



## Mid-term Review of Uni4Coop Program Cambodia (Agriculture and Economy Sector)



*Agriculture Cooperative committee members in Kampong Soeng, Preah Sdach district, Prey Veng*

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## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full explanation of acronym</b>
AC	Agriculture Cooperative
ADG	Aide au Développement Gembloux
AE	Agro-Ecology
AFSA	(1) Agriculture Familiale et Souveraineté Alimentaire
AFSA	(2) Asian Food Safety and Security Association
AIMS	Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders
ALISEA	Agro-ecology Learning alliance in South East Asia
ANGC	Actors of Non-Governmental Cooperation
ARES	Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur
BTB	Battambang (province)
BUAC	Battambang Union of Agriculture Cooperatives
CBA	Capacity Building Assessment
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CFA	Community Forestry Association
CFAP	Cambodian Farmer Association Federation of Agricultural Producers
CIRD	Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development
CPA	Community Protected-area Association
CRA	Climate Resilient Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DACP	Department of Agricultural Cooperative Promotion
DGD	Belgian Development Cooperation
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOLAND	Eco-system Services and Land Use Research Center
EIT	Environmental Integration Tool
FAEC	Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives
FCFD	Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FNN	Farmer and Nature Network
FO/FA	Farmer Organization/Farmer Association
FWN	Farmer and Water Net
FWUG	Farmer Water User Group
GI	Geographic Indicator
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generation Activity
ILO	International Labor Organization
ISC	Irrigation Service Center
ITC	Institute of Technology Cambodia
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPT	Kampong Thom (province)
LANGO	Law on Associations and Non-Government Organizations
LC	Louvain Cooperation
LQ	Leading Questions
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full explanation of acronym</b>
MB	Mlup Baitong
MF	Model Farmer
MFR	Association de l'Union des Maisons Familiales Rurales du Cambodge
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MODE	Minority Organization for Development & Economy
MoLVT	Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWRAM	Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NCFPCC	National Community Forest Program Coordination Committee
NF3	Network of Farmers' Family Facilitators
PDAFF	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
PG	Production Group
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PVG	Prey Veng (province)
RDB	Rural Development Bank
RUA	Royal University of Agriculture
SA	Sustainable Agriculture
SEA	South East Asia
SCM	Scoring Criteria Method
SE	South Engineers
SHG	Self-Help Group
SO	Specific Objective
SRP	Sustainable Rice Platform
TKO	Takeo (province)
TUAC	Takeo Union of Cooperatives
UCL	University Catholic Louvain
VEAT	Village Environment Action Team
WCS	World Conservation Society
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The entity “Uni4Coop” was created by a collaboration of four Belgian University NGOs in order to strengthen synergies and mutual engagement in a common program funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation. In Cambodia, two of these NGOs, Louvain Cooperation (LC) and Eclasio (previously called ADG) are implementing the Uni4Coop program. This program in Cambodia is tackling two sectors: Health and Agriculture/Rural Economy and is being implemented over a 5-year period (2017 to 2021). While Eclasio engaged only in the agriculture and economic sector, LC is involved in both sectors.

This Uni4Coop program is being implemented in partnership with a number of local federations, NGOs and institutions. These are Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives (FAEC), Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development (FCFD), Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD), Irrigation Service Center (ISC), Mlup Baitong (MB) and the Royal University of Agriculture, ECOLAND Research Center (RUA-ECOLAND). Initially another NGO, Minority Organization for Development and Economy (MODE) had been a partner but this role was taken over by MB mid-way through 2018.

Within the framework of the five-year program, two evaluations are planned: this current Mid-Term Review (MTR) and a Final Evaluation in 2021. However this MTR has been commissioned to review only the Agriculture/Rural Economy sector.

An important contextual element is the start of the preparatory work of the next five-year program (2022-2026), which is due to combine LC and Eclasio actions under one single Specific Objective in the agricultural and economic sector. Conclusions retrieved from this Mid-Term Review will be used in the design of the scope and planning of the future Uni4Coop program in Cambodia in common between LC and Eclasio.

### **Objectives of the Mid-term Review (MTR)**

There were four objectives to this MTR:

- Review the achievements of the global partnership strategy of LC and Eclasio in Cambodia as described in the Uni4Coop Program Document
- Appreciate the quality and performance of the partnership relations that exist between Eclasio, LC and their 5 local partners’ structures in the execution of the program
- Appreciate the institutional capacities (understood in the sense of appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, not directly related to the program) of the partners agreeing to participate in the exercise
- Propose recommendations and suggestions for improvement in the short-term (last two years of the 2017-2021 Program) and in the medium term (Preparation of the second phase of the 2022-2026 strategic framework) regarding partnership relationships.

### **Scope and methodology**

Because of the strong will to undertake an evaluation on common grounds between the partners and perceived difficulties with partnerships in general in Cambodia, this MTR was designed to focus on partnership relationships as well as on the assessment of progress to date. Key questions for the MTR were therefore accumulated under four Leading Questions (LQs):

- LQ1: To what extent have the partnerships developed by LC and Eclasio helped to create added values and to strengthen the institutional capacities of each partner?
- LQ2: What is the understanding of each partner of what is a partnership approach?
- LQ3: What are LC and Eclasio’s approaches in the field of agro-ecology and the support of rural economy development in Cambodia?
- LQ4: In what ways has the program been implemented efficiently and what progress can be noted in regards to effectiveness (possible achievement of objectives), possible impact and potential for the results to be sustainable?

Of the seven (out of eleven) key provinces where activities were implemented, three of these were visited during the evaluation field work. Respondents included all partners and stakeholders as well as a sample of key target groups. The main target groups were Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of which 9 ACs and 10 SHGs were interviewed.

## **General findings**

The TOR for this MTR was designed from a perspective that there were issues related to the overall partnership which needed to be explored. This partly stemmed from Eclasio's perceptions that the program partners did not meet Eclasio's desire for legitimacy. Another underlying issue was the question of division of program design into two Specific Objectives (SOs) whereas both SOs respond to the same Theory of Change designed for the Agriculture and Rural Economy aspect of the Uni4Coop program.

These issues have now been explored and the conclusion of the consultant is that overall the partnership is working well. Although Eclasio and LC largely implement two separation programs, there is good collaboration and sharing of lessons learnt and joint participation in workshops and other events to disseminate results from action research and other learning. But more opportunities for deeper reflection between partners of each NGO would further strengthen collaboration and sharing.

Regarding Eclasio's concerns about legitimacy and representation, it is the opinion of the consultant that NGOs (although without the elected mandate from target groups to represent them) are equally committed to meeting the needs of the target groups they represent. Naturally they can only do so with external funding support; but currently, this is also the situation of representative associations. The need of Eclasio to have representative partners is a restriction considering how few there are in Cambodia; but partnership with LC offers an avenue to work with other less "legitimate" organizations as LC does not operate under such restrictions.

On the issue of two SOs, there are historical reasons why this division came about (based on the historical experience and connections of Eclasio and LC from previous projects implemented in Cambodia). Actually implementing the Agriculture & Rural Economy aspects of the Theory of Change under two SOs gave the opportunity for both NGOs to work to their individual strengths and interests; neither one of the NGOs could have implemented the entire program without changing their current mode of operation – either they would have had to expand their human resources in order to closely monitor many partners or they would have had to devolve more to the partners (become more of a donor than a real partner). Based on the current strategic thinking for the next phase it is unlikely that one SO could be developed; it would seem more advantageous to again develop the program under two SOs (*refer to section IV.3.2 for more detailed discussion on partnership issues for new program phase*).

In relation to the actual implementation to date, indications are that the results and objectives can be achieved by the end of the program. For SO1, there has been more progress to date than SO2. This is not unexpected as the change of partner during the second year was a disrupting event for the activities under SO2. But that is now moving forward after the new partner, Mlup Baitong, came on board. While there are a few issues listed under recommendations for program implementation, possibly the most important is the suggestion not to form any more SHGs; if the program changes to formation of production groups (PGs) focused on agro-ecology (AE), they are more likely to be sustainable. Such groups can help the geographical concentration of farmers transitioning to AE where they can more easily receive the intensive support they need in the early stages (both from each other and from service providers).

## **Conclusions to evaluation questions**

### **LQ1 – added value and institutional strengthening**

All partners of this program were clear that the Uni4Coop program closely matched their own vision and mission. This is not surprising as both Eclasio and LC selected partners with that match in mind. Implementation has provided "give and take", with partners contributing to the partnership and in turn benefiting from this participation, with opportunities for learning and sharing of knowledge. The partnership has benefited from the diverse experience of each of the partners, with the key added value of each of the partners being the skilled human resources they provided to enable the planned actions to be carried out. In turn the partners expanded on their knowledge and skills through the joint meetings and workshops of various networks. One network which all partners mentioned in particular as being particularly useful in terms of new knowledge, and also new contacts, was the ALISEA network, focusing on agro-ecology. For research, an important contribution of the Uni4Coop program has been facilitating opportunities for research institutions like RUA-ECOLAND (and students from Belgian universities) to conduct their research among target groups of local partners.

The institutional capacity of the partner NGOs and research institution is quite strong. CIRDA and MB are both well established NGOs with stable funding from a variety of sources and have been operational for many years. There is little doubt that they will continue to implement projects according to their mandate. RUA-ECOLAND is a research institution under the auspices of the Royal University of Agriculture and has support from many sources of finance for its research activities. As long as they continue to source support for their research, there is no reason not to expect that they will continue their work after the end of this Uni4Coop program.

But the implementing NGOs (especially Eclasio) are more concerned about the institutional capacity of the federations (FAEC and FCFD). While their structures and governance are appropriate and they have clear goals for service provision to members, both federations still depend on external financing support. This is a concern for Eclasio as they worry that federation dependence on external (donor) funds could distract federations from their main mandate (meeting their member needs). The consultant would argue that most donors who support these federations have similar mandate to Eclasio (assisting federations to meet member needs). Although to date they have managed to attract such support, reducing dependence on external financial assistance to cover basic operational costs should continue to be an aim of both federations. For this reason, assisting federations to develop a fee structure for service provision has been a strong focus of Eclasio throughout this program. The process of developing fee-structure models has enhanced FAEC's understanding of how to meet member needs for these services as well as providing them with an opportunity to benefit from fees from these services. This has been an important contribution to FAEC capacity. But implementation of the fee structure is still very new and only limited fees have been collected so far; this will require further monitoring over the remaining years of this Uni4Coop program.

### **LQ2 – understanding of partnership approach**

It has been mentioned above that there is very close convergence between the goals of all partners involved in this program. But it would be stretching the imagination to say that this leads to one common goal between them all. Each partner retains their individual goals above that of any one program they are implementing. Each program contributes towards that goal rather than becoming the objective in itself. This is not a problem; rather it is good that partners retain their independence but can still work together towards short term goals that are relevant to their long term vision and mission.

Some key strengths of the partnership include:

- Experienced partners with diverse skills who require only limited guidance (which enables LC and Eclasio to operate with relatively low overhead costs – as partnering with “going concerns” means structures already exist so new program management structure needs to be setup)
- Inclusion of federations such as FAEC and FCFD have enabled the program to reach out to a wide number of ACs due to the broad (and increasing) network of these federations
- The design of the program ensures a lot of networking opportunities
- As University NGOs, Eclasio and LC need to be able to contribute to learning and sharing (between north and south). The partnership with RUA-ECOLAND provides such an opportunity and it has been utilized through the action research conducted (and remaining plans)

But two areas of weakness that need to be considered are:

- Lack of close coordination between the partners of both objectives. There has been limited reflection on activities between the two sets of partners; mostly reflection has been confined to partners within each of the objectives. Both Eclasio and LC recognize this and plan to work more closely in the coming year. As geographical proximity may assist this, they plan to rent joint office space and perhaps share some human resources. But as Eclasio currently shares an office with CIRD, they need to consider which is most practical – to be closer to LC or closer to CIRD (which also gives close access to FAEC/FCFD as they often frequent CIRD office).
- The total budget is very small when spread over many partners, and many years. Of the Eclasio component, the wide geographical spread comes from one of the strengths (large number of members of FAEC and FCFD). But the implementation of SA by LC could have benefited from a more restricted geographical focus – more farmers in closer proximity rather than spread over many communes.

### **LQ3 – approaches to AE and rural economy**

Most respondents felt that it is only a matter of terminology whether they refer to Agro-Ecology (AE – the term used by Eclasio) or Sustainable Agriculture (SA – the term used by LC). The techniques being promoted by Eclasio and LC do not differ significantly as to date both focus on sustainable production techniques. However, AE is intended to create wider social and economic dynamism but this will take a bit longer to evolve.

But while the technical inputs promoted by Eclasio and LC may be similar, a difference in approach to implementation is the level of technical support given to farmers who are transitioning to AE/SA. The target farmers of Eclasio benefit from their membership of ACs (although a few non-AC members also practice); and in addition to the technical support from AC specialist trainers, Eclasio also assigns specific technical staff to support these farmers. LC largely selects farmers from SHGs and the technical support is provided by their local NGO partner. Initially this was MODE but internal management issues hindered their ability to provide quality support so implementation of SA slowed down. MB is now on board and FAEC has recruited additional technical staff. But the selected farmers are spread over a large geographical area (not confined to any one or more SHGs) so technical support may not be as intensive as it needs to be during the early years of transition.



It is not sufficient to have a few good examples among many farmers who are still farming with unsustainable agriculture practices. It would be more sustainable to form production groups (PGs) of farmers in close geographical proximity who could support each other; this would also ease the provision of technical support.

For supporting rural economy, the AE/SA interventions discussed above are one approach to improving household income. But for other interventions, Eclasio and LC have taken different approaches during this Uni4Coop program. Eclasio focuses on AC capacity as a tool for improving the economic situation of their members; LC supports the formation of SHGs to amalgamate capital for small business initiatives and they also support IGA grants to individual entrepreneurs to promote good examples to others.

From the findings of this MTR, the conclusion of the consultant is that strengthening ACs has greater potential for positive impact on rural economy than establishing SHGs. ACs have legal status, established governance structures, and support from government and other institutional donor programs. On the other hand, the SHGs currently being formed do not have a long term vision for building up finance to improve their economic situation; most of them see their group as a short-term saving mechanism (and they propose to liquidate the fund every year and start again). MB plans to work more with them on this issue, putting stronger emphasis on the “self-help” aspect rather than on saving only. But from the history of SHGs in Cambodia, it is unlikely that they will continue after the end of the program without MB support. The consultant would suggest not forming more SHGs; rather as mentioned above in relation to AE/SA, form production groups instead. Such production groups having a strong agriculture focus (rather than saving) could more easily transition later to AC than could SHGs.

#### **LQ4 – status of program implementation**

Although the main intention of Eclasio and LC was for this MTR to focus on partnership, it would have been remiss of the consultant not to include a review of the program implementation. A partnership for partnership sake is of little value; the quality of a partnership is best revealed through the benefits it produces for partner target groups.

Therefore, it is worth highlighting some key success to date:

- Completion of studies and action research has provided tools for the implementing NGOs to disseminate practical learning from the program to a wide range of stakeholders (both in Belgium, Cambodia and the region)
- Following training and business planning, ACs are now more business orientated than before (and even the members/farmers think of their farming more in business terms)
- Building up a pool of farmer to farmer trainers (service providers in the case of LC partners and for Eclasio partners, specialists in various agriculture techniques, management, finances and business planning) provides options for ACs and their members to access support that is practically-orientated to their needs (and their level of understanding)
- The success of ISC in mobilizing financial contributions from farmers in Takeo for the small-scale irrigation services shows the high relevance of this component to the farmers
- SCM (Scoring Criteria Method) in use by FAEC to assess capacity of ACs is highly appreciated by all ACs as they can understand more clearly the areas they need to improve on; the target for the program is for at least 20 ACs to reach a target of 80 points (80% of the available score) and even between 2017 and 2018 (the latest SCM conducted), the number has already increased from 6 ACs to 14 ACs

In general the activities under SO1 are on target to achieve the results; SO2 is behind on a few targets due to the loss of time changing partner from MODE to MB but they should be able to catch up on these over the next few years. The main challenge under SO1 is enabling ACs to acquire external financing. This is proving challenging as banks/MFIs do not yet have confidence in ACs to loan without collateral and many ACs do not have collateral to offer as guarantee. But banks/MFIs are naturally risk-averse institutions and ACs may be best suited as clients of Venture Capital institutions. Unfortunately these are limited in Cambodia (or SEA in general); but Eclasio and LC may be able to use connections in Belgium (or other European countries) to explore options there for such venture capital investment.

It is planned to do an external evaluation at the end of the program which should examine the achievements of the program in more detail. But, in preparation for that, the program needs to re-think the data required to measure the SOs – as final evaluations focus on impact which will largely be measured by the indicators for each SO. There needs to be clarification of what is to be measured – e.g. under both SOs, there are indicators comparing program achievement with “average of similar groups” but it is not clear where this comparative data will be sourced. Measuring increased income from AE under SO1 also seems to intend to rely on a relatively small sample.

## Summary of Recommendations

The following is a brief summary of the main recommendation of the consultant, divided into two groups: partnership and program. These recommendations are of course the opinions of the consultant and it is up to Eclasio/LC to decide which recommendations they (or their partners) wish to take on board. The underlying reasons behind these recommendations are explained in more detail in Section V.2 of the main report.

### Partnership

- 1.1 To ensure full ownership of the next phase of the program, it is critical to identify the relevant partners early in the process so they can be fully involved in the development of the program proposal
- 1.2 In developing the next phase of the program, reduce geographical focus of the SA inputs to ensure greater impact from funding
- 1.3 Organize more reflection meetings for different groups (e.g. management, field staff) of partners (LC and Eclasio combined)
- 1.4 Develop a capacity assessment tool that is relevant to AC Federations (FAEC and FCFD) – CBA used for NGOs does not cover the required capacities (and includes some irrelevant ones)
- 1.5 Support FAEC to create knowledge website to collect and share all documents produced under Uni4Coop – a wider Khmer audience may access studies and research posted on such a site compared to the number who may access ECLOSIO or LC websites.
- 1.6 In order to prepare data for end of program evaluation, Eclasio and LC need to confirm the sources of comparative data for indicators at objective level
- 1.7 In designing the next phase, key project inputs (or group formation) should be planned for the first half of the program (with appropriate budget allocation)
- 1.8 Annual budget planning should be speeded up (finalized by end December of current year) so that partners are clear on amounts before the start of the next year
- 1.9 Contracts with partners should stipulate rate of release of funds (linked to plans). Transfers should then be made without further need to request; and Eclasio and LC should accept finance reports without copying invoices (this would respect partner independence and demonstrate trust)

### Program

- 2.1 LC/MB should consider not forming any more SHGs; instead focus on production groups (PGs) of farmers in close proximity to each other to transition to SA
- 2.2 Eclasio to assist FAEC/FCFD to increase the number of specialists (with more emphasis on women and youth) to provide services to AC members; LC/MB to select and train additional service providers/model farmers to support SA
- 2.3 Assist FAEC and FCFD to develop system for specialists/service providers to record details of services provided so that information can be reported as per indicator
- 2.4 Suggest that if MB has the time and resources, it would be good to follow up on the 16 farmers reported by MODE as still practicing SA – it would indicate whether families may continue to practice SA even if project staff no longer visit or support them
- 2.5 Support additional research by ECOLAND on socio-economic factors influencing the adoption (or non-adoption) of AE/SA
- 2.6 Eclasio to use its connections in Europe to explore other possible sources of venture capital (as limited options in Cambodia or SEA)
- 2.7 Eclasio should commission a study on the supply chain of main types of fertilizers to understand better where ACs could enter this supply chain in order to ensure that Cambodian farmers are paying the lowest price possible compared to farmers in neighboring countries

## Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the consultant takes this opportunity to thank all those who gave up their valuable time to take part in this MTR exercise. Special thanks to the community members who participated freely and were very open in sharing their views on the program. The consultant hopes that donors will appreciate the considerable achievements of the program and will continue to support the Uni4Coop partnership and their target communities to ensure continued improvement to their livelihoods.

