

Greater Mekong Subregion
16th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA AM-16)
Luang Prabang, Lao People's Democratic Republic, 17-18 June 2019

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

1. The members of the Working Group on Agriculture (WGA) from the six countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), namely, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, met in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR on 17-18 June 2019 for the 16th Annual Meeting of the WGA (WGA AM-16). The list of participants is in Annex 1.
2. The meeting commended the achievements of the Core Agriculture Support Program (CASP) Phase II and sought support for speedy implementation of the GMS Strategy for Promoting Safe and Environment-Friendly agro-Based Value Chains in the Greater Mekong Subregion and Siem Reap Action Plan (SASRAP). The WGA members deliberated on the proposed regional technical assistance the GMS Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security Program (SAFSP) and provided valuable inputs to the SAFSP, including areas for regional collaboration and best practices to be introduced and/or scaled-up in the GMS. The WGA members presented their respective national agricultural sector development strategies and confirmed that the proposed SAFSP aligns with and supports their respective strategies.
3. The meeting supported the proposed SAFSP and suggested the following sub-projects. The preliminary details of subprojects are in Annex 2.
 - a. Inclusive, green and gender-conscious agri-food value chains;
 - b. Financing climate-smart agribusinesses;
 - c. Food safety and quality standards, certification and traceability;
 - d. Cross-border animal health and value chains improvement;
 - e. Soil and water management for food security in a changing climate;
 - f. Agricultural adaptation in the context of water-food-energy-climate nexus.
4. The meeting discussed the concept note prepared for a proposed regional investment project entitled "GMS Cross-Border Livestock Health and Value Chains Improvement Project", which was included as "animal disease control zone project" in the SASRAP and the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022. The representatives from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR confirmed their interest to participate in the investment project while representatives from People's Republic of China, Thailand and Viet Nam confirmed their readiness to closely collaborate in its implementation with countries participating in the investment project.
5. The meeting noted the importance of implementing the GMS Ha Noi Action Plan 2018-2022 and GMS RIF 2022 as adopted by the GMS Leaders in their 2018 Summit, which include strategies, action plans, projects and a RIF updating process in the agriculture sector, among others.

6. The meeting extended sincere appreciation to the CASP II co-financing partners: the Government of Sweden, the Nordic Development Fund, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The meeting encouraged ADB to reactivate the WGA Secretariat as well as the National Secretariat Supporting Units. The meeting also encouraged ADB and development partners to continue to coordinate and support SAFSP and strengthen shared commitment and partnership for a more integrated, prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable GMS.

7. The meeting appreciated the acceptance of the Government of Myanmar to host the 17th Annual Meeting of the WGA in 2020.

8. The meeting expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, for hosting the WGA AM-16 and ADB for its support in organizing the event.

List of Participants

| No. | Names | Designation/Organization/Contact Details |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| WGE COUNTRY DELEGATES | | |
| CAMBODIA | | |
| 1 | Dr. Prum Somany | Director, Department of International Cooperation (Head of delegation) Assistant to Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Manager, GMS-WGA-National Secretariat Support Unit Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Phnom Penh, Cambodia |
| 2 | Mr. Chheng Vibolrith | Deputy Director Department of International Cooperation Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Phnom Penh, Cambodia |
| 3 | Mr. Heng Bunhong | GMS Secretariat Public Relation and Promotion of Private Investment The Council for the Development of Cambodia Phnom Penh, Cambodia |
| PRC | | |
| 4 | Mr. He Jie | Deputy Director (Head of delegation) Department of International Cooperation Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Beijing, PRC |
| 5 | Ms. Jiang Ye | Associate Researcher Foreign Economic Cooperation Center Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Beijing, PRC |
| 6 | Ms. Zhang Bin | Associate Researcher Foreign Economic Cooperation Center Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Beijing, PRC |
| LAO PDR | | |
| 7 | Dr. Phouang Parisak Pravongviengkham | Deputy Minister Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 8 | Mr. Savanh Hanphom | Deputy Director General (Head of delegation) Department of Planning and Finance Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 9 | Mr. Xayaphanh Lasy | Director General Provincial Agriculture and Forestry of Luang Prabang Luang Prabang, Lao PDR |
| 10 | Mr. Vanpheng Sengmanothong | Deputy Director General Department of International Cooperation Ministry of Planning and Investment Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 11 | Dr. Nivong Sipaseuth | Deputy Director General Department of Agricultural Land Management Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |

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| 13 | Mr. Sangthong Southammakoth | Deputy Director General Department of Forestry Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 14 | Mr. Samlan Paseuthkhamla | Director Economic Integration Division Department of Planning and Finance Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 15 | Mr. Thavisith Bounyasouk | Deputy Director of Standard Division Department of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 16 | Mr. Alounxay Onta | Deputy Director Economic Integration Division Department of Planning and Finance Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 17 | Ms. Souvanny Phommakone | Deputy Head of Fisheries Management Section Department of Livestock and Fisheries Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 18 | Mr. Alounmixay Keoboualapma | Department of Economic Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 19 | Mr. Xaysongklame Phimmasone | Deputy Director General NAFRI, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 20 | Mr. Sakpasit Manibod | DOPF, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 21 | Ms. Phaphone Manivongsy | DOPF, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 22 | Mr. Ai Bounmy | DOPF, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 23 | Dr. Syseng Khannsy | Deputy Director General DLF, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 24 | Mr. Sonephet Souliphone | DAFI, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| 25 | Mr. Bounsy Manthaphone | Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Vientiane, Lao PDR |
| MYANMAR | | |
| 26 | Dr. Thanda Kyi | Deputy Director General (Head of delegation) Department of Planning Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar |
| 27 | Ms. Yu Yu Than | Assistant Director Department of Planning Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar |

