

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lessons shared on research assisting farmers to adapt to challenges faced

The results of a five-year regional collaboration to develop climate change adaptation strategies for farmers in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Bangladesh and India were reviewed at a meeting in Savannakhet on 22 July 2014.

More than 60 participants exchanged views and shared lessons learned through the AU\$5.3m Australian-funded project at the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO).

The meeting was co-chaired by Dr Bounthong Bouahom, Director General of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), Mr Khamlouy, Deputy Director of Savannakhet PAFO, and Dr Evan Christen, Land and Water Resources Research Program Manager for Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).

The research project has been addressing a range of issues that are impacting farmers such as labour shortages, and testing options for farmers with varied access to resources and household strategies to adapt their farming practices. The results have been used to develop a toolkit to help farmers manage farming in a variable climate.

In Lao PDR, the project focused on how farmers could adapt their cropping systems in lowland rice-based cropping systems of the districts of Champhone and Outhoumphone in Savannakhet. Strategies were also developed to enable policymakers to deliver more effective climate adaptation programs that are relevant to farmers' livelihoods and food security.

“Using direct seeders introduced by the project to grow rice helped me save on the labour needed to pull rice plants and replant them as is the normal rice transplanting practice” said Mr Bounpheng Phatsalath, a local farmer of Phine Tai village in Outhoumphone district during a field visit of the review team. He told the visitors that he got similar rice yields from both direct seeding and transplanting cultivation.

“I believe that the collaborative research has been very positive,” Mr Khamlouy Yattivong told the gathering of researchers. “PAFO together with NAFRI will continue to collaborate with all partners to enhance our research capability on various scales to support agricultural development in response to climate change and food security needs.”



Dr Bounthong Bouahom, DDG of the NAFRI, and Dr Evan Christen, ACIAR RPM (seated second and third from the right respectively) joined the group photo with other participants.



Reviewers and other participants visited the rice field of Mr Bounpheng in Phine Tai village.

Media Enquiries:
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)
C/o: Australian Embassy
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel.: 021 353800