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## I. Introduction and background

In 2016, four Belgian University NGOs (Eclasio – previously known as ADG-Aide au Développement Gembloux, FUCID, Louvain Coopération, and ULB Coopération) decided to join forces and strengthen their synergies through the creation of the entity “Uni4Coop” and the mutual engagement in the implementation of one common program funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation (hereafter referred to as DGD).

In Cambodia the Uni4Coop Program is implemented by two of the four Belgian University NGOs, Eclasio and Louvain Coopération (LC). The first step undertaken to set up the program was a context analysis that gathered inputs from all the different Belgian ANG (Actors of Non-Governmental Cooperation) engaged in Cambodia that resulted in a Joint Strategic Framework that foresaw common strategies and objectives for each of the sectoral interventions to be supported by DGD. The Context Analysis presented an analysis of the situation of Cambodian civil society, the decentralized authorities and the government institutions and elements for promoting circumstances of their strengthening. It led to the description of the different actors identified for intervening in the development of the sectors, including partnership, synergies and complementarities.

The Uni4Coop program in Cambodia is tackling two sectors: Health and Agriculture/Rural Economy. While Eclasio engaged only in the agriculture and economic sector, LC is involved in both sectors. The Uni4Coop program is divided into Specific Objectives (SO) by country, by sector and by NGO. Within the framework of this five-year Uni4Coop program (2017-2021), two evaluations are planned: this current Mid-Term Review (MTR) and a Final Evaluation in 2021. However this MTR has been commissioned to review only the Agriculture/Rural Economy sector. The SOs formulated for this sector (for the 5-year program) are shown in the table below.

NGO	Specific Objectives	Partner; Synergy/collaboration
Eclasio	Small-scale family farmers and their family members strengthen their capacities to achieve food sovereignty, to defend their interests and to generate pro-poor growth	<u>Partners:</u> CIRD, FAEC, ISC, BUAC, TUAC <u>Collaborations:</u> WWF, FCFD, DACP, NF3, ALiSEA
LC	The food and economic security and the level of organization of vulnerable rural populations have improved in a sustainable way.	<u>Partners:</u> FAEC, RUA-ECOLAND Research Center, MB <u>Collaborations:</u> GRET, ITM, ALiSEA, UCLouvain, DEMETER, LMT
<i>For full explanation of partner (and collaborating agency) names, refer to page 3 of this report)</i>		

Eclasio and LC jointly commissioned this MTR. Although the TOR for this MTR mentioned only 7 provinces (Battambang, Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Takeo, and Kampong Speu), the program has actually expanded to 11 provinces (mainly through the expansion of membership of FAEC and FCFD).

An important contextual element is the start of the preparatory work of the next five-year program 2022-2026, which is due to combine LC and Eclasio actions under one single Specific Objective in the agricultural and economic sector. Conclusions retrieved from this Mid-Term Review will be used in the design of the scope and planning of the future Uni4Coop program in Cambodia in common between LC and Eclasio.

Because of the strong will to undertake an evaluation on common grounds between the two partners, LC and Eclasio, this MTR will focus on partnership relationships, an issue that is commonly experienced with difficulties in Cambodia.



## **II. Objectives, Scope and Methodology of the MTR**

### **II.1 Objectives**

The objectives of this MTR as set out in the TORs (see **Annex 1** attached) were as follows:

- Review the achievements of the global partnership strategy of LC and Eclasio in Cambodia as described in the Uni4Coop Program Document
- Appreciate the quality and performance of the partnership relations that exist between Eclasio, LC and their 5 local partners' structures in the execution of the program
- Appreciate the institutional capacities (understood in the sense of appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, not directly related to the program) of the partners agreeing to participate in the exercise
- Propose recommendations and suggestions for improvement in the short-term (last two years of the 2017-2021 Program) and in the medium term (Preparation of the second phase of the 2022-2026 strategic framework) regarding partnership relationships.

### **II.2 Scope of the MTR**

While taking into consideration learnings from the previous programs implemented by Eclasio and LC in Cambodia, this main focus of this MTR was on the first 2.5 years of the Uni4Coop program currently being implemented. The TOR proposed a number of questions to lead the MTR (Leading Questions – LQ) and a few more questions proposed by the consultant were subsequently added. These Leading Questions were divided into 4 groups (LQ1 to LQ4) as follows:

LQ1: To what extent have the partnerships developed by LC and Eclasio helped to create added values and to strengthen the institutional capacities of each partner?

- a) Are CSO' partners sufficiently (organizationally and financially) sustainable to ensure durability of the actions?
- b) To what extent is the partnership relevant to achieving the vision and mission of the partner institutions?
- c) Does the capacity building of the partners remain viable and less dependent on external technical support?
- d) To what extent the partnership enabled the reach of further collaborations, synergies, networking?
- e) Did partners succeed to participate together to policy formulation and reform process conducive of a better environment for CSOs in Cambodia?
- f) Did partners succeed to participate together to knowledge management processes and to increase their reflection about their actions?

LQ2: What is the understanding of each partner of what is a partnership approach?

- a) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, the factors of success, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions made to solve them?
- b) Can we only talk about common interests in the partnership or are LC and Eclasio building a common and shared goal, objective or perspective with each of their partner which is different from each individual organization's objectives or problems they are facing?
- c) What are the partners feeling they receive or benefit from the partnership with Eclasio or LC?
- d) What are they contributing which is seen as a resource from other partners?

These three dimensions (sharing - giving – receiving) should be explored for each of the partners of LC and Eclasio.

LQ3: What are LC and Eclasio's approaches in the field of agro-ecology and the support of rural economy development in Cambodia?

- a) What are the commonalities and the main differences between these approaches?
- b) Is the current situation organized around two set of partnerships with two distinct structures the one to pursue? If so, how should it be organized and shared between LC & Eclasio?
- c) Or should the specific objectives of the two organizations be pooled in a single goal with a common operational structure? And how should the roles and responsibilities be shared?
- d) Are there additional structures or organizations, networks working in the same field with whom partnerships should be considered to reinforce the collaboration between LC and Eclasio?

LQ4: In what ways has the program been implemented efficiently and what progress can be noted in regards to effectiveness (possible achievement of objectives), possible impact and potential for the results to be sustainable?

- a) Were project resources applied in a timely manner?
- b) Have financial resources been used as planned?
- c) Are project outputs being achieved at reasonable cost?
- d) To what extent do outputs to date indicate achievement of project results and objectives?
- e) What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of outputs?
- f) In what ways is the program contributing to improved quality of life of target groups?
- g) Are there any unexpected results (positive or negative) arising from the program?
- h) To what extent are the benefits likely to be sustainable in the longer term and what mechanisms have been put in place by the program to ensure this?
- i) Replication: to what extent has the program established models of interventions (or key lessons) which could be used in other areas (or by other agencies)?

### **II.3 Methodology applied**

The methodology included the following steps:

- Desk Review
- Sampling framework & tools development
- Conducting the field work
- Data analysis and reporting

#### Desk Review

In order to get an overview of the project, a desk review was undertaken to review all relevant project documents. These included:

- Detailed Project Documents of Eclasio and LC (including detailed activities and budgets)
- Contracts (or MOUs) with local partners of both Eclasio and LC (setting out roles and responsibilities, targets and detailed budgets)
- Final reports of previous programs implemented by Eclasio and LC in Cambodia
- Reports on all evaluations carried out on behalf of Eclasio and LC in Cambodia
- Baseline data collected to measure program indicators (baseline report and raw data)
- Further periodic surveys carried out to measure change from baseline (reports and raw data)
- Progress reports on Uni4Coop activities (from local partners to Eclasio/LC)
- Progress reports on Uni4Coop activities (by Eclasio/LC to donors)
- Financial reports to date (per partner and overall report for Eclasio and LC)
- Training and other capacity materials used for all aspects of the program
- Capacity Assessments carried out (for partners, ACs/FOs)

#### Sampling framework & tool development

As is normal with the evaluation of a large, geographically-wide, program such as that of the Uni4Coop, the evaluation focused on a representative sample of target groups and stakeholders. The selection of the sample started with the province level, and then moved down to define specific target groups/respondents to interview.

#### *Selection of provinces for MTR:*

From the Program Document, it was understood that Objectives 1 and 2 of the Uni4Coop program cover 7 provinces of Cambodia – 6 provinces for Objective 1 and 2 provinces for Objective 2 (but with one overlapping province, Kampong Thom). As it was understood that similar activities had been carried out in all provinces under each of the SOs, a selection of 2 provinces (over 25%) would normally be considered sufficient as representative of the entire program. However, from the experience of the consultant in conducting previous evaluations, there can be different socio-economic circumstances between provinces which constrain the use of such a small sample. Therefore it was agreed with LC & Eclasio that the MTR be spread over 3 of the 7 target provinces in order to get wider representation.

To ensure objectivity, the selection of the 3 provinces should be done randomly. However, as Kampong Thom province was the only one where both SOs are being implemented, it was automatically included in the sample in order to understand the synergy between implementing agencies and partners working in the same province. The other two provinces were randomly sampled resulting in the selection of Prey Veng and Takeo. However due to some politically sensitive issues among target groups in Takeo, this province was later replaced by Battambang.

*Selection of target groups within sample provinces:*

Review of the program documentation indicated that, in addition to partners and other implementing stakeholders, the main target groups supported by the program are ACs/FOs, SHGs and some other individuals such as model farmers. As different numbers of groups were supported in each of the selected provinces, the following type and number of respondents was agreed with LC/ECLOIO:

**Table II.3.1 – Field respondent groups planned and actual**

Interview type	PLANNED					ACTUAL				
	KPT	PVG	TKO	PNP/oth	Total	KPT	PVG	BTB	PNP/oth	Total
<b>Implementing agencies, partners, key stakeholders</b>										
ECOSIO/ADG and Louvain				2	2				4	4
FAEC				1	1				1	1
CIRD				1	1				1	1
ISC	1				1	1				1
RUA-Ecoland RC				1	1				1	1
MB				1	1				1	1
FCFD		1			1		1			1
<b>Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</b>										
AC management	1	6	8		15		5	4		9
AC members / other farmers	1	6	8		15		4	4		8
SHG management	8				8	10				10
SHG members / other farmers	8				8	14				14
<b>Key Informant interviews (KIIs)</b>										
DACP (MAFF) and PDAFFs	1	1	1	1	4	1		1	1	3
MFR			1		1					0
FNN				1	1					0
FWN	1				1	1				1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>55</b>

As can be seen from above table a few less interviews were conducted than planned. The main reduction was in the change of province from Takeo to Battambang. The change meant additional time in travel and also ACs in Battambang are more spread out around the province than in Takeo (where most of those planned were in one district, Tram Kak). So it was only possible to meet four ACs in Battambang (and same number of member interviews) whereas it has been expected to visit eight ACs in Takeo. A few other missing respondents included MFR (this interview had been planned for Takeo but the team did not go there) and FNN (this respondent had not been informed in advance as was not available during the time allocated). On the other hand, some additional SHGs were interviewed in Kampong Thom as some villages selected had more than one SHG and all mobilized for the meetings.

*Tools development*

As it was expected that sufficient quantitative information would be available from Uni4Coop reports and other monitoring data, the evaluation focused on Qualitative Data Collection, with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) the main tools used. The guiding questions for the KIIs and FGDs were developed after completion of the desk review of all relevant project documentation. These Guiding Questions are included as **Annex 2** attached.

Conducting the field work

The Lead Consultant worked with two Assistant Consultants to conduct the interviews listed in the table above for the three selected provinces (the interviews in Phnom Penh were done by the Lead Consultant alone). The interviews were conducted over a 10 day period between the 1st and the 11th October. Some other interviews were later conducted by telephone and email. A total of 215 persons contributed information during these interviews, 139 of whom were female (65%). The list of persons who contributed is attached as **Annex 3**.

Data analysis and reporting

Information collected via KIIs and FGDs was codified according to the main issues arising and in particular, according to the key questions identified in the scope of work above which enabled the consultant to address

the MTR objectives. Information from all sources was triangulated to assess the level of convergence (or otherwise) of responses between different sources.

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using project monitoring data for triangulation with the qualitative (and quantitative) information collected through the Individual Interviews, KIs and FGDs. Financial data (budget and latest reports) were examined to contribute to the analysis of program efficiency.

Following the analysis of all data and information, the consultant prepared a draft report incorporating the format set out in the TOR. The key points from this draft report were presented to Eclasio/LC for their inputs. Following receipt of all inputs and feedback on the draft report, the final report was submitted.

**Limitations**

The change of sample province from Takeo to Battambang meant that some activities were not able to be explored in detail with target groups. In particular, this affected the small-scale irrigation component and Agro-Ecology (AE) activities under SO1 as these had only been implemented in Tram Kak district of Takeo.

During interviews with some ACs, there was low turnout of members as they were busy with their farming activities; for one AC (in Kansaom Ak commune of Kampong Trabek district) all members had migrated so only the committee could be interviewed (and this AC is mostly non-functional at present). Another AC in the same commune had not been informed of the interview so nobody was available.

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### III. Findings

This section summarizes the key information received from respondents to the FGDs and KIs, supplemented by the data from quantitative analysis as well as from the documents studied. The section is merely descriptive – comment and analysis of the consultant on the issues raised will be presented in Section IV below under the Leading Questions set out in the scope of the MTR.

Analysis of the planned results under each objective indicates some clear division of targets between each of the Specific Objectives (SO). SO1 focuses more on Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs) but also focuses on capacity of partners (FAEC/FCFD). The main focus of SO2 is on Self-Help Groups (SHGs) but also including capacity of partners and some other general activities related to Income Generation (IGA), climate change adaptation (CCA) and environmental issues. Both SOs include activities for capitalization of learning through studies, collaboration and dissemination. A summary of the key areas covered under the planned results for each SO is shown in the table below, indicating where these issues will be reported in this section on findings:

**Table III.1 – Summary of key areas and targets per SO**

Result	Focus areas	Target	Report
SO1, R1	Access to irrigation, AE techniques, increased production	ACs, TKO only	III.2
SO1, R2	Collective sales of produce by ACs; SCM scores of ACs	ACs	III.2
SO1, R3	Access to finance; capital increased	ACs	III.2
SO1, R4	FAEC/FCFD service provision; increased membership	FAEC/FCFD	III.1
SO2, R1	Partner capacity assessments; SHG leaders trained	Partners, SHGs	III.1, III.3
SO2, R2	SA practices; increased yields; SHGs -> AC/FO	SHGs	III.3
SO2, R3	IGA > \$50/month; # SHGs functioning	SHGs, IGA	III.3
SO2, R4	CC mitigation plans, environment impact, waste disposal	SHGs, other	III.3
SO1/2, R5	Studies, collaborations and dissemination	General	III.4

Thus the findings are presented here under the following categories:

- III.1 Partners & stakeholders
- III.2 Agriculture Cooperatives
- III.3 Self-Help Groups
- III.4 Capitalization (studies, collaboration & dissemination)

In order to ensure this report is not unduly lengthy, the findings for III.1, III.2 and III.3 extract only some key points from these meetings; more comprehensive findings from each stakeholder are included as **Annex 4**.

#### III.1 Partners & Stakeholders

The key partners involved in the implementation of the Uni4Coop program have been the Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD), Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives (FAEC), Irrigation Service Center (ISC) and Mlup Baitong (MB). Relevant stakeholders interviewed included Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development (FCFD), Department of Agricultural Cooperative Promotion (DACP), and Royal University of Agriculture, ECOLAND Research Center (RUA-ECOLAND). But before presenting findings from partners and stakeholders, it is firstly important to summarize some key points from the interviews with the two implementing agencies – LC and Eclasio.

##### III.1.1 Implementing agencies

###### a) Louvain Cooperation (LC)

LC feels that overall there are close similarities between LC and Eclasio as both are Belgian University NGOs which means they come from similar backgrounds. But both also have their own individual identities. Working together on this Uni4Coop program has brought them close for some activities but still the program is implemented like two separate programs. Both NGOs share information and attend each other' partner coordination meetings but other than that the work is implemented separately. Both NGOs meet on an annual basis for joint planning but there is little need for more frequent schedule planning (only coordination) as there is no overlap in activities with target groups (although working on some activities with the same partner, FAEC). But LC attends Eclasio partner meetings and Eclasio also comes to LC partner meetings.

Although Eclasio (SO1) talks about Agro-Ecology (AE) and LC (SO2) talks about Sustainable Agriculture (SA), LC feels that these are only different in the terminology used; basically the concept in practice is the same. But whether SO1 and SO2 could be brought together under a single objective, LC feels this would be challenging.



As each NGO has different style of working, it would require to be creative and to learn more from each other's approach to jointly manage one objective.

Regarding contribution of partners to the partnership, the most important contribution from all partners is their human resources for implementing the activities to achieve the objectives. There are some differences between MB and MODE in that whereas MB has much more experience with SHGs, MODE had developed a system for supporting IGA (passing on the skills, using the success replication method) that MB is not so committed to. FAEC has a lot of experience with ACs/FOs so their contribution is to assist SHGs who want to transition to become ACs/FOs. The contribution of LC to the partners is to facilitate cooperation and capacity building opportunities for them. Part of this capacity building is provided by another partner, RUA-ECOLAND. As well as managing their own research work related to the program, they also assist the other partners by building their capacity to develop monitoring tools and data management. LC also imparts technical knowledge through 3-monthly field visits by their agronomist. LC also conducts Capacity Building Assessments (CBA) and supports the development of capacity building plans.

The main benefits LC feels that target groups will gain from their participation in SO2 is that they will implement more sustainable agriculture practices which will lead to increased income for them. This can be achieved due to the experience of the local partners but will take a bit of time due to change of partner from MODE to MB.

Regarding the next program phase LC and Eclasio have already had some preliminary discussions about the content and are considering the following components:

- Strengthening FOs/Developing value chain
- Promotion of AE
- Research and knowledge management
- Access to employment (adaptation of IGA approach)/entrepreneurship
- Conservation of bio-diversity (e.g. mangrove – to align with cross-country approach)

#### **b) Eclasio**

Regarding expectations from this MTR: Eclasio is not so interested in the usual areas of efficiency, effectiveness, etc; they want to have more focus on partnership aspects of the program. LC and Eclasio apply different approaches: LC is more top-down – select partners (with the issue of representation not being a critical factor) to implement and manage budget; Eclasio develop structural partnership with organization that provides legitimacy (membership organizations), not with NGOs; NGOs are Technical Partners, meaning that there is no requirement for institutional reinforcement as they tend to become “consultancy” type of organisation. They want to support FOs but not to disrupt their main function (provision of services to members); prefer to fit into FO strategic plan rather than have FO adapt to their program. Since registration under LANGO, FAEC has been operating more like an NGO. Previous evaluations did not fully address the issue of partnership which is why Eclasio wants this MTR to focus strongly on this issue.

