRET presentations, it still mainly relates to a supply chain approach. Discussion with the provincial administration, during the evaluation, have shown a particular attention paid by the provincial authorities to the issue of food safety. Yet the wording “territorial food system” could be understood as a much broader and holistic reflection on food production, supply and destinations of products integrating interactions between the different value chains, nutrition, the use of natural resources, the preservation of environment... leading to the definition of priorities (and possibly restrictions). The exercise should make it possible to develop an overall vision and to reflect in terms of trade-offs between different scenarios (considering that development on one production or value-chain may not be neutral to other ones: for instance, intensive mung bean production development around Tonle Sap impacts on fisheries).

Now that the “Working Group on the building of a strategic plan for food system and nutrition for Siem Reap province” has been made official by Governor’s decision, its first task shall probably be to clarify the scope and objectives of what shall be “a strategic plan for food system and nutrition”.

- **Dimension resources in accordance with the ambition**

If the more ambitious scenario of developing a comprehensive strategy / vision of Territorial Food System is confirmed, then probably there is a need to align the resources in accordance with the ambition. It would notably require:

- To invest more in expertise, i.e. mobilize more thematic expertise and resources to collect and analyze data on food and nutrition in the province, in order to carry out an

²² https://www.tonlesap.gov.kh/images/pdf/planing/2021/strategic%20plan%202021-2025_Eng.pdf

informed diagnosis and conduct a dialogue process involving a wide range of stakeholders;

- To ensure integration / bridges with existing committees at national level mandated in these fields (CARD and the TWGFSN);
- To associate, from an early stage, development partners that could be interested to contribute to finance the implementation of a comprehensive strategy and action plan for the provincial food and nutrition system... (which is likely to require far more than CD-92 contribution).

- **Envisage a more bottom-up / subsidiary approach**

In order to better root the approach and connect it with the field experience of APICI (and possibly IADA) project, it could be desirable to also facilitate consultation at a more local level on agriculture and food system, taking into consideration local constraints and priorities. This will favor the contribution of “smaller” stakeholders to have a say in the process (smallholder farmers, cooperatives, communes...), if outcomes of dialogues at local level can be carried up to the provincial working group.

Starting at the communal or district level (particularly in APICI's historical working areas), planning could guarantee that more practical issues are addressed and can help to address stakes that can be locally important, but seen as relatively marginal (and hence overlooked) at provincial level. For instance, the impact of the new airport is relatively important at provincial level, but is major for the commune(s) where it is established... This bottom-up process between the local food plan and the district level, which could be carried out by the future project within an action research framework, could feed into the dialogue at provincial level on policy design for the food system master plan. Last, an approach rooted from communal level would also enhance and value the work already started by Agrisud International to build capacities and facilitate the preparation of Action Plans for Agro-ecology at communal level (also supported by CD-92).

3.3. Analysis of project management and programming methods

3.3.1. An initial strategic framework that is relevant but lacks updating

One of the fundamental aims of the APICI project is to improve the resilience of farming households through innovation in agricultural practices, while developing quality products for consumers. The findings on the production conditions of small-scale producers were characterized by:

- Production systems based mainly on monocultures, with the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides;
- Difficulties in accessing technical advice and agricultural financing;
- Low levels of collective organization;
- market integration methods (small volumes, isolation, door-to-door sales, lack of information, etc.) that are neither favourable to small producers nor conducive to product quality enhancement²³.

By tackling a wide range of issues through the construction of a technical toolbox and approaches combining training, on-site demonstrations and individual coaching, the project has undoubtedly achieved a significant number of observable results in relation to the various problems initially identified.

In fact, to date, the number of farmers reached by the program's activities in the two districts is said to be "*around 4,500 households in aggregate*" since the start of the project: "*After 10 years of the project, it is [...] difficult to find farmers in the project's intervention zone who have absolutely no connection with the activities supported and would be exempt from any adoption of practices*"²⁴...

This observation highlights the fact that the project's primary focus was on conducting and consolidating the activities it had in mind at the outset, while giving the impression of putting the question of whether, and to what extent, its action had a positive impact:

- Whether, and to what extent, its actions have increased the resilience of farming households in the two districts;
- How the logic of action, based on training and support in the various areas of intervention, has had a knock-on effect, enabling the creation of a virtuous circle of sustainable development;

²³ Capitalization report APICI project - Farming system evolution - Program tool box Agroecology performance & Case study - Future prospect - Period 2010-2020. Prepared by Stephane Fayon, - September 2020 - GRET CIRD

²⁴ Annexes de la convention GRET CD92 – Programme de développement agricole et social 2023 à Siem Reap (Cambodge) mis en œuvre par le GRET.

- Whether all the levers of development support are sufficiently in place to perpetuate all or part of the results.

A watchdog posture on these various issues would undoubtedly generate a number of elements that could inform reflections for action.

As highlighted above (cf.3.2.3), the new specific objective n°3 on territorial food approaches should help provide a more inclusive strategic framework. But beyond the undeniable relevance of this new orientation, the question at a technical level is to know what lessons and achievements it will be able to draw on at the scale of the project's historical areas of intervention.

3.3.2. Essentially annual technical programming

The project has been in its 4th implementation phase since January 2011. With the exception of the first phase, which lasted 2.5 years, each phase lasts around 4 years. Each phase generally corresponds to the same multi-year strategic framework, setting out the general and specific objectives, a target value in terms of beneficiaries, and finally indicators for each specific objective which reflect the planned activities but do not give details of the target values to be achieved.

**Box 3 : Example of indicators from the GRET CD92 - 2023 agreement for Specific Objective 1:
Promote agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production**

- *Number of farmers trained by the project*
- *Number of active pilot farmers and agroecology demonstration farms*
- *Number of training courses given by pilot farmers*
- *Number of farmers and consumers made aware of nutrition issues*
- *Number of households having improved their hygiene and nutrition practices*
- *Number of households receiving seed kits*

Source : Annexe 1 de la Convention Programme de développement agricole et social 2023 à Siem Reap (Cambodge) mise en œuvre par le GRET - Conseil départemental du 17 février 2023

This general framework is then broken down on an annual basis, defining the activities and the technical and financial resources required. The annual agreement therefore includes a description of the activities, without specifying the target values to be achieved for each indicator, a provisional implementation schedule and the annual budget.

One of the project's stated aims is to constantly introduce and test innovations. In this respect, this mechanism has a number of advantages in terms of operational flexibility and the ability to seize opportunities, whether technical or financial (contribution to the project budget). This last point is all the more important as the project is usually implemented by the partners in a sustained search for co-financing. So, although CD92 funding is the main part of the project's budget, and thus a structuring element of its action, this "programmatic writing process" greatly facilitates the search for co-financing.

