

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: SEAE

<b>TA No. and Name:</b> TA 4310–CAM: Formulating a Master Plan for National Agricultural Research			<b>Amount Approved:</b> \$300,000	
			<b>Revised Amount:</b> –	
<b>Executing Agency:</b> The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)		<b>Source of Funding:</b> TASF	<b>TA Amount Undisbursed</b> \$33,434.94	<b>TA Amount Utilized</b> \$266,565.06
<b>Date</b>			<b>Completion Date</b>	
<b>Approval</b> 22 December 2003	<b>Signing</b> 05 March 2004	<b>Fielding of Consultants</b> 17 January 2005	<b>Original</b> 31 December 2004	<b>Actual</b> 15 February 2006
			<b>Closing Date</b>	
			<b>Original</b> 31 December 2004	<b>Actual</b> 15 June 2006
<b>Description</b>				
<p>Agricultural sector in Cambodia remains a major contributor to the national economy, accounting for 39% of the gross domestic product, and employs about 70% of the total workforce, of which 80% reside in the rural areas. About 56% of rural population lives below the poverty line compared with 15% in Phnom Penh. Therefore, sustainable agricultural growth is essential to facilitate improvements and enhanced rural livelihood opportunities in the country.</p> <p>In Cambodia, while rice will continue to be the main crop in agricultural production, its importance in terms of value added within the sector will decline over time. High-value agricultural products have the potential to contribute in enhancing agriculture growth through integration with domestic and international markets. Achieving this will require concerted efforts to facilitate commercialization of agriculture, diversification towards high-value agriculture, and integration of smallholders with agro-based enterprises. An important constraint in agricultural commercialization and diversification for increasing cash income is the limited access of farmers to improved technology and knowledge mainly due to insufficient investments in agricultural research and extension. As a result, farmers' linkages with urban and international markets and agribusinesses are weak. A master plan for national agricultural research was required to address these constraints and to generate strong ownership within Cambodia for establishing a renewed strategy for research; clarifying and agreeing on scientific objectives and priorities in agriculture research; planning the research program contents to implement the priorities; and defining resources required to implement these plans.</p> <p>The Government of Cambodia is aware that the improvement in agricultural sector is an important component of national development. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (MAFF) has been formulating a strategy policy to enhance the agricultural sector based on the Government's Rectangular Strategy (2004), the Cambodian Millennium Development Goal (2003), and the Second Social Economic Development Plan (SEDPII, 2001).</p> <p>The TA was formulated in line with ADB's country strategy and program for Cambodia, 2000, and subsequent updates to help achieve the Government's objectives of sustainable agricultural growth and reduction in rural poverty. It will also contribute to private sector participation in agriculture, and in improving farmers' access to productive opportunities. Major external funding agencies in agriculture sector also fully supported the process of master plan formulation, as it would complement the activities of their other programs and projects in the country.</p>				
<b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs</b>				
<p>The TA was intended to assist the Government in formulating a master plan for national agricultural research that would provide strategic direction and identify priority research objectives for the medium term. The initiative was intended to strengthen national agricultural research by defining areas for the improvement of research policy, strategy, and management, and by identifying priority objectives and activities to be shared by partners in agricultural research.</p> <p>The TA was carried out in three phases: (i) review and assess the existing policies and strategies for agricultural research and extension; (ii) develop a renewed strategy for national agricultural research in the medium term, and; (iii) identify the priority research programs based on current and future research needs in agriculture sector</p>				
<b>Delivery of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b>				
<p>The consultant team comprised eight person months of international consultants in the field of agricultural research management, and agricultural economics; and 12 person-months of domestic consultants in the field of research policy, research systems, environment, and social and gender analysis. A project coordinator for the TA was appointed by MAFF, and an agricultural research steering committee was established at MAFF to guide the TA activities. The committee members were the representatives of MAFF relevant departments, the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, other government agencies, research institutes, agricultural universities and schools, civil society organizations (including farmer associations), private businesses, and external funding agencies. Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute served as a secretariat for the steering committee. Under the committee, there were 5 working groups for sub-sectors, including crops, livestock, fishery, forestry, and agro-industry. Each was headed by a leading scientist in an appropriate discipline and comprised a team of national</p>				