On the overall approach to sustainable agriculture, Eclasio staff feel that approaches are similar between LC and Eclasio, with AE being one aspect of sustainable agriculture. But implementation is like two separate programs although both NGOs keep each other informed. It would be difficult to combine SO1 and SO2 under one SO unless only one NGO takes charge.

Regarding FAEC, for Eclasio the most important factor is how representative the organization is. FAEC is not an NGO and should not be dependent on donors for key service provision (although donor support can be necessary for additional activities such as advocacy or research). From the Uni4Coop program to date FAEC have seen that they can earn fees for services provided; examples include the rice seed component and fertilizer service. But the most important service provided is specialist trainers (agriculture, business planning, financial, etc.). Specialists are farmers who have received specific training. It is farmer to farmer approach; it is this practical nature which makes such trainings more relevant to participants. ACs can, and are, willing to pay for such services. But, although the fertilizer service is now making a profit<sup>1</sup>, so far service delivery fees for FAEC from specialist trainings are not providing sustainability (not covering the operational costs) so there is a need for them to focus more on this.

The main contribution from partners is the experience (in terms of human resources) that they bring to effectively implement the activities. The partnership benefits all partners through increased knowledge of, and participation in, various networks (e.g. ALISEA network has introduced many partners to new contacts as there are over 50 members in this network). Joint visits to each other's projects are another way for partners to learn from each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Although data on fertilizer service was not available during MTR field work, Eclasio later provided an update which stated that: the service of fertiliser purchase and selling has already been financially sustained: In 2019, the budget for this service of FAEC/FCFD amounted to 3,127\$, while the fee return amounted to 3,831\$. It is therefore sustained already. Eclasio will not budget this anymore starting from 2020

Eclosio notes the following as positive change that has occurred through Upscale to date: ACs are now more business orientated; they have business plans (more activities than credit); Farmers (small farmers) are now also more business orientated in their production; Capacity of AC committees are much stronger and network better to mobilize resources for their ACs; the 7 ACs in Takeo have common interest to build union (but not yet approved); Good long term cooperation between Takeo ACs for chickens and rice seeds. But there have been challenges, especially regarding access to external finance for ACs. However, after a lot of effort on the part of Eclusio and FAEC to develop linkages with Rural Development Bank (RDB) and other Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs), 12 ACs have now taken out loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Regarding development of the new program strategy: An issue under discussion is what will be the point of entry (regarding partners)? – is partner (FAEC) ready or is Eclusio still building capacity/sustainability? And do they still retain their legitimacy (or being driven by donor projects)? Eclusio has already had internal discussions about possible components of the new program (as they had to prepare a technical strategic paper); the thinking now is to focus on 5 themes:

- AE
- Value chain/FOs
- Entrepreneurship
- Conservation biodiversity
- Research and Knowledge management

### **III.1.2 Implementing partners**

#### **a) CIRD**

As a long term partner of Eclusio, CIRD was closely involved in the development of the current Upscale program (SO1 of this Uni4Coop program). CIRD feels that the goal of Eclusio Upscale program contributes to the achievement of CIRD's own vision. Through the joint collaboration, CIRD has increased in technical knowledge (in particular seed production); they have acquired additional funds to expand their operations and have improved organizational capacity (e.g. increased ability to use information technology; they are currently developing APPs for rice production and chicken selling). CIRD in turn has contributed to Eclusio through providing the human resources to implement the relevant aspects of the Upscale program assigned to them and CIRD can also contribute to the co-funding of the program through funds provided by their other donors. Both organizations (Eclusio and CIRD) benefit jointly from sharing experiences through meetings and workshops organized throughout the program duration.

Regarding collaboration with other partners of Upscale, CIRD raised some issues in relation to working with FAEC: CIRD has been working for a long time with them but still they need support (seems they intend to operate more as NGO rather than as representative association); CIRD feels that it would be more efficient to implement seed production component directly with ACs rather than through FAEC; and CIRD worries about the impact on AC management as the strongest board members from ACs are elected to FAEC board and then they become immersed in that work which leaves them less time for their own AC. Nevertheless, the seed production component is moving well. Currently there are 411 seed producers among FAEC/FCFD members. At the start of this program in 2017 there were only 70 seed producers. An internal quality monitoring system has been established; this is called the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). They term it participatory because it involves the seed producers, private sector/buyers and department of agriculture staff.

CIRD also provides Training of Trainers (TOR) to act as specialist trainers from among FAEC and FCFD ACs. To date they have 24 trainers (between 2 and 3 per province) and they estimate that between 40-50% of these can function well in training other farmers. CIRD has also been active in the support to 100 orange growers in Battambang to get recognition for their produce as GI. CIRD has also promoted Agro-Ecology (AE) through encouraging farmers to grow a cover crop (in Khmer it is called "*Chongkrom Sva*"). This has previously been tested by CIRAD on corn but not on rice. So this Upscale program is testing this but will take time to see full benefit; the main benefit they expect is that as soil improves, gets softer bit by bits, eventually farmers can give up the need to plough.

#### **b) FAEC**

FAEC was formed since 2009, initially called Federation of farmer associations promoting family agriculture enterprise in Cambodia. This name has recently been changed to Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives as registration under the new Law on Associations and NGOs required that they not be referred to as a Federation. FAEC now has 68 members of whom 48 are ACs and 20 are Farmer Associations (FA). FAEC has only 8 full time staff (others are AC members who implement the various projects – they get only per diems and travel costs). As a membership organization representing ACs/FAs, the most important services provided by FAEC are training/capacity building (agriculture technical issues as well as business planning and financial/management needs identified by members) and advocating for policy change that can address issues of concern to members. There are many policy issues that FAEC needs to work on including:

- Access to finance – reduce interest rates, Rural Development Bank (RDB) focus, possible government bank with low interest to force down market rate (MFIs now operate like cartel; competition among them is not leading to reduced rates of interest – but recently FAEC has had some successful discussions with Chamroeun MFI about no collateral (but still interest high – between 1% to 1.5%)
- Access to water – advocate with Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology (MOWRAM)
- Access to markets – to identify varied markets and better prices for farmers

Although FAEC has worked with Eclasio before (as ADG), this program is different as they have contracts with two different partners – Eclasio and LC. They feel this is good as two advisors are better than one. Compared to their other donors (who also support their work in capacity building of ACs), Uni4Coop also supports capacity building of FAEC itself to strengthen the institutional development and this is very much appreciated.

While FAEC is very happy with the partnership, there are a few issues of concern: There is some confusion about the roles of each implementing partner on some aspects which they jointly implement – e.g. AE in Takeo with Eclasio (sometimes Eclasio do by themselves with little consultation with FAEC); seed production with CIRD, work with MB in Kampong Thom. In relation to the advocacy component, FAEC was actively involved in the Farmer Forum which was held at national level. In addition to advocacy, FAEC has been involved in many other activities under this program. These included conducting capacity assessments of ACs, providing training and capacity building to ACs to improve their management and governance, cooperating with Eclasio in the implementation of AE with farmers in Takeo and Battambang, cooperating with CIRD on the seed production component, and supporting the training of master trainers (specialists) for each province.

One plan that could not be completed was the formation of a union of ACs in Takeo (TUAC). The Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDAFF) in Takeo estimated it would cost \$10,000 to form such a union and FAEC did not have this money available. For transition of SHGs to ACs, PDAFF in Kampong Thom requested a budget of \$3,000 per SHG (but discussions with PDAFF suggest that they agree to reduce this cost to \$1,500 per SHG). Documents of the three SHGs who wish to become ACs have been prepared and submitted to PDAFF; they are currently awaiting follow up by PDAFF.

FAEC feels that the aspects of the program most likely to be sustained in the long term are: for LC aspects, the training of service providers in Kampong Thom; and for Eclasio aspects, training of specialists in vegetable growing, rice seed production, business planning, and AC financial management. The development of these human resources will ensure quality services to AC members and other farmers in the years to come.

#### **c) ISC**

ISC was initially formed after the Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology (MOWRAM) constructed the Stung Chinit irrigation scheme in Kampong Thom. The purpose was to support the Farmer Water User Groups (FWUG) to sustainably maintain and manage the water from the scheme. ISC was registered as a local NGO at the Ministry of Interior in December 2011. ISC became a partner of Eclasio in 2017, with an 18-month contract to provide small-scale irrigation services in Takeo province. The main activities they carried out were:

- Interviewed prospective farmers for support
- Prepared maps of the farms of the selected farmers
- Selected and supplied materials for DRIP irrigation (10 farmers)
- Constructed small family ponds (30 farmers)
- Filled soil for vegetable growing (6 farmers)
- Provided water pumps, hoses etc (13 farmers – 8 of whom receive electric motor pumps)

In total 47 farmers were supported with the above activities (as some farmers receive more than one of the above types). In addition ISC coordinated with Eclasio in the selection and training of model farmers. Overall a lot of work was implemented with a very low cost (even considering that the farmers paid about 50% of the cost). An important benefit to ISC in participating as a partner on this project was to learn about new ways that they could support other FWUGs in the future. One of the things they learnt was about the types of water pumps used by farmers. Often farmers purchase cheaper pumps but spend higher cost on energy (either fuel or electricity). Better quality pumps are available at slightly higher cost which can reduce operational costs. Solar pumps would be the most environmentally sustainable solution but so far the cost is still prohibitive.

ISC suggests that for future interventions, Eclasio should investigate cheaper solar pumping options (e.g. Israeli technology). More study also needs to be done on the use of automatic pumping systems – i.e. the system knows when water is needed and pumps accordingly; no need for human input (this can be very useful for farmers who lack labor to monitor their plots regularly).

#### **d) MB**

MB was not one of the original partners selected to implement this Uni4Coop program. But after one other partner, MODE was dropped from the partnership, MB was selected as the one with the most appropriate experience and resources to carry out the work. MB signed the partnership agreement with LC in August 2018. MB feels that the overall goals of LC and MB closely adhere to each other. Although MB has stronger focus on

natural resource management, improving the livelihood of the people dependent on these natural resources has always been a clear objective. MB also has a strong focus on climate change adaptation which aligns closely the LC objectives for sustainable agriculture and cleaner environment.

Although this is the first time MB has worked in partnership with LC, they feel that already there is a very good relationship. MB has received new knowledge from the partnership and developed links with new networks (e.g. ALISEA). They have also increased understanding on the use of digital tools for data collection (through collaboration with RUA-ECOLAND). MB has also contributed to the partnership; in addition to the human resources allocated to achieve the objectives, MB has also provided co-funding as well as the use of its own office and transportation equipment. No major issues have arisen except that MB feels the design of the program did not allow sufficient time to work with some of the groups – the program spread the formation of SHGs over the duration of the program which means that little time would be available to support the groups formed in the latter years. In collaboration with the other partner (FAEC), MB also experienced some difficulties as FAEC has changed the staff many times so it takes time for new persons to become familiar with the work.

An important partnership aspect has been working with South Engineer (SE) students who, through RUA-ECOLAND/LC, have come to do action research in their program area. But MB raised an issue related to surveys: students who design questionnaires tend to try to cover too many subjects which means it takes a long time to administer the questionnaire with respondents; this reduces the accuracy of the information they collect due to “respondent fatigue”.

From MB perspective, the most important aspect of the SHGs is the “self-help” part; they should not be developed as saving groups. There had been some precedents from MODE time of SHGs liquidating the group funds each year and starting again. MB is trying to change this by encouraging groups to accumulate their resources over time. This would be important if SHGs wish to transition to ACs and MB feels that if SHGs become ACs, they will be more sustainable and have official recognition and more avenues of possible support. In addition to supporting capacity building of SHGs on management, leadership and record-keeping, the program also includes introducing Sustainable Agriculture (SA) techniques and environmental considerations. For SA, MB feels that implementation will help SHGs to improve their production but so far it has just started so it is too early to know the extent of such impact.

For assessing environment impact, LC introduced a tool to MB for use in the communities. This tool is called Environment Integration Tool (EIT). MB feels that it is a bit difficult for communities to use and also not useful unless the program has clear activities to address issues identified through applying the tool<sup>2</sup>. In previous programs, MB used to form a Village Environment Action Team (VEAT) which proved effective in coordinating actions on clean environment in their target villages. It would be nice if LC included such activity in future programs.

For future programs, MB recommends that program design should ensure that all planned groups are formed early in the program (not spread out evenly over program duration); and it is also important that if SHGs transition to become ACs, that sufficient time is given to support them before withdrawing activities

### **III.1.3 Stakeholders**

#### **a) FCFD**

FCFD was founded in 2010 with 40 farmers’ organizations as founding members and officially registered with Ministry of Interior in 2011. FCFD now has 56 members of whom 26 are ACs. Members are spread over six provinces of Cambodia. The main objectives of FCFD in supporting its members are:

- To improve productivity of production groups
- To improve market access for members
- To facilitate development of business plans
- To help members to access credit for their activities at a reasonable rate

FCFD has worked before with ADG/CIRD so is very familiar with their working arrangements. FCFD has no problems with this partnership. The Upscale program has enabled FCFD to continue capacity building with its member organizations, especially focusing on governance and planning. The program has also supported technical training to farmers who are members of ACs/FOs. The involvement of FCFD in the seed production and fertilizer supply also ensured some additional income (although only small amount so far) for FCFD. None of FCFD members have yet engaged in agro-ecology.

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<sup>2</sup> LC comment: EIT aims to measure the impacts of the activities to the environment and of the environment to the activities. It is administrated by one person from the team (local partners or LC) together with farmers for example. And it leads to some self-commitments from the farmer, for example, to reduce some negative impacts jointly assessed. And the team member comes back after a certain time to follow up on the implementation of the commitments. The implication of MB in the application of EIT has been light so far and the understanding of the tool should improve with further use and application to other farmers.

For future program design, FCFD suggests that, in addition to building capacity of AC/FO committees, there is a need to strengthen the production groups within these ACs/FOs. A new program also needs to continue to find better markets (help ACs to link to these) and further explore credit/funding of ACs for increased sustainability. In conclusion, FCFD noted that even if government is now developing national federation of cooperatives, FCFD (and other NF3 members) still have strong role to play in providing services (training etc.) to ACs members.

**b) DACP (and PDAFFs)**

DACP:

DACP reports that there are currently over 1,000 ACs registered and there are 10 Unions of Cooperatives already approved (with 2 or 3 more currently being processed). The director of DACP said he only knows about one activity that DACP involved in related to the program of Eclasio/FAEC. That was a Training of Trainers (TOT) recently conducted for Eclasio and FAEC staff (held at Eclasio office). The main support to DACP in their work with ACs comes from DGRV (German Cooperation) and JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency). The business plan formats currently being trained to ACs by PDAFFs are those supported by JICA. DACP director agrees that these formats need more work to reduce detail but give more strategic view.

DACP has the following recommendations for future Eclasio/FAEC program focus:

- The program can call on DACP support because DACP has many trainers (about 40 persons)<sup>3</sup>; but they focus more on institutional capacity (other departments of MAFF give technical support)
- NGOs should be the main recipient of their training in order to enable them to work with ACs because many NGOs support ACs but not all are fully competent on business planning (and PDAFFs only have 2 or 3 staff in the AC support office so they don't have resources to support all the ACs that have been formed)
- Most important NGOs supporting ACs should focus on are leadership, entrepreneurship, business plan development (encouraging ACs to fulfill their main role, not just be credit provider)
- Support ACs to focus on value chains – from production, processing, value added to market
- Need to have clear links to private sector – contract farming

PDAFFs:

The role of PDAFF is to support ACs but they have limited personnel and budget to carry out this work. PDAFF does not really know much about FAEC; they know that FAEC supports capacity building for ACs but FAEC does not invite them to attend trainings. The main problem with ACs is that they invest most of their resources into credit for members. One obstacle is that members still don't really understand the benefit of cooperative membership. They see small annual dividend but don't realize the rate of return this produces on the relatively small value of their share (for example an AC pays out 2,000 Riels per share in dividends but each share is only valued at 10,000 Riels – this means 20% return per year which is much higher than the rate they would get at a bank or other location). So investment in more shares would increase AC profits, enable more activities to generate these profits and result in higher dividends. Another challenge is that committee members are getting older and youth are not interested to take up such positions (they want to leave their villages for jobs in the towns and cities).

Two key issues can be noted as examples of good cooperative activities: Contract farming is now improving – last year there were about 10,000 tons of rice produced under contract to rice mills; ACs are now understanding that they can produce rice seeds instead of eating rice and sell for higher price (2,000 Riels instead of only about 1,000 Riels)

Suggestions for future support to ACs:

- Request FAEC to invite PDAFF to join activities and should provide short reports at least every quarter (PDAFF does not want anything from them, only information)
- In particular, when FAEC do capacity assessments, these should be done jointly with PDAFF (as PDAFF also has system for assessing capacity and it can confuse ACs to have two systems)
- Should provide more training on vegetable and other agriculture technique to improve their productivity
- Provide training on processing and marketing their produce
- Organize exchange visits to other developed ACs in other provinces so that they can learn more (study tour more effective than theoretical training)

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<sup>3</sup> Eclasio comment: Yes, but paid as consultancy fee, without competitive bid, which is not eligible under the DGD/Eclasio administrative procedure; Also their handouts and trainings are too long and not adapted to the capacities of AC board members

**c) RUA-ECOLAND**

ECOLAND is a research center based at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Phnom Penh. ECOLAND has many research grants – from ERASMUS, IRD, CIRAD. They also have a lot of collaborations with universities in the region (Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Australia). ECOLAND became an official partner of LC in 2017 (at the start of the Uni4Coop program) even if previous collaboration exists since 2016. ECOLAND was actively involved in Uni4Coop design. .

For Uni4Coop partnership, there is some confusion between MOU and what they are asked to do – especially in relation to data management. ECOLAND feel their role is capacity building of partners to be able to do themselves but partners seem to expect that ECOLAND will do all cleaning, entry, analysis and reporting. Partners (especially FAEC) do not assign staff to learn and follow up. ECOLAND helped to train MB staff on digital data collection. For AC data, ECOLAND also helped FAEC with questionnaire development and data entry; most data has been entered by RUA students but ECOLAND has kept the remaining (about 60 questionnaires) for training FAEC staff on data entry (waiting for FAEC to allocate staff for this). ECOLAND has involved in a lot of action research during this program (in cooperation with students from Belgium). Most recently one research assistant is involved in research on quality of water around farms (compare those using SA techniques with others not using).