The downside of this positive aspect lies in a certain "volatility" of the programmatic framework. As in the case of the introduction of Specific Objective 3 on the territorial food approach in year 2 of phase 4 of APICI, certain strategic changes occur during certain multi-year phases.

Similarly, within the same multi-year framework and for the same specific objective, certain activities appear, disappear or are reformulated from one year to the next. This gives the impression that the specific objectives, more or less clearly defined, are mainly used to "classify" activities year after year, and it is difficult to find a clear, structured overall intervention logic.

3.3.3. An annual budget mechanism that is out of sync with activity reports

As mentioned above, the technical and budgetary programming process is carried out on an annual basis, due to the budgetary programming process of the Haut de Seine department, which has no multi-year funding tool for decentralized cooperation. As the department is the main sponsor of the project, it plays a structuring role in programming.

It has been observed that this process is conducted without any temporal linkage with the internal mechanisms for annual assessment and reporting of the project's activities:

- The annual activity report produced by the project is submitted between April and June of each year "n", covering the 12 months from April "n-2" to May "n-1";
- Technical and financial programming begins in May "n", carried out jointly by the APICI team and the CD92 monitoring officer, who also carries out a mission to Cambodia to prepare the annual funding agreement; as can be seen, the process can be based on the latest activity report, with the proviso that it relates to activities carried out between 12 and 24 months earlier. The finalized funding application is sent to CD92 in September, and the grant is awarded in February of year n+1, with actions starting up in May n+1 (signature of new annual funding agreement);
- In addition, the annual review of project activities is carried out by the team in December of each year, two months after the funding application is submitted.

In addition, annual activity reports provide a wealth of detailed information on project activities and results. But this profusion of information makes it difficult to see how far we have come and how far we still have to go to achieve the project's strategic objectives: target values for indicators (see analysis of the monitoring and evaluation system), assessment of actions carried out and problems encountered, measures planned to remedy them, proposed strategic adjustments, and so on.

3.3.4. Recommendations

The recommendations that can be made relate to the following points:

- Carry out a new diagnostic exercise at district level aimed at taking stock of changes in farming households and their agricultural production systems, with a focus on identifying and assessing the effects of the project;
- Back project interventions with the construction of a systemic intervention logic, which can be based on a "problem tree" approach and be materialized by a logical framework, and serve as a reference for project implementation over the years;
- As CD92's budget planning dates are intangible, it seems that it is up to the project to find ways of adjusting its monitoring and evaluation system, internal review periods and report writing accordingly, despite possible constraints (such as crop cycles with, for example, the main rice harvest in December), in order to have data and analyses that are at least somewhat consolidated and up-to-date at the time of the programming processes.

3.4. Cross-cutting question on the monitoring and evaluation system

3.4.1. Strategic framework for the monitoring and evaluation system

The objectives set out in the multi-year project agreements are to improve the resilience of 1,500 producers for the first two phases (APICI 1 - January 2011 to June 2013 & APICI 2 - June 2013 to June 2017), 1,800 producers for the next two (APICI 3 - June 2017 to June 2021) and 2,500 for the final update of the APICI 4 agreement (2023).

The large number of farming households impacted by the project in the two districts, estimated at 4,500, has already been mentioned (cf. **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). The question therefore concerns the nature of the "*link with the activities supported and would be exempt from any adoption of practices*": farmer trained, having participated in meetings, having adopted certain practices, which ones, under what conditions? Is it a member of a farming household whose other member is a direct beneficiary of the project, a farmer who has not benefited from any intervention but who has implemented certain practices on his own initiative, etc.?

In fact, a major blurring in the monitoring and evaluation system lies in the fact that the number of producers counted as beneficiaries essentially corresponds to the number of producers who have attended training courses or meetings. It is therefore in fact an indicator of project activity, but does not enable us to assess the results of interventions at the level of beneficiary farm households, nor the knock-on effects and impacts of the project at the level of the targeted districts. This point also reflects the project's relative strategic weakness in terms of scaling-up.

3.4.2. Operational dimension of the monitoring and evaluation system

In the present case, APICI does not have a logical framework and therefore no monitoring-evaluation tool for the project as a whole, particularly with regard to general and specific objectives. The monitoring system focuses mainly on groups of activities that have been implemented practically since the project began, based on a "module" approach: market gardening, poultry farming, rice growing, credit savings, etc. This information system is based on the following two main elements:

- Technico-economic monitoring of farms, with a dual purpose of providing "agricultural advice" and contributing to the analysis of the relevance of actions for the project team: this tool, specific to the three agricultural components of the project (rice, market gardening, livestock breeding), called the "Monitoring Book", includes data on the adoption of promoted techniques, production data and economic data; data is collected from several samples (30 rice producers, 30 market-garden producers, 30 members of market-garden groups, 30 chicken breeders and 30 members of livestock breeders' groups). At the end of each crop year, the team assists a few farmers in analyzing their data and presenting their technical and economic results to the other farmers at workshops.²⁵;
- Monitoring project achievements and results: set up at the start of the project, the system is based on data collection and analysis tools, led by a monitoring and evaluation officer recruited in 2016. Data is collected by technical area of intervention (Rice, Poultry, Vegetables, Marketing, Nutrition, etc.) and covers the number of producers trained, the number of producers adopting the techniques, yields, volumes sold, and so on. Modules also exist for marketing or nutrition, each with specific types of data to be collected.

This data is then processed and used in the analysis and presentation of results in activity reports.

The system is supplemented by thematic studies, regularly carried out to delve deeper into a particular subject, some of which are designed to address the difficulties encountered (diagnostic study on SVG in 2022).

At this stage, a number of observations can be made:

Monitoring project achievements and results:

- The monitoring system provides information on the number of participants in training courses and meetings (1,418 people for the period May 2021 to April 2022), but the absence of a farmer identification code is a major weakness:
 - one and the same farmer will be counted as many times as he participates in several events, within the framework of one or several technical areas of

²⁵ Annexes de la convention GRET CD92 – Programme de développement agricole et social 2023 à Siem Reap (Cambodge) mis en œuvre par le GRET.

intervention. The system is therefore unable to determine the absolute number of producers or farm households involved;

- because the monitoring system is compartmentalized by module, and there is no identification code, it is not possible to know whether producers are beneficiaries and adopters of several technical areas of intervention (vegetable production, poultry farming, SVG, etc.). This compartmentalized structure makes it impossible to assess whether there is a systemic dimension to the evolution of production systems;
 - A “agroecological techniques adoption” survey is done by the project every year, village by village, based on the number of adopted techniques per farmer. It would then be interesting to analyze the number of farmers and/or beneficiary/adopting households per village, in order to appreciate the project impact in terms of territorial networking;
 - the system seems to be based on an annual operation: due to a lack of coding, it is impossible to determine whether the same farmer or farm household benefits from and/or participates in the activities from one year to the next, and thus to track the dynamics of farmer participation in the project, and above all the development of their farms.
- Specific monitoring of the adoption of techniques year after year would be worthwhile, in order to understand the consolidation of new practices;
 - A group of indicators relating to the types of credit granted within the framework of the SVGs would provide a better understanding of the proportion of financing for income-generating activities, and those used for agriculture.