agricultural researchers. Each sub-sector working group held 6–9 meetings, and there were also one combined meeting for all sub-sectors, four regional workshops, and two national workshops to solicit their participative contribution in formulating the master plan. There were three tripartite review meetings involving the Government, the TA consulting team, and ADB in reviewing the progress and for resolving any outstanding policy and implementing issues. During implementation, the consultants worked in close collaboration with the project coordinator and the steering committee.

The TA completion date was delayed for more than one year, mainly due to delays in fielding qualified consultants and in coordinating with various stakeholders participating in the Project. But the delay did not adversely affect the Project. The Government is of the view that the whole process of developing these research programs was a Cambodian led initiative and MAFF will continue its strong ownership of the agricultural research process in the future. Provision of counterpart support by MAFF, including office facilities and counterpart staff, was satisfactory. It is noted that the TA design, term of references for the consultants, and the participation of the Government staff and other stakeholders were adequately formulated and implemented; and the Government, the consultants, and ADB staff performed satisfactorily in preparing and implementing the TA.

#### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

In accordance with the TA design and the consultants' terms of references, the TA has achieved its following three main outputs: (i) existing policies, strategies and systems for agricultural research and extension have been reviewed; (ii) strategy for national agricultural research for the medium term (2006–2010) and also for the next 10 years (2006–2015) have been renewed; and (iii) the research program based on current and future national research needs in the agricultural sectors has been prioritized. In addition to the establishment of the sub-sector working groups, analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of rubber sub-sector was also conducted and a research program for this sub-sector was also developed.

Progress under each output is presented in English and Khmer in the Final Report and in the Master Plan for National Agricultural Research. The final Master Plan document completed in January 2006 is a result of a participatory consultative process carried out through a series of meetings with five sub-sector working groups operating with oversight from a national steering committee and inputs from four regional workshops, national workshops, tripartite meetings and individual discussions. MAFF's approval of the master plan is expected in the first quarter of 2006.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

Overall the TA is rated as successful. Not only did it achieve the three intended outputs, the TA has also gained the Government's commitment to prepare Cambodian Government agricultural research organizations to implement the renewed master plan. The Government plans to allocate a budget of about \$2 million per annum over the next 5 years (2006–2010) for agricultural research (crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, agro-industry, and rubber), and has also committed to provide additional funds for training and improvement of infrastructure to demonstrate its support to agricultural research in Cambodia over a long-term period. The Master Plan lays a foundation for a relevant, focused, and flexible agricultural research system with strong linkages to Cambodian institutions and international research organizations and education systems.

#### **Major Lessons**

A key success factor in this TA was the involvement of the Government institutions and other key stakeholders through a participatory process in developing TA design and implementing TA activities. The process has thus encouraged their sense of partnership and the commitment to implement the renewed Master Plan. The TA report including the renewed Master Plan for National Agricultural Research in Cambodia presents broad detailed SWOT analysis on developing crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, agro-industry, and rubber in Cambodia. These provide comprehensive information on benefits to be derived from research activities and their contribution to potential investments in the agricultural sector.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

The TA report also analyzed potential investments relevant to the research, such as: developing area for rubber plantation from currently about 50,000ha to about 150,000ha; investing in laboratory facilities, vehicle, computer, and human resources; as well as establishing synergic investments in irrigation, rural road and sustainable livelihoods from developing crops, livestock, fishery, forestry, agro-industry, and rubber plantation. Further studies are required to assess the viability of such investments and their linkages with research activities.

Through existing and future agricultural investments in Cambodia, ADB may work with other funding agencies, NGOs and private sectors to help the Government accelerate implementation of the renewed Action Plan (2006–2010) and Master Plan (2006–2015) for Agricultural Research. Developing further synergic investments should focus on improving the livelihoods of farming communities in rural areas as most farmers in the country still live below the poverty line.