The main constraints ECOLAND sees with SA are:

- Farmers lack confidence in self (feel they are the lowest rung on the social ladder)
- Youth now educated and confident but do not want to engage in farm work (and even if they do, their parents sometimes oppose – what did we send you to college for?)
- Farmers often cannot find the inputs they need to prepare natural fertilizer, pesticides or animal feed
- There is still a lack of recognized markets for SA produce (especially local markets in the provinces)
- Insufficient interest in SA overall in Cambodia

Suggestions /recommendations for future program:

- Both signatories need to respect MOU terms (not asking to do things outside what has been agreed)
- In developing new program, partners should write and submit their own proposals for inclusion in new program (need to take more ownership)<sup>4</sup>
- Partners (especially FAEC) need to assign specific staff to learn about data management (and continue from what ECOLAND has done)
- Would like to do study/research on why farmers do not adopt SA (but it also needs to be proven to be sustainable and lack of data is an impediment)

**III.2 Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs)**

Apart from 2 ACs in Kompong Trabek (Ta Aong and Ansaong) who are members of FCFD, all other ACs interviewed are members of FAEC. These ACs who provided information are shown in the table below:

**Table III.2.1 – ACs interviewed during MTR**

SN	Province	Name of AC	District	Commune	Member of
1	BTB	Kear Meanchey	Moung Russei	Kear	FAEC
2	BTB	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Banan	Bay Damram	FAEC
3	BTB	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Battambang	Wat Koh	FAEC
4	BTB	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	Sangkae	Reang Kesei	FAEC
5	PVG	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Ansaong	FCFD
6	PVG	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Ansaong	FCFD
7	PVG	Kasikor & Thomcheat	Kampong Trabek	Kansaom Ak	FAEC
8	PVG	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Kompong Trabek	FAEC
9	PVG	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Kampong Soeng	FAEC

These ACs have been in existence now for some years, the most recent year of formation being 2013 (for 4 of the 9 ACs); the other 5 were formed before that (one, Kampong Soeng, as long ago as 2005). For most of the ACs, membership has increased significantly between formation and now. The exceptions are two ACs mentioned in the table below who experienced problems (loss of fund, migration of members) but one other AC (Ansaong) has maintained the same number of members over the last six years while significantly increasing overall fund balance. See details of formation, membership, shares and funds in table below:

<sup>4</sup> LC comment: This was the case for the current program and also with the strategic reflection on the new orientations for the next 5-year program!

Table III.2.2 – AC data (formation, membership, shares & funds)

SN	Name of AC	Formed (year)	# members		# shares	Share capital	Comments
			Starting	Current			
1	Kear Meanchey	2013	86	322	328	32,800,000	Total fund now over 70 million Riels
2	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	2007	41	136	340	34,000,000	Total fund now 67 million Riels
3	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	2012	70	67			Treasurer took money, now only 5 million left for credit
4	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	2013	185	315	2183	32,745,000	Total fund now over 66 million Riels
5	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	2010	90	114	1000	10,000,000	Total fund now 60 million Riels
6	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	2013	50	50	239	2,390,000	Total fund now 72 million Riels
7	Kasikor & Thomcheat	2011	12	12			All members migrated, AC not functioning
8	Prek Pdao AC	2013	30	73	1739	17,390,000	Total fund now over 193 million Riels
9	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	2005	8	60	300	30,000,000	885 savers but only 300 shareholders; fund over 2,000 Million Riels

Activities of ACs:

Most of the ACs engaged in more than one activity; the exceptions being Wat Koh (as mentioned above, this AC has no funds until the money stolen by the treasurer is repaid; they only have a small amount of 5 million Riels to revolve in credit) and Ansaong (although this AC provides only credit, members are very active in livestock production and use their loans exclusively for agriculture production). The AC with the most activities was Kampong Soeng with 6 activities running. As would be expected, credit provision is the one activity carried out by all ACs that are functioning. The next most common activity was fertilizer credit (provided by five of the 8 functioning ACs). Four of the ACs engaged in seed production (2 in BTB and 2 in PVG). Rice trading (buying members' rice for collective selling was only engaged in by ACs in BTB – 3 of the 4 ACs). Two of these three ACs sold some of their rice under contracts to buyers (rice mills). Other activities included selling fuel, drinking water production, rice bank, saving service for members and selling rice for eating.

Table III.2.3 – Activities carried out by ACs interviewed

SN	Name of AC	Money credit	Seed prod	Rice trading	Contract farming	Fertilizer credit	Fuel selling	Other	Other description
1	Kear Meanchey	X	X	X	X				
2	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	X	X	X	X	X			
3	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	X							
4	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	X		X		X		X	Drinking water production
5	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	X				X		X	Rice bank
6	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	X							
7	Kasikor & Thomcheat (not functioning)								
8	Prek Pdao AC	X	X			X	X		
9	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	X	X			X	X	X	Savings & sell rice for eating

Summary of key points from discussions with ACs:

All ACs pay an annual membership fee of 100,000 Riels (some to FAEC and some to FCFD). For this fee, their expectations are threefold:

1. That they can call on the expertise of FAEC or FCFD to provide technical and/or managerial training when required (including assisting them with development of business plans)
2. That they will be invited to workshops or study tours where they can share experience and develop new contacts that can be useful to their AC businesses
3. That FAEC/FCFD can link them to new markets for the agriculture produce of their members

In relation to point 1 above, all ACs were able to list a number of areas where their capacity has improved due to trainings conducted by FAEC/FCFD. These included support with record keeping and facilitating meetings, and preparation of business plans. For point 2, at least some members of all ACs have attended workshops organized by FAEC/FCFD and some other members of 3 of the ACs have had the opportunity to participate in study tours to other provinces (and other countries such as Vietnam, Thailand). For point 3 most ACs have not

yet been linked to any new markets but the three well functioning ACs in BTB noted the increased income for members who now engage in seed production; the links to quality seed acquisition were facilitated by FAEC.

On the topic of capacity building, five of the eight functioning ACs has participated in the capacity assessments conducted by FAEC (some participated in this only one time; others twice or three times already). All of them felt this was a very useful exercise to identify areas where they needed to improve. This can help them to develop plans to address these weaker areas. The weak areas differed per AC; but in general weak points included lack of capacity to attract external financing and unsustainable agriculture practices.

The overall activities have already been summarized in Table III.2.3 above. Some additional points of relevance concerning implementation were:

- ACs in BTB engaged in contract farming (rice production) with AMRU and BRICO companies got higher prices per kg plus bonus per ton of rice
- But ACs in Prey Veng did not yet agreed to enter any contract farming to supply rice because the village location is close to Vietnam where they have ready buyers for their rice
- ACs in BTB who experimented with cover grass could not succeed because of lack of water after harvesting and also because cows are released to roam immediately after harvest
- Many ACs members in Prey Veng used to do SRI rice (after training from CEDAC) but almost everybody has stopped now because of lack of labor for planting
- Ta Aong AC in Prey Veng succeeded to get a loan from RDB of \$5,000 at 10.5% interest p.a.

*Problems faced by ACs:*

- Main problem faced now is by most AC members is irrigation water (some ACs have irrigation canals but these often dry up in the hot season)
- Most of the ACs lack of sufficient warehousing (for inputs, produce) and drying facilities for rice/rice seeds
- Don't have equipment for land leveling
- ACs lack sufficient funds to buy rice from members (owe the members for long time waiting for company to pay for the rice) – this pushes members to sell to middle men instead of AC which can leave the AC short of rice to fulfill contracts with rice mill
- Competition from private sellers means they cannot make much profit from selling fertilizer (private companies also offer fertilizer on credit); so members don't always buy inputs from the AC – even though AC collected their needs and ordered what they wanted
- For some ACs in Prey Veng, it is difficult to replace Vietnam seeds with Pkar Rumdoul or Sen Kraob as they know that if they plant Vietnam rice, (middle-men) buyers will buy

*Suggestions and requests:*

- Request FAEC to provide more capacity building of committee (including on record keeping and filing systems) – and also organize study tours for ACs to exchange knowledge and experience
- Also request to FAEC to provide more technical training (on rice, livestock, vegetables), including Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) techniques for farmers
- Request FAEC to identify trainers to help address weak points from CBA (Capacity Building Assessment)
- Request FAEC to help find support to solve irrigation problems
- Help to find additional markets outside of this province
- Request FAEC to facilitate access to machines for land leveling for members to produce rice seeds
- Request FAEC to help find access for additional funds (loans)
- Continue to help provide good quality rice seeds that have high yield (and meet market requirements)

### **III.3 Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**

It has been planned to interview 8 SHGs in Kampong Thom but 2 of the villages had 2 SHGs each (Sampong and Bos Sbeng) and all organized to meet the MTR team; so the total number of groups interviewed was 10 as shown in the table below:

**Table III.3.1 – Name and location of SHGs interviewed**

SN	Name of SHG	District	Commune	Village
1	Samaki Phum Pramat Dei	Stung Sen	Srayov	Pramat Dei
2	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Santuk	Prasat	Sampong
3	Sampong Rik Reay	Santuk	Prasat	Sampong
4	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Santuk	Prasat	Chambak Chrum
5	Reang Kang Tdong Mean Rith	Santuk	Tang Krasang	Reang Kang Tdong
6	Krom Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Baray	Andong Pou	Damrei Slap
7	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Baray	Chralong	Bos Sbeng
8	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Baray	Chralong	Bos Sbeng
9	Krom Sansom Phum Tnout Chum	Baray	Tnout Chum	Tnout Chum Ti Mouy
10	Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Baray	Tnout Chum	Prey Kraol



The majority of these groups (8 of the 10 SHGs) were only formed in 2019 by Mlup Baitong (MB); the other two had been formed in earlier years by MODE but had liquidated all their capital each year so their saving status does not differ much from the newer groups. But the members of one of the older groups (Damrei Slap) are much more active savers so their fund has increased faster than others. The table below summarizes the data on membership and fund accumulated to date:

**Table III.3.2 – Membership and accumulated funds of SHGs**

SN	Name of SHG	Formed	Nr. memb	# females	Rate of saving	Estimated current fund	Credit rate
1	Samaki Phum Pramat Dei	Mar-19	14	11	5,000 Riels/share/mth	1,920,000	3.0%
2	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Apr-19	34	32	10,000 Riels/month	4,420,000	3.0%
3	Sampong Rik Reay	Apr-19	60	42	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,728,500	3.0%
4	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Jun-19	37	37	10,000 riels/share/mth	6,000,000	2.5%
5	Reang Kang Tbong Mean Rith	Jun-19	17	8	10,000 riels/share/mth	2,670,000	2.0%
6	Krom Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Jun-17	64	59	Varied (up to members)	20,500,000	2.5%
7	Bos Sbang Mean Rith	Feb-19	15	14	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,000,000	3.0%
8	Bos Sbang Mean Chey	Feb-19	17	16	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,000,000	3.0%
9	Krom Sansom Phum Tnout Chum	Dec-15	21	19	10,000 riels/share/mth	7,860,400	3.0%
10	Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Apr-19	24	22	10,000 riels/share/mth	3,000,000	3.0%

MB has provided training to all groups on record keeping and additional coaching to them during their first few monthly meetings so committee members now feel confident to do this. Some members of most groups have received agriculture technical training and those who attended training received material or funding support to implement these agriculture activities (some vegetable growing, others chicken raising). These activities are still very new so not much result to report yet.

As most groups are still new, they did not yet face any problems except that, as would be expected at this stage, funds are not yet sufficient to meet their needs. One group in Sampong village noted that marketing of agriculture produce is difficult (especially vegetables) so members should focus on chicken raising as the buyers come to the village and give very good price (over 16,000 Riels per kg). A problem raised by Tnout Chum SHG is that the leader and deputy leader are now very old so they need to identify younger members to take on this role. So far, they have not found those willing to be group leaders.

As groups very new, they have not yet received any significant impact from their membership of the group. But many members noted that the loans from the SHGs (even though small) have already enabled them to invest in income generation activities (like chicken raising, grocery shops) that they hope will yield improved income in the near future. One of the most important things is that the interest they pay on loans stays in the village to revolve among their members.

All groups indicated that they plan to continue saving in the future no matter whether MB continues to support them or not. But the way in which they will continue differs; some groups plan to liquidate the fund every year (returning all capital and interest to members) whereas other groups plan only to distribute profits made from loans as dividends to members. Apart from Damrei Slap AC who is actively pursuing steps to become an AC, the other SHGs interviewed felt it is a bit too early for them to think about this yet as they are only running as SHG for less than one year<sup>5</sup>. But one SHG (Tnout Chum) has an idea for the group to run a money changing service in the future (e.g. like True Money) as this could be a good way to invest savings to earn more income for the group members.

*Some other suggestions for future support included:*

- MB to provide more capacity building to committee to make them strong enough to manage themselves
- Training on chicken raising (and distribute fund to buy chicken stock and housing)
- Also technical training on fish raising, vegetable growing and mushrooms
- Need more capital in the short term as takes time to build up funds
- More drilled wells (and hose pipes for irrigation)
- Improve sanitation in the village (rubbish disposal is big problem)

### **III.4 Capitalization (studies, collaboration & dissemination)**

A key role of both ECOSIO and LC (as University NGOs) is learning and sharing. This has been incorporated into the Uni4Coop project through a number of studies, action research, collaboration with other like-minded institutions and dissemination of results. Although learning and sharing normally takes place in the later stages of implementation (and it is now only half-way point), already a number of activities have been undertaken.

<sup>5</sup> LC comment: In addition to Damrei Slap, there are two other SHGs (Balaing and Prasat) in the process of forming ACs but these were not among the MTR sample [Consultant: agreed; the statement above referred to the SHGs interviewed during MTR]

In 2017 a number of collaborations and opportunities for sharing were identified. One of the most important of these was the formation of NF3 (Network of Farmers' Family Facilitators). This comprises five federations who represent farmer organizations: FAEC and FCFD as well as FNN (Farmer and Nature Network), FWN (Farmer and Water Net) and CFAP (Cambodian Farmer Association Federation of Agricultural Producers). Such a network like NF3 can provide a stronger advocacy forum for farmer issues than each federation working by itself. The active participation of these network partners in the organization of the 2018 National Farmer Forum is an indication of what they can achieve in collaboration with each other. LC Country Director attended the Organic World Congress in New Delhi to present a research on multidimensional benefits of sustainable agriculture practices of LC in collaboration with UCLouvain, RUA and MODE. The research has also been selected for presentation in two other conferences in Paris and Brussels. Other opportunities for learning and sharing throughout the year included participation of FAEC/FCFD in national and provincial events such as Rice Forum exhibition, drafting of the National Rice Policy, and the workshop on Contract Farming Guidelines.

In 2018 Eclasio had the opportunity to share their experiences and difficulties in supporting access to finance for ACs at a meeting of Belgian NGOs in Bangkok, Thailand. At a Regional Vegetable Forum (focusing on Cambodia, Lao and Vietnam) Eclasio was able to share their experience on the advantages of Bokashi fertilizer for soil improvement. LC hosted an event in collaboration with RUA to launch a video on sustainable agriculture and organised a panel discussion on the future of Sustainable Agriculture in Cambodia that was attended by around 200 persons including students, farmers, NGOs, private sector representatives and farmer organizations. LC was selected to present his research on the dissemination of technical innovations among smallholder farmers at AFSA international conference on Food Safety and Food Security in August 2018. Both LC and Eclasio attended ALISEA regional forum on promoting agro-ecology which was attended by 260 participants of 21 different nationalities and both presented studies stemming from the implementation of the program..

In addition to the above collaborations, it is worth highlighting some studies that have been carried out in collaboration with RUA and students from Belgium universities. These include:

Dissemination of technical innovations among small-holder farmers:

One research on the dissemination of sustainable technical innovations among small holder farmers in the South of Kampong Thom province was completed by a UCL Master student.

Role of gender in agriculture:

Three RUA students completed their studies on the role of gender in agriculture in Thnot Chum commune (Baray district) and on levels of adaptations by farmers of new technologies in Andoung Pou and Baray communes (Baray district), Kampong Thom province.

Video on Sustainable Agriculture (SA):

A short Video was produced to document about the SA techniques successfully applied by farmers in Kampong Thom province. This short film made possible thanks to CSR from a Belgian private company captured the impact a SA approach had on the lives of these farmers, their achievements as well as depicting the process of implementation and research findings. It highlights three main dimensions of sustainability: economic, environmental and social/governance.

Bokashi Improvement:

The study was to improve the efficiency of natural fertilizer type Bokashi of Otdom Sorya cooperative. The study was conducted by a Belgium student with ITC students.

Chicken feeding:

The study was conducted to identify local feeding ingredient that could help local cooperative to produce and distribute to members. The study was conducted by a Belgium student with ITC students.

Farming system analysis:

This study was conducted in 2017 and continued by a Belgium student to complete some missing part.

Impact of Right Base Approach:

This study was conducted by a Belgium Student to analyze the overall impact of right based approach in Cambodia.

Development of natural fertilizer production tools:

The technical design and built were performed by a group of Belgium students (4 students) and a group of Cambodian students from University of Agriculture (4 students). The student has designed and developed a scaling tool and material mixing tool model for Otdom Soriya Cooperative.

## **IV. Discussion in relation to TOR questions**

As set out in the scope of evaluation in Chapter II, the key questions for this MTR were divided into four sections as follows:

- LQ1 – added value and institutional strengthening
- LQ2 – understanding of partnership approach
- LQ3 – approaches to AE and rural economy
- LQ4 – status of program implementation

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### **IV.1 LQ1: added value and institutional strengthening**

Key questions addressed under this section were:

1. Are CSOs' partners sufficiently (organizationally & financially) sustainable to ensure durability of actions?
2. To what extent is the partnership relevant to achieving the vision and mission of the partner institutions?
3. Does the capacity building of the partners remain viable/less dependent on external technical support?
4. To what extent the partnership enabled the reach of further collaborations, synergies, networking?
5. Did partners succeed to participate together to policy formulation and reform process conducive of a better environment for CSOs in Cambodia?
6. Did partners succeed to participate together to knowledge management processes and to increase their reflection about their actions?

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#### **IV.1.1 Sustainability of CSO partners to ensure durability of actions**

As discussed in the previous chapter, three CSO implementing partners are currently involved in the implementation of the Uni4Coop program. Those are the Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRD), Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives (FAEC) and Mlup Baitong (MB) – one other, Irrigation Service Center (ISC) recently completed their involvement. In addition, two other institutions are involved as key stakeholders such as Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development (FCFD) and the Royal University of Agriculture, ECOLAND Research Center (RUA-ECOLAND).