Technical and economic monitoring of production:

- The technical-economic monitoring system does not include the recording of working hours; this is a major constraint in terms of data recording for the grower, but it would make it possible to assess labour productivity, a fundamental decision-making criterion for a farmer with regard to the opportunity cost in his strategy of using (or selling) his labour, and thus help to shed light on the question of adoption; this data is necessary, for example, to compare agro-ecological market-gardening production systems with those run conventionally;
- More generally, the technical-economic monitoring system does not allow us to extrapolate the production and income results of the producers monitored to the scale of the intervention, for which we would need to have a reasoned sampling based on the typology of producers supported by the project.

System: due to lack of time, the mission was unable to examine the monitoring and evaluation tool in detail. However, it is important to ensure its reliability, in particular by avoiding the risks of error and approximation in the data collection process - by limiting as far as possible

the collection of information on an indirect "actor's say" and non-automated calculations, which would affect the analyses produced, both at time "t" and over time (year after year).

3.4.3. Some recommendations for a tentative future monitoring system

The recommendations flow directly from the observations below:

- Linking the monitoring and evaluation system to the project's logical framework would make it possible to design indicators relating to the project's overall and specific objectives, and the expected results. Attention to the knock-on effects and impacts of interventions would be judicious, although this would need to be done in coherence with any revision of the project's strategic approach to scaling up its interventions;
- Consolidation of the data collection, processing and analysis system would appear to be necessary: the design of indicators, the definition of reliable operational methods for collecting the variables used to inform them, and the implementation of an automated calculation system, together with the definition of the role of stakeholders in the system, could be the subject of a monitoring-evaluation procedures manual. This would enable everyone to understand the indicators entered in the database and how they are processed. The system would enable indicators to be entered reliably and relatively instantaneously. These tools would also guarantee the transmission of the system in the event of changes in the project coordination team;
- The introduction of a farmer coding system would multiply the possibilities for analysis of the project's results and knock-on effects,
- Linking it to a Geographic Information System would provide significant added value, particularly with a view to promoting territorial approaches;
- The "agroecological techniques adoption" yearly survey could be revised in terms of data quality. It might be also completed with an analysis to understand the processes involved in adopting or abandoning the proposed agroecological practices by the farmers, in conjunction with the capitalization system. This would possibly provide new elements of strategic orientation for the project and enrich and consolidate its reference systems.

3.5. Cross-cutting gender issues

3.5.1. Project achievements

The project has not specifically implemented a gender strategy, but has nevertheless put in place a number of quantitative indicators designed to provide information on the role of women in the project.

These indicators show that women in fact make up the vast majority of the project's beneficiaries:

- 74% of the 1,418 farmers trained in 2021/2022 are women;
- Currently, the 3 cooperatives ECOFARM, FUDAC and DSAC have an aggregate of 224 members, 73% of whom are women; on average, women are equally represented on the cooperatives' boards of directors;
- Since 2016, the year this indicator was first tracked, women have represented each year:
 - o more than 70% of those trained in vegetable production ;
 - o more than 68% of those applying improved poultry production techniques.
- Finally, they represent 64% of farmers applying improved rice-growing techniques.

3.5.2. Discussions

These ratios show that the proposed activities are particularly suited to the needs and constraints of women farmers.

However, this finding should be seen in the context of Cambodia's general situation, in which agricultural activities concentrate more women than men, with or without a project, while men are more inclined or find it easier to engage in non-agricultural salaried activities, either locally or via migration²⁶.

The question is therefore to assess - in relation to this demographic transition process at work - whether the appropriation of activities by women is likely to specifically increase their income and decision-making power within farming households, promote their access to more economic and financial resources and opportunities, and strengthen their voice through better representation in decision-making bodies. It might also be interesting to know what proportion of households are headed by women, considering that in this case, women are more likely to head poor households, associated with a lower capacity to participate in the labor market and a lower level of education.

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More generally, beyond the scope of the project, the underlying questions are whether this trend prefigures a progressive reorganization of socio-economic structures in rural areas. In the same vein, the ageing of the rural population and the migration of young people to the

²⁶ Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Women's Affairs. 2014. Country Gender Assessment 2014; Summary. ADB. 2014. Country Performance Assessment; and ADB. 2014.

towns - observed in Siem Reap province as in the rest of Cambodia - was another point discussed during the mission. The COVID crisis has shown a slowdown in migration, with in some cases a return of young people to the land, whether temporary or more structural. Nor can it be ruled out that, in some cases, young people's migration is part of the logic of building up a certain amount of capital, with a view to a return to farming.

3.5.3. Recommendations

Enrich the project's knowledge of the dynamics of demographic change in the target districts, with a focus on:

- changes in the status and role of women within farming households, and changes in their decision-making power in farm management (decisions on labor allocation, production and marketing, sharing of farm income, etc.).
- the dynamics of young people's migration and eventual return to the land.

3.6. Analysis of current and future partnership arrangements

After more than 10 years of existence, APICI is entering a new strategic phase, and it is only right that the project's sponsors should revisit the implementation mechanism for the next phases, in the light of the new orientations that will be adopted.

The guiding principle would be to move away from a project structure - as it has existed until now - towards a more embodied and appropriate collaboration with perennial local and/or provincial players. This approach would have the advantage of gradually creating the conditions for a relay in the various Cambodian institutions with jurisdiction.

At this stage, several avenues can be outlined:

- The implementation of the Territorial Food System component could be anchored at the level of the Province's various territorial entities:
 - o Anchoring at Provincial level with dedicated technical assistance, for the "construction of provincial policies" dimension
 - o Dismantling to district level, with a technical assistance unit to implement local TFS components (bottom-up approach).
- The section on strengthening the resilience of farming households and market integration could be the subject of a more ambitious partnership with provincial agricultural departments, with local anchors to be developed within district agricultural departments

- A partnership could be designed and implemented with cooperatives to take charge of certain technical aspects (advice, market, irrigation, etc.) with a view to professionalization and sustainability.