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| 28 | Ms. Yu Ei Phyo | Staff Officer Foreign Economic Relations Department Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar |
| THAILAND | | |
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| 30 | Ms. Preyanat Thiabratana | Plan and Policy Analyst, Senior Professional Level Foreign Agricultural Affairs Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives Bangkok, Thailand |
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| 43 | Ms. Nattha Mankhong | Plan and Policy Analyst, Professional Level Office of National Economic and Social Development Council Bangkok, Thailand |
| 44 | Ms. Pattharin Ongartitthichai | Plan and Policy Analyst, Practitioner Level Office of National Economic and Social Development Council Bangkok, Thailand |
| VIET NAM | | |
| 45 | Mr. Nguyen Than Dam | Head of Multilateral Cooperation Division (Head of delegation) International Cooperation Department Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Hanoi, Viet Nam |
| 46 | Mr. Nguyen Van Manh | Deputy chief of Central and Central Highlands Division Institute of Water Resources Planning Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Hanoi, Viet Nam |
| PRESENTER | | |
| 47 | Mr. Thomas Weaver | ADB Consultant Livestock Health Specialist |
| 48 | Ms. ShiTing Wong (Rachel) | Regulatory and Food Safety Officer Food Industry Asia Singapore 228208 |
| 49 | Ms. YiFan Jiang | Head of Science & Regulatory Affairs Food Industry Asia Singapore 228208 |
| 50 | Ms. Nicola Bonnefoy | Food Safety Manager Food Industry Asia Geneva, Switzerland |
| 51 | Mr. Andrew Roberts | Partner Reciprocom Ltd. Bangkok, Thailand |
| ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK | | |
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| 57 | Ms. Cynthia Razon | Project Implementation and Finance Specialist Bangkok 10330, Thailand |
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| 59 | Ms. Jirapar Boonyasurakul | Project Administration Coordinator Bangkok 10330, Thailand |

Preliminary Details of Subprojects

- a. **Inclusive, green and gender-conscious agri-food value chains:** Support GMS countries to (i) identify policy gaps and propose measures for promoting clean energy and energy efficiency, and reducing water consumption, food loss and waste for selected high priority value chains, and for mainstreaming gender concerns in agri-food policies; (ii) strengthen capacity of stakeholders along the value chain by providing training for smallholders and SMEs, including women farmers and entrepreneurs, on green supply chain management, agribusiness skills, market literacy, value addition, and climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices; (iii) mainstream climate-friendly technologies and practices into agri-food supply chains; (iv) design green supply chain networks through private-public partnerships; and (v) conduct pilots on green supply chain management (e.g., nitrogen, soil and water management) in selected agri-food value chains.
- b. **Financing climate-smart agribusinesses:** Enable GMS stakeholders to (i) analyze barriers and propose measures for improving financial preparedness of agri-food small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with specific focus on job creation for women; (ii) build capacity of SMEs and women entrepreneurs on appropriate financing options and measures for climate risk management; (iii) support a small competitive grant scheme for SMEs to adopt climate-friendly manufacturing practices to reduce GHG emissions and vulnerability to impacts of climate change; and (iv) implement a pilot on digital agricultural finance service aimed at women farmers and entrepreneurs.
- c. **Food safety and quality standards, certification and traceability:** Promote food safety and quality through support to (i) harmonize policies and standards related to good agricultural practices, food safety and quality assurance, certification and accreditation (e.g., organic certification, good manufacturing practice certification, geographic indications), and surveillance and information systems and laboratories; (ii) establish a knowledge platform to facilitate information exchange, strengthen sub-regional coordination and communication, and develop food risk communication strategies; and (iii) conduct pilots on application of high-level digital technologies (e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, block chain technologies) for food traceability and quality assurance systems for promoting domestic and regional trade and for ensuring compliance with international food safety systems.
- d. **Cross-border animal health and value chains improvement:** Enhance enabling environment through support to (i) improve safety policies and legislation on livestock, livestock products, and feed control; (ii) strengthen capacity of animal health workers to improve service delivery, and to control transboundary animal diseases and anti-microbial resistance; and (iii) pilot digital technologies for cattle identification and traceability systems to ensure compliance with international livestock safety systems. The participants stressed the importance of addressing African swine fever as a priority.
- e. **Soil and water management for food security in a changing climate:** Support GMS countries to (i) prepare national and sub-regional assessments in order to prioritize activities

critical to producing more food per drop of water; (ii) train focal points from water-related government ministries on water accounting under various climate change scenarios, and to prioritize climate adaptive soil and water management options in agriculture; and (iii) conduct feasibility studies on climate-smart practices in water use for agriculture.

- f. **Agricultural adaptation in the context of water-food-energy-climate nexus:** Strengthen agricultural adaptation through support to (i) establish a GMS platform for climate-smart agriculture to conduct policy dialogues on options to reduce water, energy, carbon and environmental footprints and soil degradation from agricultural practices; (ii) identify 'no-regrets' strategies that have both positive development outcomes and make GMS agricultural systems resilient to future impacts of climate change; (iii) incorporate nexus thinking in climate change action plans of agriculture and related ministries, and in project design; and (iv) conduct pilots on agricultural adaptation that proactively consider water-food-energy nexus (e.g., solar irrigation, agricultural waste to energy for food processing), including deployment of digital technologies for enhancing agricultural adaptation in a warming climate.