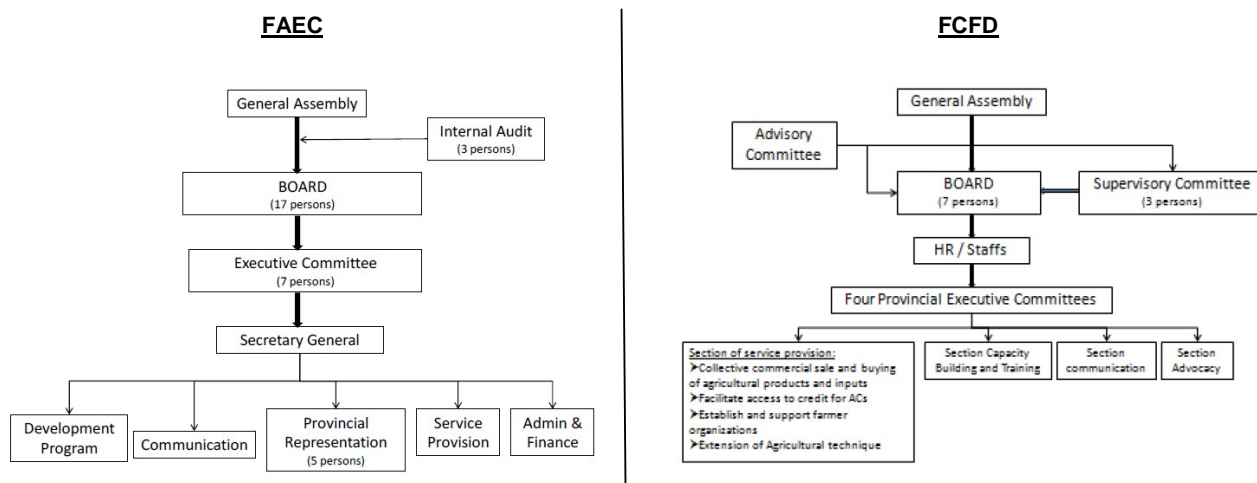
CIRD and MB are both well established NGOs with stable funding from a variety of sources and have been operational for many years. There is little doubt that they will continue to implement projects according to their mandate. The relevant question in this context is: "to what extent are they committed to the target groups supported under this program". NGOs can operate for many years with stable funding but move their geographical focus depending on the type of projects they receive support for. Many times a project finished is then quickly forgotten as resources are scarce and needed for current projects. It is very seldom that NGOs build in specific actions for follow up of previous projects into their current projects which means no human resources get allocated for that. So unless their future actions are in the same geographical area and the program includes activities to follow up on groups formed under previous programs, it is unlikely that they will have further involvement with these groups.

RUA-ECOLAND is a research institution under the auspices of the Royal University of Agriculture and has support from many sources of finance for its research activities. As long as they continue to source support for their research, there is no reason not to expect that they will continue their work after the end of this Uni4Coop program. The main contribution of the Uni4Coop program has been facilitating opportunities for research by linking ECOLAND with local partners. Even if there is no new Uni4Coop, the local partners remain in place and can still provide the opportunities for cooperation in action research with ECOLAND. However it is worth noting concerns from partners (in particular MB) about the constraints on their time from facilitating participation of their target groups in such research.

The federations (FAEC and FCFD) are membership organizations with organizational structures elected by their members. Unlike NGOs, these federations are sure to retain their involvement with the target groups supported by the Uni4Coop program even if there is no future support from Ecosio or LC as long as the ACs remain members of their federations. However the scope of the services they can provide depend on their organizational and financial durability (other issues related to capacity will be discussed under IV.1.3 below). In relation to their organizational structures, both federations are democratic institutions. All management and governance positions are elected by members. They both hold annual general assembly's of all members for the purpose of such elections as well as for discussion and approval of reports and plans. While both have similar structures at the governance and management level, the division of responsibilities differs slightly at the

functional level; FAEC separates responsibility per service area (under the management of the secretary general) whereas FCFD has provincial committees who manage services and functions in each of their target provinces.

Graphic IV.1.1 – Organizational structures of FAEC and FCFD \*\*



\*\* 2017 Report by Eclasio on “SITUATION OF FEDERATION of FARMER’ ORGANISATIONS”

Although these structures differ from each other, they are both suitable structures for implementing their functions. Most importantly, these structures are approved by members. However, in order to implement the activities under these structures, both federations still depend on external financing support. Although to date they have managed to attract such support, reducing dependence on external financial assistance to cover basic operational costs should continue to be an aim of both federations. For this reason, assisting federations to develop a fee structure for service provision has been a strong focus of Eclasio throughout this program. Eclasio has facilitated FAEC to develop the following fee structure:

Graphic IV.1.2 – Fees for services provided by FAEC

No.	Service Types	Facilitation/Coordination	FAEC’s Service Fee
1	Credit Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAEC finds a lowest interest rate of loan (credit) for the members/communities</li> <li>Loans include loans as cash, fertilizer and rice-seed</li> <li>Members who are receiving credits/loans under the coordination of FAEC must pay a contribution (service fee) to FAEC on the first day of receiving funds (loans)</li> </ul>	1% of total (gross) loan
2	Rice Seed Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAEC provides techniques and supports the members in producing qualified rice seeds</li> <li>FAEC facilitates in packing (branding) and marketing for the members to market their rice seed production</li> <li>Members who sell the rice seed under the coordination of FAEC shall pay the commission costs to FAEC on the first date of settlement made by the bilaterally parties</li> </ul>	50 Riels/kg
3	Paddy Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAEC helps members to find the markets for sale of paddy (fragrant rice, dry seasonal rice, and rainy season rice)</li> <li>Both members and non-members who sell the rice through FAEC’s facilitators should pay the FAEC’s service fees when making settlements between buyers and sellers</li> </ul>	2,000 Riels/ton for ordinary member and 3,000 Riels/ton for non-member
4	Fertilizer Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAEC helps the community for the fertilizer suppliers/markets (including selling fertilizer and buying fertilizer)</li> <li>Community that sells and buys fertilizer under the coordination of FAEC must pay a contribution cost (service fees) to FAEC on a day of delivery and receipt money between the vendors and buyers</li> <li>It’s the same for service cost will charge for selling out and buy in</li> </ul>	500 Riels/sack for ordinary member and 700 Riels/sack for non-member
5	Staff Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each employee who are contracted for the wages from FAEC must pay the contribution to FAEC</li> </ul>	20,000 Riels/month
6	Training Services to Ordinary Members and Non-Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a Training of Trainer, when provide training to the members of FAEC, must pay the contribution costs to FAEC</li> <li>Trainer of FAEC, when instructing to non-FAEC members under the coordination of FAEC, must pay the contribution for FAEC</li> </ul>	20,000 Riels/day 40,000 Riels/day

The level of fees appears to be minimal in relation to credit applications, rice seed and paddy business. But the rate for fertilizer is quite high considering the competition within this market (e.g. with private sector suppliers). It is not clear to what extent “staff contribution” should be considered a “service fee”. The final service, training services, is likely to be the most productive source – considering the number of requests from ACs for training (technical, financial and managerial).

Overall, this is a good plan for FAEC and at least one of the fees proposed is also applied by FCFD (for rice seed service). But while they have generated some fees to date, the amounts are still minimal in relation to the overall operational costs. Nevertheless they are confident that amounts will increase in the coming years (as implementation of this fee structure is still relatively new for them).

Coming back to the issue of external financing, this is a concern for Eclasio as they worry that federation dependence on external (donor) funds could distract federations from their main mandate (meeting their member needs). The consultant would argue that most donors who support these federations have similar mandate to Eclasio (assisting federations to meet member needs)<sup>6</sup>. And the recent interest among donors/development partners to support such representative associations leads to confidence that external funding will continue to be available to them in the near future. But such external financing should be adding to the services they provide, not sustaining the federation's regular costs; hence the importance of generating fees from services provided.

#### **IV.1.2 Relevance of partnership to vision & mission of partners**

All partners of this program were clear that the Uni4Coop program closely matched their own vision and mission. This is not surprising as both Eclasio and LC selected partners with that match in mind. A quick look at the mission statements of the key NGOs currently involved in the project (CIRD and MB) shows how the extent of this relevance:

*CIRD mission statement:*

CIRD is dedicated to fighting poverty, to improve the livelihoods of rural and marginalized communities in Cambodia through capacity building, service and organizational management support enabling rural livelihood systems to improve its position from a subsistence system to an income generating agro-food production and agricultural social enterprises system compatible/consistent with Biodiversity and Environmental conservation.

*MB mission statement:*

To support the protection of the environment in Cambodia by increasing awareness and promoting sustainable use of natural resources while improving people's livelihood.

The Uni4Coop program objectives for agriculture and rural economy clearly make a contribution to both this mission statements. In particular both organizations have clear missions to incorporate environmental considerations (to which AE/SA is clearly relevant) as well as supporting rural livelihoods (to which supporting ACs, SHGs as AE/SA make a significant contribution).

For RUA-ECOLAND, a research institution, the Uni4Coop clearly provides them with many opportunities to link with relevant target groups to conduct action research which enhances the achievement of their goal which is:

To provide scientific activities on topics related to ecosystem services, rural development, land use management, and conservation

FAEC and FCFD are federations that represent their members. These members are either Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs) or Farmers Associations (FAs). FAs differ from ACs mainly to the extent that they are not registered with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); most of their activities are similar in nature to ACs. As this Uni4Coop has clear objective to support such ACs and FAs, it is clearly highly relevant to both these federations.

#### **IV.1.3 Capacity of partners (viable, less dependent on external technical support)**

For this question, a distinction needs to be made between the type of partners – NGOs (CIRD, MB), research institution (ECOLAND) and the federations (FAEC, FCFD). For the first two types (NGOs and research institution), all partners are already capacitated to carry out their mandate. While capacity assessments (such as those done during this program) can highlight areas to improve (and organizations are always trying to improve), their current capacity is viable for their level of operations, without need for any further technical support. NGOs by their nature are always dependent on external financing as they rarely run income generation businesses (or only on a small scale); and most NGOs build in organizational capacity as one of their activities (which is normally agreed and supported by their donors).

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<sup>6</sup> Eclasio comment: Some donor projects are not in line with FAEC strategic plan such as the request of AFD for FAEC to formally integrate FCFD or vice-versa so to achieve better efficiency, but in disregard to ownership...

Regarding the federations, their mandate is to support their members' needs. This includes providing technical agriculture training when requested, business planning services, identifying potential financing opportunities and potential markets for members' produce, as well as advocating on their behalf with government and other relevant stakeholders. Unfortunately the capacity assessment conducted with FAEC by LC during this Uni4Coop program used the same format as that for NGO partners; the topics covered only partly explored the key capacities that would enable the federation to fulfill the mandate described above<sup>7</sup>. There was no capacity assessment done with FCFD.

Throughout this Uni4Coop program, capacity of the federations has been enhanced through experience in the implementation of activities rather than any specific theoretical training – but with a stronger focus on FAEC rather than FCFD. During the course of Uni4Coop program implementation, Eclasio has supported FAEC to develop various models for service provision (as discussed under IV.1.1 above). These models set out the roles and responsibilities of FAEC in the provision of these services. The process of developing these models has enhanced FAEC's understanding of how to meet member needs for these services as well as providing them with an opportunity to benefit from fees from these services. This has been an important contribution to FAEC capacity (although, as discussed under IV.1.1 above, such fees are not yet at a level to sustain the operational costs).

Technical training by Eclasio has focused on supporting farmer to farmer specialists who can provide direct services to ACs and their members; and LC component supports training of service providers for technical training to SHG members engaged in SA. There is still insufficient numbers of these specialists and service providers considering the large number of AC and SHG members. This is one area that Eclasio and LC should concentrate on expanding before the end of this program.

In the case of the specialists under the auspices of FAEC, the capacity developed under the Uni4Coop program as described above should continue to provide benefit to farmers after the end of the program without the need for further external assistance as long as ACs are willing to pay for these services. This is not so clear for service providers trained by LC for supporting SHG members. Unlike ACs who set aside a percentage of their annual profits for training, SHG do not have a fund for supporting training of members so are more dependent on external support for any technical or managerial training that they require.

#### **IV.1.4 Collaborations, synergies and networking furthered by partnership**

As outlined in the previous chapter, there have been many opportunities afforded to all partners regarding collaborations and networking throughout this Uni4Coop program. All partners mentioned introduction to ALISEA as one of the most relevant as this network has a diversified group of over 50 members. Knowledge of this platform is not only useful for networking, their website provides a multitude of reference material that can help build the knowledge and skills of the partners. Most of these materials are in not in Khmer language so partners need to have someone who can translate extracts that they wish to make use of (however some of the materials – those that originated from Khmer productions – are translations of Khmer documents so they should be able to contact the authors for original texts in Khmer).

In addition, for FAEC and FCFD an important collaboration platform was the formation of NF3 (Network of Farmers' Family Facilitators). This comprises five federations who represent farmer organizations: FAEC and FCFD as well as FNN (Farmer and Nature Network), FWN (Farmer and Water Net) and CFAP (Cambodian Farmer Association Federation of Agricultural Producers). Having such a network like NF3 can provide a stronger advocacy forum for farmer issues than each federation working by itself.

An important synergy developed during the course of the project was between CIRD and Harvest (a project of USAID) in the process of developing GI oranges in Battambang and Pursat provinces. This synergy also enhanced CIRD links with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) with whom they have previously cooperated for other GI projects as the MoC is the assigned ministry for awarding of GI status for produce in Cambodia.

CIRD also worked in synergy with AIMS (Accelerating Inclusive Markets for Smallholders) which is a project funded by IFAD supporting value chains for various types of produce. Eclasio was awarded as technical consultant to CIRD to improve the business literacy of their target groups on the rice value chain.

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<sup>7</sup> LC comment: (Basic Capacity Building Questionnaire (QRCP) tool is used to make a diagnosis of the capacities to be strengthened and the Capacity Building Index obtained will serve as an outcome indicator in the logical framework. LC has chosen to regroup the main capacities to be strengthened in four groups including: 1) Structuring and organizational capacities; 2) Capacity for reflection and implementation; 3) Technical management capacities; and 4) Capacity for collaboration, diversification and action

With a view to the future, a meeting was held between ITC (Institute of Technology Cambodia), ARES (Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement Supérieur), LC and Eclasio to discuss potential synergy between ITC/ARES and LC and possible cooperation in future research.

Other opportunities for learning and sharing throughout the year included participation of FAEC/FCFD in national and provincial events such as Rice Forum exhibition, drafting of the National Rice Policy, and the workshop on Contract Farming Guidelines. These events provide great opportunities for understanding the national context as well as developing a range of contacts for future reference and support.

#### **IV.1.5 Participation of partners on policy formulation and reform**

Over the first two and half years of this Uni4Coop program, there have not been any significant policies or reforms introduced that have specifically resulted from participation of program partners. But partners have given inputs into some policies that are relevant to target farmers – in particular during the workshop on Contract Farming Guidelines and the drafting of the National Rice Policy. These workshops included group discussions to gain input from participants (such as Uni4Coop program partners like FAEC and FCFD among others).

Although not yet resulting in any policy change, the organization of the Farmers' Forum was an important opportunity to allow farmers to voice their concerns to relevant authorities at a national event. FAEC (with NF3) is now planning a follow up forum which will follow up on outputs from the first forum and continue to advocate for issues not yet resolved. One of the issues to be further promoted is the “UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in rural areas”. But so far the translation into Khmer is not yet finalized for sharing (which is necessary to allow wider dissemination).

#### **IV.1.6 Participation of partners in knowledge management & reflection**

Knowledge management and reflection has occurred through different activities of the program. At an operational level, each of the NGOs conducts regular monthly meetings with their partners – separately for LC and Eclasio partner groups. But, as mentioned earlier, LC attends the Eclasio meetings and Eclasio likewise attends LC partner meetings. While these meetings cover a lot of logistical issues, they are also an opportunity to reflect on what has been done. NGO partners do not depend only on ECLOSIO or LC to organize reflection; they also conduct their own internal meetings to reflect on their project implementation. Outputs from these reflections are used to guide future project planning and implementation.

The various workshops mentioned under the previous topic were also opportunities for partners to enhance their knowledge on the various topics being discussed. A number of joint project visits were also organized to allow partners to learn from each other. The action research of studies (e.g. SE students) also provided some new experiences for partner staff (although the covered pond did not meet with much enthusiasm, partner staff are more optimistic about the value of the evaporation cooling system for storing vegetables).

One of the critical aspects of knowledge “management” is ensuring the knowledge gained is retained for future use and reflection. In that context, documentation (of studies, research, annual reports) is very important. Access to a library of “knowledge” is what can help to institutionalize organizational learning of partners. To amalgamate all learning from Uni4Coop implementation, documentation needs to be combined – currently some is available from Eclasio, some from LC (and some other documentation remains with partners). This should be improved before the end of the program to collect all outputs from the program under one access point. As FAEC is a common partner for both ECLOSIO and LC, a portal on FAEC website or Facebook page would be a logical place to develop a Uni4Coop library. However, FAEC does not have a website and their Facebook is not well designed (and rarely updated with new information). ECLOSIO or LC could help FAEC to develop/improve knowledge sharing via social media – and a wider Khmer audience may access studies and research posted on such a site compared to the number who may access ECLOSIO or LC websites.

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## **IV.2 LQ2: understanding of partnership approach**

Key questions addressed under this section:

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, the factors of success, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions made to solve them?
  2. Can we only talk about common interests in the partnership or are LC and Eclasio building a common and shared goal, objective or perspective with each of their partner which is different from each individual organization's objectives or problems they are facing?
  3. What are the partners feeling they receive or benefit from the partnership with Eclasio or LC?
  4. What are they contributing which is seen as a resource from other partners?
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### **IV.2.1 Strengths, weaknesses, successes & difficulties of the partnership**

The key strengths which the consultant notes from the Uni4Coop partnership are:

- Uni4Coop has brought together a group of experienced partners with diverse skills to offer who require only limited guidance to implement their activities (which enables LC and Eclasio to operate with relatively low overhead costs)
- Inclusion of federations such as FAEC and FCFD have enabled the program to reach out to a wide number of ACs due to the broad (and increasing) network of these federations
- The design of the program ensures a lot of networking opportunities (discussed above under IV.1.4). While these may not offer any immediate benefits, there can be longer term opportunities – e.g. students who conduct action research may eventually hold influential positions and be in a position to “return the favor” from the opportunities offered to them for research
- As University NGOs, Eclasio and LC need to be able to contribute to learning and sharing (between north and south). The partnership with RUA-ECOLAND provides such an opportunity and it has been utilized through the action research conducted (and remaining plans)

As regards weaknesses, the consultant did not note any significant weaknesses in the partnership in general; there are some issues with certain activities which will be discussed later in the report but these are not reflective of the partnership per se. A few issues which can be noted are:

- Lack of close coordination between the partners of both objectives. There has been limited reflection on activities between the two sets of partners; mostly reflection has been confined to partners within each of the objectives. Both Eclasio and LC recognize this and plan to work more closely in the coming year. As geographical proximity may assist this, they plan to rent joint office space and perhaps share some human resources (but for Eclasio a change to proximity to LC may mean moving further away from CIRD with whom they currently share office space).
- The total budget is very small when spread over many partners, and many years. Of the Eclasio component, the wide geographical spread comes from one of the strengths (large number of members of FAEC and FCFD). But the implementation of SA by LC could have benefited from a more restricted geographical focus – more farmers in closer proximity rather than spread over many communes.
- CIRD noted that if they were to implement the seed component themselves instead of through FAEC, it would have been easier – this seems to suggest a different understanding between CIRD and Eclasio as regarding the role of FAEC in this component
- Although it would seem logical to mention the need to change partners by LC (from MODE to MB) as a weakness, this is not really a weakness as it could not have been foreseen in advance that MODE would have changed personnel to the extent that they could not implement their activities effectively

Regarding successes, the following points are worth highlighting:

- Completion of the studies and action research (described in section III.4 above) has provided tools for the implementing NGOs to disseminate practical learning from the program to a wide range of stakeholders (both in Belgium, Cambodia and the region)
- Following training and business planning, ACs are now more business orientated than before (and even the members/farmers think of their farming more in business terms)
- Building up a pool of farmer to farmer trainers (service providers in the case of LC partners and for Eclasio partners, specialists in various agriculture techniques, management, finances and business planning) provides options for ACs and their members to access support that is practically-orientated to their needs (and their level of understanding)
- The success of ISC in mobilizing financial contributions from farmers in Takeo for the small-scale irrigation services shows the high relevance of this component to the farmers
- SCM (Scoring Criteria Method) in use by FAEC to assess capacity of ACs is highly appreciated by all ACs as they can understand more clearly the areas they need to improve on



Working in partnership does not appear to have created too many difficulties. But a few issues were raised by partners (most related to finance and logistics):

- Partners noted that the financial reporting requirements are cumbersome, in particular the need to scan all receipts on a quarterly basis. This is very time consuming and it also makes them more like a contractor than an independent partner – as partners do their own global audits that show clearly the income and expenditure from donors, a report on expenditure incurred should be sufficient (without needing to submit all the receipts)
- While there is an overall budget agreed for the duration of the partnership, specific budgets change annually and this can take time to clarify – often months into the next year. This makes planning difficult for the partners. Then partners have to request funds regularly; the budget is not released automatically in installments (Eclosio requires monthly requests; LC quarterly)
- FAEC noted some difficulty with implementing the AE component in Takeo. The budget is with FAEC but Eclosio staff sometimes work directly with farmers (some of whom are not AC members) and then inform FAEC what to request in the budget (based on what Eclosio staff agreed with the farmers engaged in the AE activities); this can lead to some confusion in roles and responsibilities (this kind of confusion also exists between them and CIRD for the seed component)<sup>8</sup>

#### **IV.2.2 A common goal over and above individual objectives**

As discussed under IV.1.2 above, there is very close convergence between the goals of all partners involved in this program. But it would be stretching the imagination to say that this leads to one common goal between them all. Each partner retains their individual goals above that of any one program they are implementing. Each program contributes towards that goal rather than becoming the objective in itself. This is not a problem; rather it is good that partners retain their independence but can still work together towards short term goals that are relevant to their long term vision and mission.