The GRET/CIRD dedicated technical assistance scheme would support this outline of institutional structuring by setting up technical assistance, in the form of permanent expert(s) (province level) and technical units (district level), with 3 main functions:

- Support in defining strategies
- Technical support for district teams, based in particular on lessons learned from the APICI phases
- Coordination of the monitoring, evaluation and capitalization system

4. Recommendations synthesis

In a transversal sense, after more than 12 years of the project, and in view of the new phase currently being designed, it would be advisable to implement an intervention logic combining the transfer of skills acquired by the project to actors with a perennial vocation, such as provincial public technical services, but also with farmers' organizations (agricultural cooperatives).

This means a change of vocation for the future project, with, on the one hand, an emphasis on the functions of capitalization and consolidation of acquired knowledge, training and transfer of technical skills, and, on the other hand, support for these players in their new mandates, particularly in organizational, financial and institutional terms.

In addition, the project would maintain its innovation and research-action function in relation to the new topics addressed in the new phase (such as the territorial food scheme) or in support of technical aspects that might require it (e.g. market studies, agro-ecological approaches on a territorial scale, institutionalization of SVGs, etc.).

The table below presents a synthesis of the main recommendations formulated all along the report.

<p style="text-align: center;">Agroecological vegetable production</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consolidate regularly vegetable production plans (who produces what, in what areas, at what periods, in what quantities) within and between AC working in the province together with NGOs supporting them and buyers, on order to respond adequately to the market demand <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consolidate the AC internal control systems for agroecological production and to implement it on a sustainable way within cooperatives - If necessary, to envisaged actions to process and preserve surplus production that has not been sold or to enlarge productions and added value for the benefit of the farmers
<p style="text-align: center;">Vegetable Marketing under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To study the reasons why the involvement rate of producers in PGS processes is still low at this stage of the project - To lobby the Provincial Department of Commerce for transferring the label “Sovathapheap Siem Reap”, as a Collective Trademark to the same organization as for the Farmers Weekly Market - To insure that this collective label meets the “save vegetable” standards implemented by the producers supported by IADA & APICI projects - To carry out detailed market studies and promotion campaigns <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consolidate PGS internal mechanisms and to monitor their effectiveness - To pay attention to the financial and organizational sustainability of the control and certification systems - To create a brand and logo specific to cooperatives for safe vegetable products based on PGS
<p style="text-align: center;">Rice production</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To review the strategy for supporting small and medium scale farmers in agro-ecological rice growing, including the rational and limited use of chemical fertilizers (for example at the tillering stage), for better adaptation to farmers' constraints and response to market demands for quality rice. - Feasibility of the connection with the SRP label initiative is to be explored with specific attention to guarantee the possibility for the cooperatives to use the label, as well as the implementation of a premium price system for the famers. <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consolidate the quality seeds famers production and marketing: rigorous technical itinerary, reliable quality control and guarantee system, market study and logo, financial sustainability
<p style="text-align: center;">Chicken production and marketing</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To conduct a preable market study before to elaborate a production, certification and marketing strategy (fattening chicken under PGS approach) - To possibly explore other speculations – as for example fish raising or pig production by small scale farmers - if on going study on consumers demand confirms there is no more space for local broiler chicken production ;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consolidate specific support strategy on local egg production and marketing assuming it corresponds to a specific market demand <p>Technical recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue to support family chicken production the most vulnerable farmers household - To design both strategic and business plans with producers / DSAC for the establishment of a quality chicken chain (as a prerequisite)
<p style="text-align: center;">Device for advice and support services: training of farmers, pilot farmers,</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an integrated strategy and system for farmer advisory support by consolidating the network of pilot farmers within cooperatives on a long-term basis. - To consider “farm management advisory service for smallholder farmers” approaches adapted to the diversity of farmer types and not only based on a “tool box” approach <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To conduct an assessment of the existing FP system and to draw up a strategy for its consolidation: upgrading training, structuration/ organization, institutionalization (i.e. under AC)
<p style="text-align: center;">Support to Saving and Credit Groups</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To give a greater and specific importance to this component, including by supplying the means of expertise and support adapted to the issues at stake to accompany the various institutional evolution scenarios: SVG size regulation, institutionalization under AC system either registration within Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), networking of SVGs under mutualist entity; <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To update all the rules and tools for governance, management and monitoring, in order to professionalize practices and create the conditions for future institutional consolidation - To consider commissioning audits for certain burning issues - To introduce IT management tools to produce instant informations and analysis and to contribute to the risks reduction
<p style="text-align: center;">Support to Agricultural Cooperatives</p> <p>Strategic Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To carry out with cooperative members a work on the collective development of a shared vision of the cooperative's visions, roles, principles and objectives, backed by multi-year programming and regularly updated business plans - To design and to implement a significant strategy for strengthening the AC institutional capacities (governance, strategy/leadership, financial management, etc.) <p>Technical Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To train AC responsible on value chain approaches - To consolidate the technical advisory services mechanisms within ACs - To envisage the eventual recruitment by the ACs of a shared salaried employee to support the members of the boards of directors
<p style="text-align: center;">Territorial food systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To clarify the scope and objectives of the TFS concept (beyond the value chain approach to healthy products) towards holistic thinking on food production, sourcing and product destinations, integrating interactions between different value chains, nutrition, natural resource use and environmental preservation. This broader scope should lead to the definition of a provincial strategy and priorities for action;

- To scale up resources to match ambitions, i.e. mobilize more thematic expertise and resources to collect and analyze data on food and nutrition in the province, in order to carry out an informed diagnosis and conduct a dialogue process involving a wide range of stakeholders, and national institutions (CARD, TWGFSN);
- To consider a bottom-up process between the local food plan and the district level, which could be carried out by the future project within an action research framework, and could feed into the dialogue at provincial level on policy design for the food system master plan. This will favor the contribution of “smaller” stakeholders to have a say in the process (smallholder farmers, cooperatives, communes...) at the local and provincial scale.

Project management and programming methods

- To carry out a new diagnostic exercise at district level aimed at taking stock of changes in farming households and their agricultural production systems, with a focus on assessing the effects of the project;
- To back project interventions with the construction of a systemic intervention logic, which can be based on a "problem tree" approach and be materialized by a logical framework, and serve as a reference for project implementation over the years;
- To adapt the project monitoring and evaluation system, internal review periods and report writing accordingly to the time of the programming processes

Monitoring and evaluation system

- To link the monitoring and evaluation system to the project's logical framework and to design indicators relating to the project's overall and specific objectives, and the expected results
- To elaborate a monitoring-evaluation procedures manual
- To introduce a farmer coding system in order to multiply the possibilities for analysis of the project's results and knock-on effects
- To link the ME system with a Geographic Information System would provide significant added value, particularly with a view to promoting territorial approaches
- To monitoring specifically the adoption of practices, in conjunction with the capitalization system, would provide new elements of strategic orientation for the project and enrich and consolidate its reference systems

Gender

- To enrich the project's knowledge of the dynamics of demographic change in the target districts, with a focus on women and young's role in the agricultural economy, in order for the project to conceive further orientations

5. Conclusion

APICI is an ambitious project, which has addressed many areas of intervention since its inception, with the aim of improving the resilience of farming households and in an approach that supports innovation.