#### **IV.2.3 Perceived benefits from Eclosio/LC partnership by partners**

Partners have benefited from the partnership in Uni4Coop in a number of ways:

- The additional funds received enable them to expand their mandate to new target groups
- New technical knowledge: although partners had known about AE/SA before the program, working with LC and Eclosio has expanded their knowledge on this topic
- For FAEC, the capacity building support they received has enabled them to improve the quality of their management and governance; their staff are also now more experienced in supporting the activities of their member ACs (e.g. conducting capacity assessments using SCM tool, helping ACs to develop business plans)
- Joining in many meetings and workshops throughout the program has broadened their network of contacts on many subjects

#### **IV.2.4 What partners have contributed as resource to partnership**

All partners felt that the partnership was a two-way process. In addition to the perceived benefits they received as described in the previous section, they also made important contributions. For all partners the most important contribution is the human resources they provide to implement the activities. As with any program, skilled human resources are the foundation of effective implementation. Neither Eclosio nor LC could have implemented the range of activities without the partner staff (as both NGOs employ very few staff in their Phnom Penh offices). In terms of physical contributions, all partners have made use of existing logistics (office space, equipment, transportation) which reduced the need for such items to be funded by the project. Partners have also helped to provide some of the co-funding necessary to match DGD funding (as DGD only contributes 80% of the cost of the program).

As well as providing partners with access to networks of Eclosio/LC, Eclosio and LC also benefit from networks of their partners. These include new contacts via the various technical working groups – for example, taking on MB as a partner increased access to new networks through MB's strong focus on environment and natural resource management. Such networks include the NCFPCC (National Community Forest Program Coordination Committee) and CSO-REDD+ (REDD+ stands for countries' efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. These connection may provide useful contacts for Uni4Coop in the future as they consider conservation-biodiversity as a possible component of the next phase.

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<sup>8</sup> Eclosio comment: This has been deal appropriately already [*since the MTR field work stage*]. We have taken out the administrative, financial and human resource management from FAEC to be directly managed by Eclosio until the AC Union of Tramkak is legalised, hopefully in February 2020.

### **IV.3 LQ3: approaches to AE and rural economy**

Key questions addressed under this section:

1. What are the commonalities and the main differences between these approaches?
  2. (a) Is the current situation organized around two set of partnerships with two distinct structures the one to pursue? If so, how should it be organized and shared between LC & Eclasio? Or  
(b) Should the specific objectives of the two organizations be pooled in a single goal with a common operational structure? And how should the roles and responsibilities be shared?
  3. Are there additional structures or organizations, networks working in the same field with whom partnerships should be considered to reinforce the collaboration between LC and Eclasio?
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#### **IV.3.1 Commonalities and differences between Eclasio and LC approaches**

##### AE/SA:

Most respondents felt that it is only a matter of terminology whether they refer to AE or SA. The techniques being promoted by Eclasio and LC do not differ significantly. Both encourage reduced (or no) use of chemicals, diversified farming practices and soil fertility management. It is not important what they call it; the important thing is what they do in practice.

But while the technical inputs promoted by Eclasio and LC may be similar, a difference in approach to implementation is the level of technical support given to farmers who are transitioning to AE/SA. Under previous projects, LC's partner (MODE) appeared to have had more technical expertise among the staff assigned to the project than was the case in the early years of this Uni4Coop program. The strong technical support provided to farmers at that time has resulted in the success stories being promoted in the video produced during this program. But SA during this Uni4Coop program in Kompong Thom has been less successful due to the lack of management support from the Executive Director and the Project Manager of MODE as well as lack of monitoring support to the field staff and the delay in starting up of the project activities. Now MB has taken over it is only this year (2019) that they have been able to focus on this aspect of the project as they only joined in mid-2018 and their first focus has been on the formation of SHGs. It is hoped that MB (and FAEC) will ensure sufficient agriculture technical expertise among the staff assigned to ensure that farmers receive the necessary support. [See further discussion on this point under IV.4.7: Sustainability]

In contrast to LC, Eclasio takes a more intensive approach to the promotion of AE in Takeo. Initially Eclasio had hoped that the formation of a union of cooperatives in Takeo (TUAC) would have been the best partner to implement the AE component. But as TUAC has not yet formed, FAEC is responsible for the implementation. However, although technically FAEC is the partner implementing AE with farmers, Eclasio has assigned specific technical staff to support the activities. Thus the farmers get more intensive support which is critical in the early stages of transition from traditional agriculture to AE.

##### Rural Economy:

For supporting rural economy, the AE/SA interventions discussed above are one approach to improving household income. But for other interventions, Eclasio and LC have taken different approaches during this Uni4Coop program. Eclasio focuses on AC capacity as a tool for improving the economic situation of their members; LC supports the formation of SHGs to amalgamate capital for small business initiatives and they also support IGA grants to individual entrepreneurs to promote good examples to others.

From the findings of this MTR, the conclusion of the consultant is that strengthening ACs has greater potential for positive impact on rural economy than establishing SHGs.

Most of the SHGs do not show willingness to continue to build up finances; rather they see the group as a short-term saving mechanism which they will close every year and start again. The consultant questions the relevance of giving grants of \$200 to each of these SHGs; for most of the groups, the monthly savings are more than this amount so it is a "drop in the ocean" (so why give it at all?). As will be discussed further in section IV.4.7, the consultant proposes that instead of forming more SHGs, the program focus on production groups (PGs) of farmers for SA (who would have more potential to eventually become and AC).

Unlike SHGs, ACs are more sustainable and have legal status. Although agriculture in Cambodia continues to decline in importance compared to emerging sectors such as tourism and service industries, it is still the mainstay of most rural areas. Although they face a number of challenges (which will be discussed further

below), many ACs have improved the economic status of their members and, with additional support, can make even more progress towards uplifting small-holder farmers in the future.<sup>9</sup>

### **IV.3.2 Two sets of partnerships/structures (current) or one Specific Objective**

Discussions with all stakeholders revealed that all of them see the current Uni4Coop program as two separate programs (although under one funding umbrella). Although the leaders of both Eclasio and LC have regular contact and a number of workshops are joined by both NGOs, there is relatively little interaction at implementation level. This is partly due to the different geographical operating areas of both NGOs. Even in Kampong Thom province which is part of both NGOs target area, the locations where they work in this province do not overlap. Apart from FAEC who works as a partner with both Eclasio and LC, the other partners have little contact with each other. Eclasio joins LC partners meetings and LC joins Eclasio partner meetings but there is no regular meeting of all partners; only annual planning sessions.

An important question for Uni4Coop is whether the two objectives being implemented separately by both NGOs could be combined under one objective for the next program phase. As noted in the previous section above, both objectives cover sustainable agriculture and rural economy. The current program differentiates these as “Food sovereignty” for Eclasio and “Food and Economic Security” for LC. Discussions with staff of both Eclasio and LC revealed that they don’t see any problem with combining these under one objective but that only one of the two NGOs could implement the objective. The most frequently expressed opinion was that it would not be feasible for one objective to be implemented concurrently by both NGOs. Two issues were raised as possible obstacles:

- Both NGOs have different financial management systems (and management for LC is more centralized whereas Eclasio wishes to decentralize their management)<sup>10</sup>
- Criteria for partner selection differ between ECOLSIO and LC: This is a very important issue for Eclasio in particular and has an impact on the definition of target groups. Eclasio needs to have a local partner but it is imperative to them that the local partner have “legitimacy” in the sense that they must be truly representative of their target groups (and Eclasio does not recognize local NGOs in Cambodia as having this legitimacy – as in “who gave them the right to represent target groups in a particular area”. Even though local NGOs have board of directors, Eclasio feels that these boards play a very weak governance role over the operations of the NGOs. The implication for definition of target groups is that Eclasio aims to support the selected partner’s target groups rather than expecting a partner to work with Eclasio-selected target groups. LC on the other hand does not have these restrictions in selecting local partners. They are happy to work with NGOs that are capable of delivering quality services in accordance with signed agreements. But ultimately, even for LC the selection of target groups will largely be determined by the partner NGO – e.g. selection of farmers in Kampong Thom for SA due to MODE’s operational presence there (LC did not select Kampong Thom; the partner did).

Regarding this second point above about legitimacy, Eclasio’s position is certainly understandable as is one being adopted by other development partners. However, NGOs should not be disregarded as not having legitimacy based on the issue of representation. For sure, no target groups elected them to represent them. But many NGOs are highly committed to the groups they support and often provide more relevant services that meet real needs than elected representative institutions. Certainly they provide such support only when they are funded to do so but currently, due to lack of internal revenue generation, federations are in much of the same position. Whether the future program partners with elected federations or with NGOs, either one can be effective means to reach target groups.

On the issue of one or two objectives, theoretically one objective could cover the food sovereignty/food & economic security aspects. There are of course historical reasons why two objectives were designed. Both NGO had already been operational in Cambodia and each had their own focus and their own partners. Some Eclasio partners assume that LC was only a “health” NGO prior to this Uni4Coop program; but LC had already

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<sup>9</sup> LC comment: SHGs are aimed to bring people together and to build trust among the members by sharing their problems and try to help each others. Starting an easy credit activity is helping to test the cohesion and trust among members. Further strengthening of both the group and individuals of the group aims to further develop common activities based on the skills of each one and ultimately to formalize the group or two SHGs into an AC. We need a proper set of collected data and interviews to test whether production groups or SHGs are leading more to strong and sustainable ACs? [The consultant still feels strongly that SHGs are not the best foundation for establishing ACs but great if LC can conduct some research to prove or disprove this]

<sup>10</sup> LC comment: Could you detail the more centralized versus decentralized on the financial management systems of Eclasio & LC? [Consultant: This comment came from Eclasio whereby they intend to decentralize more management responsibility to country teams (i.e. reporting in summary form to HQ; not systematic management by HQ). The consultant understands that LC does not intend to do this – all detailed financial transactions are shared with and monitored by HQ]

been implementing sustainable agriculture activities in Kampong Thom with their partner, MODE (with whom they have had a long term relationship going back to 2011). The other LC partner, RUA-ECOLAND, only became a partner for the first time during this Uni4Coop program but their longer term (informal) relationship had been with LC rather than with ECOSIO. ECOSIO and CIRI had already a long-term relationship through the recently completed AFSA (Agriculture Familiale et Souveraineté Alimentaire) program and FAEC was also involved in this project. Therefore it was logical for both NGOs to design the next intervention to build on what they had achieved in the past. And, as mentioned above, neither Eclosio nor LC could envisage a way of implementing one specific objective by two NGOs; so they designed two separate objectives with slightly different focus but focusing largely on the same theme.

Naturally, this desire to build on what has already been achieved will also influence to some extent how Eclosio and LC wish to define the next phase. But some changes have occurred during the current program that may enable a different focus. One of these is that MODE has now been dropped from the partnership; the replacement partner, MB, did not have any past relationship with either Eclosio or LC before this Uni4Coop program so could just as easily partner with Eclosio as with LC if they were to participate in the next phase. Another reason may stem from the findings of this MTR – in particular, the recommendation not to pursue the formation any more SHGs (discussed further under IV.4.7 below).

While noting above that the selection of target groups for a new program should be determined by partners, the selection of partners naturally may be influenced by “top-down” policy decisions by Uni4Coop. In particular some strategic discussions have already taken place between Eclosio and LC and the following 5 themes have been agreed:

- AE
- Value chain/FOs
- Entrepreneurship
- Conservation biodiversity
- Research and Knowledge management

Regarding the 5th theme (Research and Knowledge Management), Eclosio will link closely with the University of Liège, Gembloux as they are engaged in a partnership with ITC, into which there is a mandatory obligation to reinforce the ITC institution. Eclosio will try to match the different researches with the priorities of Uni4Coop target groups (as took place during the current phase with developing an App for market access, study natural pest control, soil moisture and fertilization). But some activities came a bit late, so not in phase with research cycles. This will be corrected during the next program by having teachers involved from the outset.

Ignoring for now potential differences regarding partner selection criteria (and historical ties), the suggestions for the next phase could easily be implemented by one NGO. But the nature of the operations of the two NGOs presents some challenges to this.

- Firstly, for either of the two NGOs to take on this entire portfolio would require significant structural change in their in-country support teams. Currently both operative as a mixture of donor and partner; they provide funds to partners but retain a certain level of control over the implementation process (not least by the requirements for frequent financial updates and budget requests). This is different from donors who fund a partner program from a distance; in such cases there is less frequent contact and reporting involved (a contract is signed and the partner takes all responsibility for implementation). If either of the two NGOs took on this entire new program, they would have to make a choice – if continuing with their current close management, they would have to expand personnel to cover a wider range of themes; the other choice would be to devolve management more to the chosen partners (i.e. less frequent involvement in program implementation).
- If only LC implementing: Research/knowledge management could easily be continued in partnership with RUA-ECOLAND. For entrepreneurship, LC envisages an IGA approach similar to what they currently do whereas Eclosio is looking at a wider approach to working with the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MoLVT) to upgrade their provincial training centers to provide more relevant skills that meet market needs. Strengthening FOs and value chains would be challenging as LC does not have a track record with this. AE (SA) is an area of strong interest for LC but expanding this beyond a limited selection of farmers requires a different approach than currently being applied via SHGs. This could still be done in partnership with MB if the suggestions discussed later under sustainability are incorporated – namely to focus on Production Groups (PGs) rather than ACs. But a focus on PGs who are AC members would create a greater synergy with strengthening the value chain approach through FOs. The conservation/biodiversity component would be new but LC already has a partner (MB) with considerable experience in the field of natural resource management who could take such a component on board. That would depend of course on the topic of choice for LC – if they focus only on mangrove conservation, then there are other

NGO partners more versed in this area than MB (e.g. those already ready working along the coast who already partner with associations protecting their mangrove forests such as Morodok in Koh Kong).

- If only ECLOSIO implementing: This scenario presents almost opposite challenges and opportunities. For FO strengthening, value chains and AE, Eclasio has a ready base to expand partnership with FAEC (and possibly FCFD). Adding a component on conservation/bio-diversity could allow Eclasio to build on previous relationships with WWF or WCS but are these organizations representative or legitimate enough for Eclasio to build partnerships with? There are many CPA (Community Protected-area Associations) established around the country and legally recognized by the Ministry of Environment (MoE), some of whom were previously Community Forestry Associations (CFA) under MAFF. But federations of these CPAs or CFAs may be difficult to partner with as they are regional, informal and less operational than federations of ACs like FAEC or FCFD. Eclasio may face the same challenge in relation to promoting entrepreneurship – partner selection that meets their criteria of legitimacy. Apart from MoVLT and their provincial offices, most of those supporting this sector to date are NGOs (funded partly by ILO – International Labor Organization). The final component of research/knowledge management could be implemented by either Eclasio or LC.

In conclusion, it appears that it may again be necessary to have two separate SOs. This is not necessarily a problem. Similar issues being addressed by two NGOs can create opportunities for learning and sharing. AE/SA can continue to be promoted by both NGOs; both could support different aspects of conservation; and similarly with tackling entrepreneurship. The new areas proposed (entrepreneurship and conservation) can easily fit into the current Theory of Change (see Annex 5) as entrepreneurship is a critical part of rural economy and conservation/bio-diversity is best achieved when the natural resources being protected are essential to the livelihood of the communities who protect them (thus offering income generation possibilities).

There is still a lot of time for discussion on these issues before finalizing the next phase; but an important step should be the identifying partners as soon as possible to ensure that the program is developed with their full participation. A number of key steps have already been taken since the MTR field work was completed such as:

For AE component: 5 November workshop involving AliSea members

For FO and Value-Chain: 6 November workshop involving NF3 members

For Conservation / Biodiversity: In September & October 2019 meeting Conservation NGOs

For Promotion of entrepreneurship: In November 2019 assessment of studies and groups, visit of vocational training institutions

For Research & Development: In November meeting with research institutions ITC & RUA

### **IV.3.3 Possible additional organizations or networks to reinforce collaboration**

As already discussed above (IV.1.4) there has been a wide range of networking, collaboration and synergies throughout the program implementation – and many more planned for the remaining years before completion. There is no need to add any more in order to reinforce collaboration between LC and Eclasio. The most important thing for enhancement of collaboration would be more internal sharing – more cross visits and structure reflection. More structured reflection would arise if all partners (those of LC and Eclasio) had opportunities to meet more often to discuss their work with each other. This needs to take place at different levels – management staff have different issues to discuss than those operating at field level.

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## IV.4 LQ4: status of program implementation

Key questions addressed under this section:

1. To what extent do outputs to date indicate achievement of project results and objectives?
2. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of outputs?
3. Were project resources applied in a timely manner?
4. Have financial resources been used as planned?
5. Are project outputs being achieved at reasonable cost?
6. In what ways is the program contributing to improved quality of life of target groups?
7. To what extent are the benefits likely to be sustainable in the longer term?
8. Replication: to what extent has the program established models of interventions (or key lessons) which could be used in other areas (or by other agencies)?

### IV.4.1 Potential achievement of results and objectives

This MTR takes place about half way through the five year program. Already a lot of progress has been made towards achieving the planned results.

#### Results planned for Specific Objective 1

For many of the indicators under Result 1 (R1), the most current data available is from 2018 as production cycles for 2019 are still in progress so data has not yet been collected. But even using 2018 data shows that most of the indicators are well ahead of schedule for achievement (and many already over achieved). For the first indicator (access to on-farm small irrigation), the consultant used the number of farmers supported by ISC inputs in Takeo; Eclasio may be able to update this figure later by adding in farmers who have developed their own small-scale irrigation schemes. The table below summarizes the data to date for this result. Only one area of concern may be rice yields. So far there is 19% increase on the baseline figure but it could be challenging to achieve a 30% increase by the end of the program (an average yield of 3.7 tons per hectare)

Table IV.4.1 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO1, R1

Description	Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R1: Farmers (men, women, young) and their family improved sustainably their production through better natural resources access and management	Amount of family farmers having access to on-farm small irrigation system	25	10	47	ISC support in TKO (What about others?)
	The amount of AE techniques adopted by targeted family farmers increases	70%	188 HHs	375	2018 data (already 100% increase on baseline)
	Number of farmer applied 1 technique	100%	22 HHs	115	Over 400% increase on BL
	Number of farmer applied 2 techniques	85%	30 HHs	48	60% increase on BL
	Number of farmer applied 3 techniques	80%	39 HHs	94	141% increase on BL
	Number of farmers applied over 3 techniques	15%	97 HHs	118	22% increase on BL
	Percentage of production' quantity increases:				2018 data as 2019 not yet collected
Rice production	30%	2.84 T/Ha	3.38 T/Ha	19% increase on BL	
Rice seed	200%	45 tons	449 tons	900% increase on BL	
Chicken raising	100%	70 Kg	194 Kg	177% increase on BL	
Vegetable growing	100%	486 Kg	1003 Kg	106% increase on BL	

The indicators for result 2 (R2) focus on the capacity of ACs to collectively sell member produce as well their overall institutional capacity. This institutional capacity is measured by a tool called SCM (Scoring Criteria Method). Collective selling of rice seed has already well achieved the target. There is significant activity on fertilizer selling and paddy trading but no baseline to compare. But 2018 data for fertilizer is already 33% higher than the 2017 figure. The SCM covers 4 key areas: capacity to undertake commercial activities, capacity to manage finance, democratic functioning/representation, and capacity to advocate member interests. A maximum score of 100 points is possible but the program targets 80 points and in the latest assessment (January 2019), 14 ACs have achieved this target (with 5 of these over points).

Table IV.4.2 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO1, R2

Description	Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R2: Organized small-scale farmers increase the total value of their production through better access to market and allows the creation of job and business opportunities	% of increase of quantities of products sold collectively by ACs (compared to baseline)				Except rice seed, data is 2018 as 2019 not yet reported
	Rice seed		45 tons	277 tons	Over 500% increase on BL
	Fertilizer	40%		176 tons	No BL to compare
	Paddy trading			500 tons	No BL to compare
	Number of AC scoring over 80/100 on SCM grid	20	13	14	Increased from 6 in 2017

Result 3 focuses on financial aspects of the ACs (both external and internal). The first indicator aims for 20 ACs to access external financing. This has been one of the more challenging aspects of the program to date as suitable financial instruments offered by banks and MFIs have not been tailored to the needs of ACs. The minimum amounts for some banks are beyond the current needs of ACs and MFI loans still carry a very high interest rate which makes them unattractive to ACs. Competition for clients among MFIs has reduced interest rates slightly over the last few years but the MFIs appear to operate much like a cartel when it comes to the extent to which they reduce these rates with very little to choose between the different MFIs. The program initially hoped to link more ACs to finance from the Rural Development Bank (RDB) whose mandate seems to fit closely with the business plans of ACs. Later other MFIs were also encouraged to support AC financing and an update since the mid-year report shows that now 4 ACs have loans from RDB and 8 ACs from MFIs/others (4 from AMK and 1 each from Chamroeun, IFC, VSO and another unidentified source).

Regarding internal (share) capital, the average share capital among all ACs who are members of FAEC and FCFD has continued to increase over the years as more members join. The data for 2018 shows that already the increase achieved is well over the target for the entire program; and most likely this will increase further over the remaining duration of the program.

**Table IV.4.3 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO1, R3**

Description	Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R3: FOs and their members improve their access to finance to develop production and collective commercialization	Cumulative amount of ACs getting access to finance for AC collective commercial activities (external financing)	20	0	4 (44,000 USD)	Updated data (November 2019) shows now increased to 12 ACs (\$230,000)
	% of AC share capital increases during the program (compared to the baseline)	30%	5,000 USD (Avg.)	134%	Target already well achieved

Result 4 (R4) of this objective focus on service provision by FAEC and FCFD. The indicators set were number of qualified service providers and the quantity of services delivered by them as well as an additional indicator on the number of AC members of each federation. For this latter indicator (number of members), the indicator for the entire program (50% increase) is already well achieved as FAEC has doubled its membership since the baseline and FCFD has more than doubled membership numbers. These numbers are based on reports from both federations at meetings during this MTR.

For numbers of service providers, the program reports a current total of 24 and this was confirmed during MTR interviews. The program aims for 55 by the end of the program so there is still a lot of work to do to achieve this number over the coming years. More challenging is increasing the numbers of women and youth among these service providers. Those numbers currently fall very short of the targets. Regarding quantity of services provided, the program has not established any mechanism to measure this. It should be possible for each service provider to keep an account of the number of times they provide various services to each AC (or AC member). This should be put in place immediately and data should be collected monthly by FAEC and FCFD for reporting to Eclosio.

**Table IV.4.4 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO1, R4**

Description	Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R4: FO improve skills and capacities to manage their structures and advocate for SSFF interest including those for women and youths	Amount of qualified Service Providers of FAEC /FCFD trained and are operational (men/women/youth)	55 (35/20/10)	24 (20/5/1)	24 (20/5/1)	Overall moving close to target but low for # of women and youth involved
	Amount of FAEC /FCFD annual services delivered to FOs and individual members	150	50	N/A	ECLOSIO has not been able to measure this yet
	Increased percentage of FAEC / FCFD AC members	50%	FAEC: 34 FCFD: 22	FAEC: 68 FCFD: 56	Already well achieved as AC members more than doubled

The final result under this objective (R5) relates to capitalization (studies, collaborations and dissemination of learning and experiences). As discussed in the previous chapter of this report, many opportunities have arisen for collaboration with other relevant institutions to share experiences (especially on AE). Many studies have been carried out but only 3 have been published so far. It could be challenging to achieve this target (publish 10 studies by the end of the program).

**Table IV.4.5 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO1, R5**

Description	Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R5: Actors supporting small-scale family farmers and their family' members are sharing and improving their practices and approaches	Cumulative number of studies published during the program	10	0	3	On target as this figure for year 2 (year 3 is not yet completed work in progres)
	Cumulative number of collaborations with other actors on exchanges of experiences and capitalization of knowledge processes developed	10	0	7	

Specific Objective 1 – overall indicators

SO1: Small-scale family farmers and their family members strengthen their capacities to achieve food sovereignty, to defend their interests and to generate pro-poor growth

In any program design it is expected that achievement of the results (as described in the previous paragraphs above) will ensure achievement of the specific objective. Thus the indicators set for this need to link closely to the results planned (or more accurately, the results planned should have been designed to contribute to the achievement of the indicators for the objective). For this program, three indicators have been identified to contribute to the measurement of the SO1 achievement as shown in the table below.

Table IV.4.6 – Indicators for measuring SO1

Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Comments
Income of the targeted farmers' family increases more than the average income of similar population in the framework of the program	25%	AE : 788\$/HH	Measure towards end of program; use AE beneficiaries as sample
Cumulative amount of new or revised legal frameworks in favor of small-scale farmers and in consideration of gender, youth and environmental issues; in consideration of proposals submitted by FOs	5	0	No result determined to lead to this indicator
Percentage increase of women and youth among FAEC operational actors (%) (women; youth)	50% / 40%	AE : Youth 2, Women 9 SEED : Youth 0, Women 21	Indicator not clear (who are the "operational actors")

The first indicator is a logical extension of achievements from a number of the results. Improved production through AE under R1 would be expected to lead to increased income. In addition improved AC activities on collective selling, improved finance to expand activities and improved capacity (R2 and R3) should benefit members' income (as should benefits from services provided under R4). From the data entered in the monitoring sheet under baseline, it appears that the program intends to use the data from AE households (in Takeo) as the means of calculating achievement of this indicator. But this only applies to a very small proportion of the total target families; and the baseline and follow up data focuses only on 39 of these families. This is too small a sample to be representative of the beneficiaries of the program.

The target percentage suggests that target families' income will not only increase by 25% but will increase by 25% more than non-target families. The baseline does not mention which data is being used for non-target families – will national statistics be used for this? The survey that most regularly measure income is the Cambodia Socio Economic Censes (CSES) as this is done annually. At the time of writing this report, the CSES 2018 has not yet been published so the most recent report is for 2017. This report breaks down income groups into Phnom Penh, other urban and other rural. Assuming the "Other Rural" is the most appropriate for Eclosio target groups, this data shows that average income from agriculture is already higher than the baseline for AE target groups (\$918 compared to AE baseline of \$788) – see extract from CSES report below, adjusted from Riels to USD.

Table IV.4.7 – Rural household income 2013-2017 – from CSES 2017 (final report)

Income composition, average per month, 2013-2017.						2013 2014 2015 2016 2017				
[In thousands of Riels]						Converted to USD p.a.				
<b>Other rural</b>										
Primary income	878	1,101	1,233	1,403	1662	2,634	3,303	3,699	4,209	4,986
Wage and Salary	403	518	631	742	913	1,209	1,554	1,893	2,226	2,739
Self-employment Income	474	580	599	661	748	1,422	1,740	1,797	1,983	2,244
Agriculture	237	280	293	303	306	711	840	879	909	918
Non Agriculture	178	235	228	266	351	534	705	684	798	1,053
Owner occupied house	59	65	78	92	91	177	195	234	276	273
Property income	1	3	2	0.1	1	3	9	6	0	3
Total transfers received	53	62	96	114	99	159	186	288	342	297
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1,517</b>	<b>1760</b>	<b>2,793</b>	<b>3,489</b>	<b>3,987</b>	<b>4,551</b>	<b>5,280</b>

The second indicator under this SO1 refers to legal frameworks but none of the results are designed to contribute to this indicator. And it is not clear to whom the third indicator refers. Does it mean all members of target FOs and ACs. The data entered under baseline only lists some beneficiaries of AE and seed. This indicator needs to be clarified before the end of program evaluation takes place and relevant data collected.

Results planned for Specific Objective 2

The design of results under this objective has five areas of focus (represented by the five results):

1. Institutional strengthening
2. Increased production (SA)
3. Increased income (IGA, SHG credit to members for business)
4. Environment/climate change
5. Capitalization (research, documentation and dissemination)



But the organization of indicators seems a bit mixed up between R1 and R2. Under R2, the inclusion of the term “level of organization” in the wording of the result means that indicators such as SHGs transforming to ACs was included under this result as well as training of SHG committees on management, finance, etc. Those indicators would have been better placed under R1. And indicators related to water points would be more logical under R2 (as water is a key input for SA) as would provision of quality seeds and agriculture tools. But it is not the role of this consultant to change the logframe so the results are reviewed below based on what has been included in the design.<sup>11</sup>

For result 1, as expected due to low outputs during MODE period of partnership and loss of time in the changeover to taking on MB as follow up partner, many indicators are behind target. In particular there has been little input so far on installation or renovation of water points. Distribution of quality seeds and agriculture tools has only reached a small number of SHG members. For the short studies or assessments to be conducted FAEC, these will mostly comprise case studies and will be completed over the next two years.

**Table IV.4.8 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO2, R1**

Result description	Result indicators	Program Target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R1: The institutional strengthening of local partners and SHGs allows improving their technical capacity in relation to support small-scale farmers and their management capacity ensuring their sustainability.	IOV1.1.: Increased percentage of partner capacity rate (assessed by using organizational capacity building assessment tool)	87%	80% (2017 for MODE)	MB QRCP 2019 - 87%	New target will be set for MB
				FAEC QRCP 2019 - 66%	Some progress needed to reach target %
	IOV1.2.: Number of short studies or assessments conducted by FAEC	8	0	1	Long way behind target
	IOV1.3.: Number of SHGs leaders trained in finance, management and members needs assessment	48	26	39	Average 3 SHG leaders x 13 new groups
	IOV1.4.: Video on forming of SHGs	1	N/A	0	Not yet completed
	IOV1.5.: Number of water points and wells renovated and maintained	41	0	1 (MODE) 3 (MB)	Extended to end 2019 due to rainy season
	IOV1.7.: Number of beneficiaries who received quality seeds and agricultural tools	200		24 (MODE) 44 (MB)	Long way behind target
	IOV1.8.: Project yearly reflection workshop organized by MB, follow by stakeholders meeting	3	1	N/A	No record if done or not

For R2, a number of activities were initially started by MODE but without much success. They had selected 23 families for SA activities covering rice, vegetable growing and chicken raising. But the rice seeds were distributed too late for planting and most were then damaged by long storage to next season. Most of the chickens died due to disease outbreak. Only the vegetable growing provided some success. MODE final report suggested that 16 out of 18 vegetable growers were still practicing SA techniques such as composting and biological fertilizer. But now not all the groups they belonged are a target of MB so it is not clear if any of these families continue to practice – if MB has the time and resources, it would be good to follow up as it would indicate whether families may continue to practice SA even if project staff no longer visit or support them.<sup>12</sup>

**Table IV.4.9 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO2, R2**

Result description	Result indicators	Program Target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R2: SHG's members that applied a sustainable agricultural approach, improved their level of organization and increased their food production.	IOV2.1.: Target households practise Sustainable Agriculture farming system (SA) for at least 3 activities (85% of total)	255	831 (2016 annual report)	23 (MODE) N/A (MB)	Data not recorded in MB reports
	IOV2.2.: Number of beneficiaries who manage to increase their yield of rice, vegetables and chicken:		To be updated from baseline survey		MODE beneficiaries did not get success for rice and chickens (check if any veg still practice) MB not yet measured yields as only starting
	Rice: 60% of beneficiaries increase their yield by	20%		N/A	
	Vegetables: 75% of beneficiaries increase yield by	30%		N/A	
	Chicken: 70% of beneficiaries increase yield by	30%		N/A	
	IOV2.3.: Number of SHGs that decided to become Farmer Association (new)	8	0	3	On target
	IOV2.4.: New Model farmers selected and trained	15	0	7	On target
IOV2.5.: SHGs/ emerging FOs established, trained and supported on management, marketing, beneficiaries' assessment	15	0	N/A	In progress by FAEC	

<sup>11</sup> LC comment: It is important to mention that among the indicators presented for each result, there are indicators of the program proposal (only 3 main indicators per result) and the rest are internal indicators from our M&E.

<sup>12</sup> LC comment: When MODE started the activities in 2017, individuals' producers formerly supported were invited to join SHGs. So technically, if these producers are part of an active SHGs they should be under the support of MB. And it was requested to MB to check all former SHGs established by MODE to see they were still active and willing to continue to get support. [Consultant: Data was not clear about which ones joined and which did not. It is good that you already requested MB on this. LC may need to follow up further on this with MB before end of program evaluation]

R3 focuses on increasing income of vulnerable beneficiaries. The first indicator achievements are still well under the 96 planned for the whole program. MODE had already selected 14 during the first phase of the program and their final report suggests that 12 of the recipients were reaching a profit over \$50 per day. MB has since selected 11 more and, based on interviews during this MTR, they are earning well over \$50 per month from their income generation activities. A concern however should be the poverty status of beneficiaries selected; this result aims to target “vulnerable” beneficiaries but a number of those selected to date appear to have already been doing reasonably well with their business prior to becoming IGA beneficiary.

The second indicator (number of SHGs actively functioning) would have been better placed as an indicator under R1. Nevertheless it is on target to achieve as at least all the 13 new groups formed (and some of the older ones) are still functioning well. However, the number may reduce once some SHGs reach the end of their first year as many of the SHGs plan to distribute the capital and profits earned and start again – and not all may decide to start again. More data collection is needed to obtain progress for indicators 3 and 5. But for the fourth indicator, already many SHG members have accessed credit from their groups to start or expand small business activities.

**Table IV.4.10 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO2, R3**

Result description	Result indicators	Program Target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R3: The revenue of the targeted vulnerable beneficiaries is improved	IOV3.1.: Number of beneficiaries who manage correctly their IGAs and reached over 50 USD profit per month (60% of total).	96	78	12 (MODE) 11 (MB)	Will there be follow up by MB on MODE IGA to check income?
	IOV3.2.: Number of SHGs actively working (new)	15	12	13	Ahead of target
	IOV3.3.: Number of beneficiary households referred by health partners of LC and the RH or HC to get benefit from MB FES project	65	0	N/A	Data not recorded
	IOV3.4.: Number of beneficiaries identified, provided grant and supported by (new) SHG to start up or enhance small businesses or farm activities	95	0	53	Ahead of target
	IOV3.5.: Number of beneficiaries coached and followed up	15 old 25 new	0	16 old (MODE) 24 new (MB)	Data from 2018 (not updated in 2019)

Result 4 focuses on environmental protection and climate change awareness and resilience. For indicator 1, it is expected that 47 SHG members will have developed a climate change mitigation plan. In 2018 MODE conducted EIT (Environmental Integration Tool) with 6 members and MB has since done this with 3 more. But it will take a strong effort to complete 36 more of these considering that this tool is considered by MB to be difficult for members to complete (and more importantly, it seems not relevant unless the program has support to help them address issues raised during the assessment). Indicator 2 should logically link to the results from indicator 1 but lack of support by the program may make this difficult to achieve (so far, there has been no attempt to measure this). For the remaining indicators (3 to 5) there has been no update from the MODE data in 2018. But interviews with SHGs during this MTR suggest that MB has not yet had time to focus on any of these activities. However, the program should reconsider using 4.5 as an indicator of achievement as non-achievement should be the favored outcome (as it is good if no beneficiaries are affected by any natural disasters).

**Table IV.4.11 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO2, R4**

Result description	Result indicators	Program Target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R4: Improve environmental protection and climate changes awareness and resilience	IOV4.1: Number of SHG members who have developed a climate change mitigation plan	47	0	9	# members who have completed EIT tool
	IOV4.2.: The project stakeholders have put in place measures to mitigate environmental impacts	the majority of the identified measures were implemented	N/A	N/A	Data not recorded
	IOV4.3.: Number of families who have a disposal pit system and properly discard wastes at community level	35	0	8	Data from 2018 (not updated in 2019) But all figures seem far off program target
	IOV4.4.: SHGs/ emerging FOs leaders received knowledge on DRR/CC and able to disseminate to their community people	33	0	3	But if indicator 4.5 not achieved, this is good as it means that beneficiaries were not affected by disaster
	IOV4.5.: Number of beneficiaries affected by flood or drought who received additional support (small grant, seeds and agriculture tools)	30	0	0	

As would be expected, capitalization (R5) becomes more active as the program progresses and there are learnings to share with others. Already the program has conducted two main studies: “Sustainable technical innovations among small holder farmers”, and “Gender in Agriculture” – and a video was produced on SA techniques. These have been widely disseminated through various workshops and thematic working groups. It is expected that this result will be fully realized by the end of the program.