The promotion of production systems aimed at reducing the use of chemical inputs, with agroecology at the heart of the approaches, is relevant insofar as the latter enables the construction of viable and resilient models for small family farms, while making it possible to offer healthy and environmentally-friendly products to consumers.

The large number and diversity of themes historically implemented by the project means that it lacks a certain strategic clarity, not least in terms of the results to be achieved for each component, including in terms of scaling-up, sustainability and transfer to long-term stakeholders.

The many activities deployed by APICI are based on a few major historical axes which structure the project and which have achieved varying levels of results and success, depending on internal factors (uncontrolled growth of savings and credit groups) or external factors, particularly economic (opportunity cost of labor for rice, cost of inputs, competition from imports for poultry farming, etc.).

For example, agro-ecological market gardening is undeniably recognized as a success story, and the quest to increase market share through participatory guarantee schemes should be a major strategic focus for the future, to ensure that as many producers as possible benefit, and also to contribute ever more to the reduction of negative externalities (health, environment). The creation of savings and credit groups is also an action that is now very well established in the villages, and this component enjoys a very high profile. On the other hand, the project is currently facing a delicate and severe growth crisis, which calls for a clear and vigorous institutionalization strategy that will necessarily take time to implement. The crisis in the cash poultry sector has affected the poultry farmers supported by the project, even though the action was well underway. Here too, we need to ask the right questions - are there still market opportunities and room for manoeuvre for family poultry farming? - and revise the strategic objectives of this component accordingly. The section on setting up agricultural cooperatives is a logical follow-up to the gradual establishment of basic groups (market gardening, rice, poultry farming, savings/credit), by federating these dynamics and taking them to a higher level (e.g. marketing strategy). On the other hand, these cooperatives are still "young", and what's more, have been through the years of the COVID-19 crisis, and sustained support to help them professionalize seems necessary, all the more so if one of the project's development strategies is to rely on the cooperatives to take over in terms of technical and financial advice to producers (market gardening, poultry farming, irrigation, savings, etc.).

After more than 12 years of intervention, it is likely that several thousand producers have benefited positively from the project's support. However, due to the project's difficulty in specifying its objectives, and the fact that its monitoring and evaluation system may be incomplete, it is difficult to accurately assess the extent of its impact in terms of improving the resilience of farming households, the number of households concerned at the level of the

targeted districts, changes in the role of women in the agricultural economy, and even of young people, and therefore ultimately the project's effects on territorial dynamics.

The addition of the new strategic objective "Territorial Food System" will probably provide the project with the opportunity to gain in strategic coherence in a reflection articulating the development of value chains bearing signs of sustainability, the sustainable development of the territories in which they are anchored and the establishment of synergies at the provincial and district levels in articulation with other projects (such as IADA) for the construction of regional approaches.

Finally, the future project represents a new and important stage. It should provide an opportunity for the historical partners of the APICI project to readjust their institutional and operational positioning within the ecosystem of players they have successfully helped to bring into being. The logical next step would be to position themselves in a posture of support for "faire faire" by actors with a long-term vocation: AC, Districts, Provincial Authorities. This paradigm shift would automatically entail the obligation to initiate reflection on the construction of scaling-up tools, and to ensure the appropriation and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned by the players themselves.

6. Annexes

6.1. Annex 1: Summary of APICI's objectives and activities since its inception

APICI 1 – January 2011 to June 2013		
<p>OG :</p> <p>Improve the income and living conditions of farmers in the Siem Reap region, Sotr Nikum District, by increasing production, diversifying farming and supporting the creation and strengthening of producer groups.</p>	<p>OS :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Defining village development objectives and strategies - Improving rice production - Improving vegetable production - Improving chicken production - Improving marketing of agricultural products - Dissemination to the poorest 	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support for producers' associations, - village savings groups, - rice production using the Intensive Rice-growing System (SRI), - diversification into market gardening, - poultry farming - support for the poorest farmers.
APICI 2 – June 2013 to June 2017		
<p>OG :</p> <p>"Improving and securing the living conditions of nearly 1,500 small-scale farmers through the development of more efficient agricultural production and marketing systems, support for agroecology and professional agricultural organizations in 50 villages in the districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong, Siem Reap province."</p>	<p>OS :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intensification and diversification of local agricultural production through agroecology 2. Sustainable increase in family farmers' incomes by enhancing the value of local produce on Siem Reap markets. 3. Promoting and strengthening rural socio-professional organizations (support services). 4. Creation of a local agroecology dissemination network in collaboration with Agrisud. 	<p>Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Dissemination of farming techniques to farmers: rice growing, market gardening, poultry farming 1.2 Conducting agroecology experiments: soil fertility, intercropping 1.3 Support for farmers' agricultural investments: boreholes, family ponds, poultry farming equipment (incubators, veterinary kits). 2.1 Continuation of study on agricultural value chains 2.2 Support for the development of the short circuit sector 3.1 Support for 40 village savings groups 3.2 Support for market garden and chicken producer groups 3.3 Creation and support for 6 quality rice seed producer groups 4.1 Study on insect and disease management through agroecology 4.2 Strengthening local skills: value link training, IPM 4.3 Steering committee 4.4 Capitalization and publication

APICI 3 – June 2017 to June 2021		
<p>OG :</p> <p>"Improving and securing the living conditions of family farmers through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province, Cambodia.</p> <p>⇒ 1,800 farmers</p> <p>⇒ 54 villages in the districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong, in Siem Reap province."</p>	<p>OS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train family farms in agroecology and encourage the dissemination of techniques through a local network. 2. Develop the quality of local produce and increase production through agroecology. 3. Promote and strengthen socio-professional organizations in rural areas to guarantee long-term support services. 	<p>Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Capacity building for farmers in agroecology 1.2 Capacity-building for the network of pilot farmers 1.3. Develop collaboration with agricultural federations to set up a network of influence linked to ALiSEA 1.4. Video training for PDA extension agents, agricultural federations and young farmers in partnership with Mediaseeds 1.5. Investment support for the organization of events promoting agroecology 1.6. Support for investment in agricultural equipment and inputs for producers (November 2019-April 2020) 2.1. Strengthen and support existing market gardening and livestock groups 2.2. Support rice seed producer groups to comply with quality specifications and improve relations with rice growers. 2.3. Support rice growers to increase their production 2.4. Participate in the annual Agricultural Fair in collaboration with the Department of Commerce. 2.5. Investment support for the farmers' market in Siem Reap 2.6. Investment support for the organization of workshops to raise consumer awareness of healthy, local products. 2.7. Raising journalists' awareness of agricultural issues to promote agroecology 2.8. Develop communication strategy and tools for EcoFarm to target consumers and local authorities 2.9. Support local authorities in defining food governance initiatives such as waste management. 3.1 Support the creation of an agricultural cooperative called EcoFarm to ensure the sustainability of services currently provided to members (promotion of the producers' label, compliance with specifications, certification process).

		<p>3.2 Implement and test an action plan including different options for savings groups.</p> <p>3.3. Coordination and follow-up meeting with farmers' organizations to implement advocacy actions for family farming and sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>3.4. Capacity-building and monitoring for 150 members of management committees</p> <p>3.5. Organization of two APICI steering committees with local authorities</p>
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APICI 4 – Phase 1 - May 2021 to October 2022		
<p>OG :</p> <p>"Improving and securing the living conditions of family farmers through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province, Cambodia.</p> <p>⇒ 1,800 farmers</p> <p>⇒ 54 villages in the districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong, in Siem Reap province."</p>	<p>OS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train family farms in agroecology and encourage the dissemination of techniques through a local network. 2. Develop the quality of local produce and increase production through agroecology. 3. Promote and strengthen socio-professional organizations in rural areas to guarantee long-term support services. 	<p>Activities</p> <p>1.1: Capacity-building for farmers in agroecology (rice growing, market gardening, animal husbandry, water resource management, agroforestry) using participatory and innovative tools (Information Education Communication).</p> <p>1.2 : Capacity-building for the network of pilot farmers (60 PF) in terms of communication, experience-sharing and analysis of their farm's technical and economic results.</p> <p>1.3 : Evaluation of agroecology performance and development conditions</p> <p>1.4: Raising farmers' awareness of the basics of nutrition, food diversification and the 1000-day window</p> <p>1.5 : Development of a farmer-to-farmer training service</p> <p>1.6: Support for investment in agricultural equipment and inputs for producers</p> <p>1.7 : Organization of a nutrition awareness day for journalists, in connection with agroecology</p> <p>1.8: Organization of an event to promote videos produced by farmers on agroecology at commune/province level.</p> <p>2.1: Capacity-building in sales, marketing and product promotion for existing market garden groups (17 in total) and livestock groups (15 in total).</p>

		<p>2.2: Remote support from Mediaseeds for the communication and marketing of agricultural cooperatives.</p> <p>2.3 : Participate in the annual Agricultural Fair in collaboration with the Siem Reap Department of Commerce.</p> <p>2.4: Investment support for the farmers' market in Siem Reap</p> <p>2.5 : Investment support for the organization of consumer awareness days on healthy, diversified agro-ecological products</p> <p>3.1: Capacity-building for savings group management committees and advisors</p> <p>3.2: Support for savings groups in implementing the 3 sustainability scenarios</p> <p>3.3: Training and support for agricultural cooperatives</p> <p>3.4: Collaboration with agricultural federations, the University of Agriculture, the private sector and local authorities to promote family farming and sustainable agriculture, and to strengthen the integration of new agricultural cooperatives supported by the project.</p> <p>3.5 : Contribution to the Alisea network through the sharing of information and technical support and participation in activities organized by the network.</p> <p>3.6 : Mission to support savings groups in implementing the 3 sustainability scenarios</p> <p>3.7 : Organize two APICI steering committees with local authorities</p>
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APICI 4 – Phase 2 - 2022 / 2023		
<p>GO:</p> <p>"Improving and securing the living conditions of family farmers through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province, Cambodia.</p> <p>⇒ 2 400 farmers</p>	<p>SO :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting agroecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production Strengthen producers' organisations and structure local agricultural sectors to secure production and facilitate the sale of products on the markets 	<p>Activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quality control of vermicompost and establishment of demonstration plots with pilot farmers Capacity-building for the network of pilot farmers in terms of communication, knowledge and experience sharing, and analysis of their farm's technical and economic results. Capacity-building for farmers in agroecology (rice growing, market gardening, animal husbandry, water resource management, agroforestry,

<p>⇒ 54 villages in the districts of Sotr Nikum and Prasat Bakong, plus two more districts, Chi Kren & Svay Leu</p>	<p>3. To support provincial stakeholders in the construction of a plan for the development of efficient and sustainable territorial food systems and its implementation.</p>	<p>basic nutrition and health, economic analysis of the farm and other activities) through training provided by pilot farmers, peer exchange visits, information-sharing meetings on the results of the demonstration plots and analysis of the economic results of agricultural production season by season, and the production of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) tools.</p> <p>1.4. Raising farmers' awareness of the importance of pollination and conservation of local pollinators for agroecological production</p> <p>1.5. Raising farmers' and consumers' awareness of basic nutrition, food diversification and the 1000-day window (using LANN methodology).</p> <p>1.6. Distribution of seed kits to 100 poor or disabled households</p> <p>2.1. Capacity-building for cooperatives in sales, marketing and product promotion</p> <p>2.2. Training and support for agricultural cooperatives in management, administrative reporting and business planning.</p> <p>2.3. Investment support for 3 agricultural cooperatives to diversify and increase production of local agroecological products and promote these products.</p> <p>2.4. Capacity-building for savings group management committees, members and assistants</p> <p>2.5. Support for investment (small-scale promotional material, communication events, common label meeting specifications) and management of the farmers' market in Siem Reap.</p> <p>2.6. Setting up a vermicomposting unit to recover green waste from the Dom Daek market, run by an agricultural cooperative in partnership with the local authorities in the Sotr Nikum district.</p> <p>2.7. Implementation of a digital marketing strategy for vermicompost.</p> <p>2.8. Organization of and participation in two annual agricultural fairs in cooperation with the Department of Commerce and AgriSud to promote healthy, local foods.</p> <p>3.1. Land diagnostics to understand the impact on agricultural systems of the construction of the new airport and the urbanization of Siem Reap town.</p>
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		<p>3.2. Mapping of territorial food system players and platforms</p> <p>3.3. Support for multi-stakeholder dialogue through existing platforms coordinated by the Department of Commerce, the provincial marketing working group, etc.</p> <p>3.4. Collaboration with Fédérations Agricoles in implementing their advocacy for family farming and sustainable agriculture</p> <p>3.5. Contribution to the Alisea and SUN CSA networks through the sharing of information and technical aids, and participation in activities organized by the networks.</p>
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6.2. Annex 2 : List of people met

No.	Name	Sex	Position	Organization
1	Touch Sokharith	M	Project Manager	GRET
2	Perniceni Elise	F	Technical Assistant	GRET
3	Bun Thailin	F	Livestock Technician	GRET
4	Muong Langay	M	Rice Technician	CIRD
5	Khley Sreymao	F	Saving Group Officer	CIRD
6	Sok Sothea	M	Vegetable Technician	GRET
7	Tan Tokla	M	Marketing Specialist	GRET
8	Sao Eden	M	Marketing Specialist	GRET
9	Em Chomreun	M	Irrigation Technician	CIRD
10	Boun Chamreun	M	Nutritionist	GRET
11	Actman Caroline	F	Internship	GRET
12	Soth Visal	M	Agriculture Cooperative officer	GRET
13	Loch Sann	M	Pilot Farmer: vegetable farming	Chrey Khang Tboung village
14	Yeng Song	M	Pilot Farmer: vegetable farming	Kork Russey Cheung village
15	Choeun Kimsip	M	Pilot Farmer: vegetable & SRI rice farming	
16	Tock Sokha	M	Pilot Farmer: Agroecological Vegetable Farm and Micro irrigation	Sret Kaeut village
17	Thai Chanret	F	Pilot Farmer: chicken raising	Chrey Khang Cheung village
18	Prum Mom	M	Pilot Farmer: chicken raising	Chrey Khang Cheung village
19	Duch Ses	F	President	ECOFARM (Sovatepheap Thoamcheat Agricultural Cooperative)
20	Thai Soda	F	Deputy President	ECOFARM
21	Thoeun Savong	F	Treasurer	ECOFARM
22	Siem Ngouch	F	Chief of supervisory committee	ECOFARM
23	Yoeun Sreytouch	F	Deputy Chief of supervisory committee	ECOFARM
24	Phav Phy	M	President	FUDAC (Kasekor Samiki Apivath Agricultural Cooperative)
25	Chhot Chhorn	M	Deputy President	FUDAC
26	Ang Ny	F	Secretary	FUDAC
27	Chhao Chhom	M	Chief of supervisory committee	FUDAC
28	Vol Muth	M	Deputy Chief of supervisory committee	FUDAC
29	Phom Bach	F	Member of supervisory committee	FUDAC

30	Sei Rai	M	President	DSAC (Danrun Samaki Agricultural Cooperative)
31	Thai Chanret	F	Deputy President	DSAC
32	Kei Koam	F	Treasurer	DSAC
33	Sorn Chhunleng	M	Secretary	DSAC
34	Khoeun Lon	F	Member of supervisory committee	DSAC
35	Vath Sophy	F	Vegetable Collector	Domrei Chhlong Village
36	Moun Phot	F	Chief	Vegetable producer group in Trapeang Thnal Village
37	Him Sarim	F	Deputy Chief	Vegetable producer group in Trapeang Thnal Village
38	Huot Sang	F	Vegetable producer	Vegetable producer group in Trapeang Thnal Village
39	Toum Sarem	F	Vegetable producer	Vegetable producer group in Trapeang Thnal Village
40	Teav Sarin	F	Vegetable producer	Vegetable producer group in Trapeang Thnal Village
41	Kong Chhay	M	Vegetable producer	Chrey Khang Chaeng
42	Pheach Saveun	F	Vegetable producer	Chrey Khang Chaeng
43	Sieng Ngouch	F	Chief	Rice seed producer group
44	Keo Kimsan	F	Producer	Rice seed producer group
45	Khoeun Lon	F	Group leader	Chicken producer group in Santey village
46	Preoung Khon	F	Chicken raiser	Chicken producer group in Santey village
47	Phan Lai	F	Chicken raiser	Chicken producer group in Santey village
48	Sey Vai	M	Chicken collector	Srama Thum village
49	Seth Ley	M	Chicken collector out of APICI	Srama Thum village
50	Chin Teang	F	Chief	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
51	Thoeun Savong	F	Treasurer	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
52	Sorn Hou	F	Secretary	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
53	Dong Khon	F	Cashier	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
54	Ouk Ny	F	Member	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
55	Ouk Noeun	F	Member	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
56	San Mom	F	Member	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village
57	Yuon Chea	F	Member	Kasekam Rik Chamroeun Saving Group in Kok Russey Chaeng village

58	Duch Ses	F	Treasurer	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
59	Min Lan	M	Cashier	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
60	Chhit Nin	F	Secretary	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
61	Bun Vy	F	Member	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
62	Vann Von	F	Member	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
63	Hann Heang	F	Member	Saving Group in Kok Russey Tboung village
64	Soy Kimsang	M	Market Manager	Siem Reap Farmer Market
65	Chik Kimchung	M	Deputy Chief of administration department	Siem Reap Provincial Hall
66	Chhoeun Vong	M	Deputy chief of international cooperation department	Siem Reap Provincial Hall
67	Phun Borin	M	Officer	Siem Reap Provincial Hall
68	Phoeun Kimly	M	Director	Provincial Department of Commerce -Siem Reap
69	Hay Veasna	M	Deputy Director	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries-Siem Reap
70	Koun Vun	M	Chief of extension office	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries-Siem Reap
71	Din Doung	M	Chief of administration office	Prasat Bakong District Hall
72	Srey Chom	M	Chief	Office of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment in Prasat Bakong district
73	Khun Vun	M	Deputy Chief of administration office	Sotr Nikum District Hall
74	Heng Kunvuthy	F	Chief	Office of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment in Sotr Nikum district
75	No Lyhuon	F	1 st Deputy Chief	Danrun Commune
76	Sok Sembopha	F	In charge of Women's affairs	Danrun Commune
77	Koun Nab	M	Village Chief	Chrey Khang Tboung village
78	Pem Toem	M	Village Chief	Chrey Khang Cheung village
79	Seng Picheth	M	Coordinator-Representative CAMBODIA	AGRISUD INTERNATIONAL
80	Clement Vialade	M	Technical Advisor	AGRISUD INTERNATIONAL
81	Veth Vireak	M	Agricultural Coordinator	AGRISUD INTERNATIONAL
82	Chinh Pheareak	M	Project Deputy Director	AGRISUD INTERNATIONAL

6.3. Annex 3: Drafting of interviews guidelines

6.3.1. Implementation operators

Project team, GRET Team, CIRD Responsible, Consultants	
Analysis Territorial food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision, definition - Challenges for the province - Strategic priorities - Action priorities - Modus operandi
EQ 331 Relevance of strategic orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristics of SR agriculture - Agricultural policies promoted/underway - Consideration of vulnerable households - Perception of agroecology - Evolution over time - Consistency between diagnostic follow-up and strategic orientations - Territorial Food Systems" origins and links with project achievements
EQ 332 Relevance of technical and financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice of areas of intervention for technical and financial support - Evolution over time - Description of services - Scaling-up process (method/device, oil spill effect, etc.)
EQ 333 Steering and programming system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of annual and three-year action plans - strengths & weaknesses - Distribution of roles and responsibilities between the various stakeholders in the internal system - Relevance/appropriateness to the "Territorial Food Systems" Specific Objective
EQ 334 Partnership system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives and characterization of partnerships: strategic, technical/operational, financial: Gouvernorat Province, Agri/comm/Dev rural technical departments, NGOs, others. - Prospects for development of the system: "Systèmes Alimentaires Territoriaux", scaling-up, etc.
EQ 335 Viability and sustainability of intervention results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which activities will be closed: why? Sustainability, dissemination of lessons learned? - Why, how, on what scale? - Group sustainability (strategic, technical, organizational/governance, financial capacities)? - Institutional capacity of public players: strategy development/implementation? - Capacities of other perennial players potentially concerned by "Territorial Food Systems".
EQ 336 - Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic targeting of gender by the project - Analysis of expectations and needs - Methodological and technical targeting - Results, sustainability, impact
EQ 337 Monitoring and evaluation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of indicators - Gender indicators - Data collection and processing system - Monitoring of knock-on effects - Context monitoring - Use of data and analysis

6.3.2. Partners

CD92, Provincial authorities, Provincial technical services, District authorities, District technical services, AGRISUD, Other NGOs	
Analysis Territorial food systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision, definition - Challenges for the province (-Time perspective, future perspective (land use, agricultural model, demographics, tourism, agri-export, etc.). - Strategic priorities - Action priorities
EQ 331 Relevance of strategic orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characteristics of SR agriculture and future developments? - Agricultural policies promoted/underway - Consideration of different farm types, targeting vulnerable households, targeting young people - Definition and perceived relevance of agroecology - Lessons learned from the project in defining territorial food systems (at their respective scales: communes, districts, province)
EQ 332 Relevance of technical and financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice of areas for technical and financial support - Evolution over time: innovations, abandonment of technical options, etc. - Description of advisory support system - Scaling-up process (method/device, trickle-down effect, etc.)
EQ 333 Steering and programming system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation of partners in the steering and programming process: roles, mechanisms, results
EQ 334 Partnership system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Objectives and characterization of partnerships: strategic, technical/operational, financial: Governorate Province, Agri/comm/Dev rural technical departments, NGOs, others. - Prospects for future development of the system: "Territorial Food Systems", scaling-up, etc.
EQ 335 Viability and sustainability of intervention results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment of sustainability / robustness of results? Under what conditions? - What activities need to be scaled up? How can they be scaled up? - Group sustainability (technical, organizational/governance, financial)? Under what conditions? - What is the institutional capacity of public players to develop, implement and monitor strategies?
EQ 336 - Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characterization of gender issues in the agricultural sector - Strategic targeting of gender by the project - Perception of the project's methodological and technical approaches to gender issues - Results, sustainability, impacts, lessons learned from the project in terms of gender
EQ 337 Monitoring and evaluation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge & use of monitoring & evaluation data and analyses?

6.3.3. Beneficiaries

Pilot/experimental farmers, cooperatives, communal authorities, CPG/VPG/SVG, Rice producers groups	
Analysis	- Food security issues at household level: production, income, diversification/nutrition, - Food security issues at territorial level
Territorial food systems	
EQ 331	- In what ways has the project brought about change and evolution in the production systems and activities of farming households? - Which types of intervention have produced the most results at household level?
Relevance of strategic orientations	
EQ 332	- Which innovations spread most easily? Why or why not? - Which innovations are not appropriate? Why or why not? - What advisory and support mechanisms has the project put in place? Is it accessible to all farmers? - Are these mechanisms handled by producer organizations? - How have they evolved since they were taken over by the organizations (content, organization, accessibility, coverage, etc.)?
Relevance of technical and financial support	
EQ 333	- Contribution/consultation of beneficiaries in steering the project: - participatory assessment process - collection of points of view, suggestions, expectations - ...
Steering and programming system	
EQ 334	- For each type of entity, characterization of partnership mode
Partnership system	
EQ 335	- Assessment of sustainability / robustness of results? Under what conditions? - Group sustainability (strategic, technical, organizational/governance, financial)? Under what conditions?
Viability and sustainability of intervention results	
EQ 336 - Gender	- Does the project help strengthen/change the position of women in rural, agricultural, household and community life? How does it do this? - Which methodological approaches, advisory support and/or activities do you think are particularly well suited to reaching women? - Ditto young people
EQ 337	- Role of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation system: o In the production of quantitative data o In the production of qualitative data - Participation in data analysis (e.g.: annual review workshop) - Feedback of M&E data to stakeholders and use in their respective strategies
Monitoring and evaluation system	

6.3.4. Marketing

Collectors, school canteens, farmers' market, Weekly Farmer Market Committee	
Analysis of Territorial food systems	- The challenge of supplying quality food products: quality, volume, regularity, diversity, price...
EQ 331 - Relevance of strategic orientations	- How has the project led to innovations and changes in agricultural/food marketing systems? - How can these innovations be replicated on a wider scale in terms of urban food supply?
EQ 332 - Relevance of technical and financial support	- Which innovations spread most easily? Why or why not? - Which innovations are not appropriate? Why not? - What advisory and support mechanisms has the project put in place? Is it accessible to all farmers? - Are these mechanisms handled by producer organizations? - How have they evolved since they were taken over by the organizations (content, organization, accessibility, coverage, etc.)?
EQ 333 - Steering and programming system	- Contribution/consultation of beneficiaries in steering the project: - participatory assessment process - collection of points of view, suggestions, expectations - ...
EQ 334 - Partnership system	- For each type of entity, characterization of partnership mode
EQ 335 - Viability and sustainability of intervention results	- For each type of entity, characterization of partnership mode - Assessment of sustainability / robustness of results? Under what conditions? - Group sustainability (strategic, technical, organizational/governance, financial)? Under what conditions?
EQ 336 - Gender	- Characterization of gender issues in the marketing of agricultural products - Strategic, methodological and technical "gender" targeting in marketing - Results, sustainability, impacts, lessons learned in relation to the project's gender-related "marketing" actions
EQ 337 - Monitoring and evaluation system	- Role of stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation system : o In the production of quantitative data o In the production of qualitative data - Participation in data analysis (e.g. annual review workshop) - Feedback of M&E data to stakeholders and use in their respective strategies

6.4. Annex 4: Terms of Reference

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