**Table IV.4.12 – Progress towards achievement of results – SO2, R5**

Result description	Result indicators	Program Target	Baseline	Achieved to date	Comments
R5: Evidence-based information, studies and operational research on farmer issues are conducted and results are disseminated	IOV5.1.: Number of capitalization topics carried out	6	0	3	Capitalizaation and dissemination will be more active in the latter part of the program
	IOV5.2: Number of thematic working groups organised	10	0	2	
	IOV5.3: Number of National Seminar organised (in collaboration with Eclasio)	2	0	0	

Specific Objective 2 – overall indicators

SO2: The food and economic security and the level of organization of vulnerable rural populations have improved in a sustainable way

Three indicators were determined as measurement of the above SO2. In general terms, the three indicators are logical as they address food security (enough to eat), economic security (increased income) and level of organization (ACs registered).

**Table IV.4.13 – Indicators for measuring SO2**

Indicator	Program target	Baseline	Comments
IOV 1: Households having enough food to eat all year round	463	N/A	No question in BL questionnaire asking about food consumption; <b>will need to add this to endline questionnaire</b>
IOV 2: Increase of women beneficiaries' income above the average level	20%	N/A	How to isolate women's income from total family income (and where does the "average" come from?)
IOV 3: Number of new registered Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) in the target areas	5	0	FAEC now working on this indicator

But the wording of the first two indicators is a bit problematic for measuring outcomes from this program. For the first indicator, an issue is that households (HHs) may have enough food to eat but maybe they borrow to buy food; and another issue is to what extent the program contributed to food sufficiency. The target of 463 HHs seems ambitious in that context as the results that could contribute to this are SA (255 HHs) and distribution of quality seeds and tools (200 HHs). The total of these is 455 HHs (and there is likely to be some overlap between them so the total could be less). And it is never likely that all HHs supported will succeed in their activities. Another issue with this indicator is that there was no question in the baseline questionnaire regarding food consumption; this will need to be included in the endline survey questionnaire in order to measure this indicator.

The second indicator is problematic in that HH income is generally a combination of income earned from all family members so isolating women beneficiary income could be difficult. And it is not clear what this will be compared against – similar to the indicator under SO1 discussed above (will the project use nationally published data such as the CSES for comparison?).

**IV.4.2 Factors affecting achievement/non-achievement**

As can be seen from the discussion in the previous section, there have been more achievements than non-achievements. A number of factors can be identified as contributing to these achievements. The most important of these is the strong commitment of the two implementing NGOs and their partners. But such a commitment could not ensure achievement of results if target groups were not on board with the program. Active participation of target groups only happens when they feel that the program is responding to their real needs. A very good example of this is the small-scale irrigation implemented by ISC in Takeo. Selected farmers were not only active participants in the activities to map their farming plots and identify solutions that could improve their production, they contributed more than 50% of the cost of the program inputs (some received ponds, some land filling, and others water pumps). Their willingness to pay such a large portion of the cost of these inputs shows how much that aspect of the program was relevant to them.

In contrast to the above example, SA in Kampong Thom (with the exception of a few families) has been less successful because many farmers are not yet convinced that this will be of benefit to them. The techniques being promoted by LC through partners are not new; most of these techniques have been tried and tested over

the years in Cambodia. It is clear to those promoting SA (including LC and partners) that if farmers apply sustainable mixed farming methods that rely on non-chemical inputs, they can get good results (in terms of quality of produce, income and environmental improvement). But even if farmers are convinced by this, they face constraints to putting it into practice. A significant constraint in many areas in recent years is the lack of family labor. Migration of youth to towns and cities in search of paid employment leaves many farms manned by older people and young children. Many of these older people are unwilling to change traditional practices; they continue to do what they always did. In some areas, this means relying on rice production (the least economically profitable use of land); with the balance of cash needed for day to day living coming in remittances from the family members who migrated for work. Many of these families see diversification as risky (and also time consuming). To promote SA among such farmers, the program needs to incorporate extensive technical support. It is not sufficient just to give farmers the inputs and a short training; there needs to be intensive on-farm support until they are fully functioning and convinced of the technique.

Although the MTR team did not visit Takeo, it appears from reports and data submitted that implementation of AE there (promoting similar techniques to SA in Kampong Thom) is having more success with the participating farmers. One reason for this is the involvement of functioning ACs and their specialist trainers. In Kampong Thom, the SA aspects have been implemented on an individual farmer basis, without sufficient technical support (as MODE facilitators lack the necessary agriculture skills to support farmers). The AE component in Takeo is also more condensed geographically, concentrating on a few communes of one district (Tram Kak). This helps with providing technical support and also enables more possibilities of interaction and exchange of experiences between participating farmers.

LC produced an excellent video on SA. But this video is not a "training" video as it does not demonstrate in detail what farmers need to do; it is mainly a promotional video to encourage interest in doing SA. ECOLAND is interested to explore further the socio-economic reasons why SA/AE is not being adopted more despite the obvious benefits to health, economy and the environment. Such a study would be very useful and should be supported by the Uni4Coop program.

Another area where significant success was noted was the production and sale of rice seeds by ACs. As noted in the previous section, sale of rice seeds by ACs has increased by over 500% compared to the baseline data. Factors influencing this success included good cooperation between partners (in particular CIRD and FAEC) in supporting the cycle of production – sourcing quality foundation seed; FAEC facilitating interest among ACs to purchase the seed; distribution of seed to AC members for production; sale of seed after harvesting back to ACs or to local markets/buyers. However one aspect of this cycle that was not as successful as planned was the payment of service fees to FAEC/FCFD. One of the main reasons for this is that there is still not enough good quality seed available countrywide so producers have no problem finding markets by themselves (they do not yet understand the need for FAEC facilitation). But a critical step in the seed production cycle is the need for new foundation seed every three years and, without FAEC facilitation, ACs and their members may have difficulty accessing the quality foundation seed they need at affordable prices. Bulk purchasing by FAEC on behalf of ACs should guarantee the best possible price.

A component of the program that has not yet achieved much success is supporting external financing of ACs, although the internal financing (increase in share capital) is well ahead of expectations. Eclasio and FAEC have worked hard in exploring options with various financial institutions but most of these do not have financial instruments that match AC needs. As discussed in the previous section on results, only 4 ACs have been successful in obtaining loans from the RDB<sup>13</sup>. Informal discussions between MTR consultant and some MFI managers revealed that lack of trust in ACs ability to repay is a crucial factor and thus, to adhere to their own needs to safeguard their clients' assets (savings deposited), they need to have collateral; unsecured loans in their balance sheets would raise alarm with their auditors and threaten their reputation as financially prudent institutions. Nevertheless banks/MFIs want to lend and are always looking for viable businesses with sound business plans (but low risk). As most financial institutions in Cambodia are low risk operators, Eclasio could consider exploring the field of Venture Capital where risk is accepted if high returns can be foreseen (even if it takes time). There are not so many of these in Cambodia (and those that exist, e.g. Ooctane, focus on the field of technology, not agriculture) nor in South East Asia (SEA) overall. There is one (UBERIS Capital) that operates in SEA and has a component on Smart Agriculture. But minimum loan size is \$50,000 and UBERIS,

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<sup>13</sup> Eclasio comment: This is because RDB have changed their credit offer, willing to focus on the provision of credit to one single private firm owner having farming contract with ACs; which is not happening because of the domination of such arrangement. Farmers in AC are willing to have bargaining power, which does not occur in such of contract farming arrangement. But easy for RDB to retrieve commissioned benefits from one single private sector firm, rather than with multiple small-scale farmers organised in cooperative. There are currently four other MFI and banks that are lending to FAEC/FCFD ACs, this from the lobbying and facilitation work of Eclasio and FAEC

like most venture capital firms, is looking for innovative ideas. Eclasio may be able to use its connections in Europe to explore other possible sources of venture capital. But any of those will most likely have at least the same minimum requirement as UBERIS. This minimum loan size has been one of the reasons for ACs not taking loans from banks even when the bank may have been willing. The ACs don't require a high amount initially and/or they are not willing to take a big risk for their first external loan. Such loans could be more easily negotiated by Union of Cooperatives where the Union can apply for bigger loan but then divide it among a number of ACs. For now the Uni4Coop program works with only one officially recognized union (BUAC, which has 4 AC members). Unfortunately the program has run into difficulties in trying to get approval for the TUAC (Takeo Union of Agriculture Cooperatives). If officially recognized, TUAC would represent 7 ACs and thus the cumulative capacity to apply for, and successfully manage, external loans would be greater. There is confusing information about the reasons for TUAC not being approved. FAEC understood that PDAFF in Takeo only wanted to have one union for the province so they did not want to approve another one. This was refuted by the DACP who said that a province can have many unions as long as there is a clear distinction between them. Eclasio said that there are political issues involved and that they were told not to proceed with the application. Even if such obstacles could be overcome, recent political events among members of the ACs in Takeo may have derailed any chances of proceeding with an application in the short term.

#### IV.4.3 Timeliness in use of project resources

Examination of the results under each of the SOs above (IV.4.1) indicates that the project is on target with most of the activities. Although there were some delays in the beginning, the program has largely caught up with those by now. SO2 was of course hampered by the change of partner in year 2 from MODE to MB which caused some delays but since selection as a partner MB has been efficient in moving the program activities closer to those planned. Nevertheless (as discussed under IV.4.2 above) many indicators still fall short of targets so will need strong effort to achieve.

An important issue related to timing was raised by MB. For programs designed to form new groups (whether they be SHGs, ACs or other types), it is critical to ensure that the formation takes place in the early stages of the program. This ensures that sufficient time can be allocated to strengthening of the groups. If a program is still forming groups in the second half of the program, there is limited time to provide the support and training needed to ensure their sustainability. If a program closes before groups are fully competent to manage without outside support, it is unlikely that those groups will continue to function. This also applies to monetary or physical support (e.g. agriculture interventions). Therefore program budgets need to be designed on a sliding scale, with most of the physical inputs taking place in the first half of the program.

In relation to timeliness of budget planning, some partners noted that it takes time to approve annual budgets, sometimes it can a few months (or even up to the middle of the year) for the budget to be clarified. This causes delay and uncertainty and makes planning difficult for partners.

#### IV.4.4 Expenditure compared to planned budgets

The table below summarizes the financial situation up to the end of June 2019:

Table IV.4.14 – Budget vs. Expenditure (to 30 June 2019)

Eclasio	Updated budget	Expend to June 2019	% spent	Louvain	Updated budget	Expend to June 2019	% spent	Total Uni4Coop	Updated budget	Expend to June 2019	% spent
<b>1. Partners</b>	700,042	295,660	42%	<b>1. Partners</b>	354,006	139,255	39%	<b>1. Partners</b>	1,054,048	434,915	41%
CIRD	167,848	96,572	58%	FAEC	78,457	25,370	32%				
FAEC	300,827	119,453	40%	MODE/MB	251,049	104,783	42%				
ISC	31,326	0	**	RUA	24,500	9,101	37%				
KHAE	200,042	79,635	40%								
<b>2. Collaborations</b>		0		<b>2. Collaborations</b>	5,330	0	0%	<b>2. Collaborations</b>	5,330	0	0%
				Operation/Running	5,330	0	0%	Operation/Running	5,330	0	0%
<b>3. Local Office</b>	544,269	202,612	37%	<b>3. Local Office</b>	77,246	72,227	94%	<b>3. Local Office</b>	621,515	274,839	44%
Investment	64,563	42,618	66%	Investment	226	552	244%	Investment	64,789	43,170	67%
Operation/Running	126,214	75,813	60%	Operation/Running	24,424	47,880	196%	Operation/Running	150,638	123,693	82%
Personnel	353,492	84,181	24%	Personnel	52,596	23,796	45%	Personnel	406,088	107,977	27%
<b>4. Head office</b>	14,643	140,186	957%	<b>4. Head office</b>	207,984	79,646	38%	<b>4. Head office</b>	222,627	219,832	99%
Investment	-	1,573		Investment	0	0		Investment	0	1,573	
Operation/Running	-	32,015		Operation/Running	55,921	16,053	29%	Operation/Running	55,921	48,068	86%
Personnel	14,643	106,599	728%	Personnel	152,063	63,593	42%	Personnel	166,706	170,191	102%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,258,954</b>	<b>638,458</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>644,566</b>	<b>291,128</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,903,520</b>	<b>929,586</b>	<b>49%</b>

\*\* ISC expenditure completed but not booked until July 2019

Overall the program appears to be on track, with 49% of budget expended by this half-way point. But within this overall total, there are some areas that raise some questions. For Eclasio, there is limited budget provided for Head Office costs although substantial amounts are being charged to the program – do these costs have to

be covered by savings on other budget items or is there a separate budget for this (not included in the updated budget figures reported)<sup>14</sup>?. For LC, the budget for Local Office costs has already been exhausted at this half way point – will future costs have to be covered by savings from other budget items or will additional financing be added to cover future local office costs?

#### IV.4.5 Reasonableness of costs of outputs

Overall, this program is a quite low cost compared to the number of beneficiaries planned to reach. The program does not support large inputs; the main costs are human resources for training and other capacity building activities. Through these activities, the program reaches AC members and their families and SHG member families. But there are some beneficiaries of AE and SA who are outside of these groups (here the consultant estimates between 20%-25% of those practicing AE/SA techniques are non-group members). Adding in the FO (FAEC/FCFD) management, governance and staff who, as well as assisting implementation, are themselves beneficiaries of the program, the total direct beneficiaries is over 40,000 persons. Comparing this initially to the budgets allocated to partners gives an average of \$25 per beneficiary and comparing to the total cost averages at \$46 per beneficiary. Considering this cost is spread over a 5-year period, it is very low (and much lower than similar projects evaluated by the consultant over the last number of years).

**Table IV.4.15 – Cost per beneficiary**

Estimated direct beneficiaries:		Updated budgets:		Cost/beneficiary
AC family members	37,616	Partner budgets	\$ 1,054,048	<b>\$ 25</b>
AE (non-AC members)	422			
SHG family members	3,240	Total budget	\$ 1,903,520	<b>\$ 46</b>
SA (non-SHG members)	180			
FO staff/leadership/board	52			
<b>Total direct beneficiaries</b>	<b>41,509</b>			

#### IV.4.6 Contribution to improved quality of life of target groups

Improved quality of life is something that takes time and will be better measured at the final evaluation stage of this program. However, some successes already experienced by some target groups can give confidence that more of such positive impacts can result by the end of the program. A few examples of these are:

- Farmers who have successfully applied SA or AE techniques are reaping the benefits of healthier crops, increased income, improved soil quality and a cleaner environment around their farms.
- AC members who started producing seed instead of paddy rice received higher profits (even after taking into consideration time spent) than before when they only produced paddy rice.
- Although still relatively new, SHG members value the easy access to loans from their savings groups (at a competitive rate compared to private money lenders) which they have been able to use to set up or expand their small business activities. Even for those who did not yet borrow, knowing they have savings on hand in case of emergency gives them a sense of security.

#### IV.4.7 Extent to which benefits may be sustained

##### Support through ACs:

Even though ACs face a number of challenges, the majority of ACs continue to function after formation. Only a minority of ACs formed to date have disbanded. For those who did cease activities, the most common reason was migration of members. As long as the members remain active in the village, the AC continues to function. Thus the actions under this program targeted at ACs are likely to be sustained. The Uni4coop program has incorporated a number of activities that can influence the scale and diversity under which these ACs may continue. For example, capacity assessments conducted by FAEC have helped many ACs to understand the areas where they need to improve, thus enabling them to take action on these points; training by FAEC/FCFD specialists has improved the business plans of a number of ACs (and it is hoped many more before the end of the program); and diversification of activities to incorporate seed production has broadened AC scope and income. The challenging area, already discussed above, is access to external finance. If, during the remaining

<sup>14</sup> Eclasio comment: This is because expatriate manager moved out from Cambodia to HQ since August 2018 and cost is now being covered by HQ level; finance did not change that in the original budget. At the end, it is a gain for the project budget, because the costs under Belgian contract conditions is lower than of the Expatriate conditions. The gained difference will be used for mobilisation of further technical support to FAEC. Eclasio is in the process to assess FAEC needs for further technical expertise, and this will be mobilized from Cambodian local sources starting from early 2020. The recommendations from this MTR are being considered as part of this assessment, for instance we will mobilize resources to support FAEC developing more Specialist Trainers, and implementing an important plan of mobilizing these Specialist Trainers to reinforce AC capacities

years of the program, Eclasio and FAEC can identify sources of financial instruments with suitable conditions for ACs, this will considerably add to the sustainability of ACs (but will also require more support from FAEC/FCFD to ensure that ACs can adequately manage increased and diverse sources of finance and fulfill all conditions linked to such finance). Further issues related to FAEC/FCFD have been discussed under IV.1.1 above.

The issue of limited financing affects another challenge faced by ACs: competition with the private sector. This is particularly evident in their efforts to supply agriculture inputs (especially fertilizer). Competition among private sector companies makes prices competitive and ACs are finding it difficult to compete. Some ACs offer fertilizer on credit for members who don't have cash on hand to purchase but private companies are now offering the same credit options (often at similar rates of interest). It would be expected that free market competition among suppliers would reduce prices for farmers but AC members who have participated in study tours to neighboring countries say that the prices of fertilizer in those countries is lower than Cambodia. It would be interesting for Eclasio to conduct a study on the supply chain of main types of fertilizers to understand better where ACs could enter this supply chain in order to ensure that Cambodian farmers are paying the lowest price possible compared to farmers in neighboring countries.

Competition with the private sector is even more acute when it comes to trading in paddy rice. Middle-men acting on behalf of rice mills and other buyers have sufficient cash to pay farmers at the farm gate whereas ACs have to wait to sell before paying farmers as they don't have sufficient funds on hand. Selling at the farm gate is attractive for farmers as they get cash immediately and they don't have to transport their rice. But it also brings risks: the farmers depend on the middle-man to set the price (they have limited opportunity for negotiation); and the middle-man will determine the quality of the rice (which impacts on the price offered). It is unlikely that, in the short term, ACs will have the funds to compete with these buyers and it is important that they don't add another link to the supply chain – shortening the supply chain should be the objective not introducing another link in the chain; this would mean cutting out some player, preferably the middle-men. ACs can be most effective in negotiating with the main buyers in advance regarding quantity of rice available for sale, varieties, quality and price. Collective selling (single selling point) puts onus on the farmers for transport unless the AC has transportation means to collect from the farmers (which few ACs have at present) so the final selling price agreed needs to compensate for this additional cost plus the time waiting for buyers to pay.

Another general challenge to the long term sustainability of ACs is one of demographics. Many of the AC committee members are aging and youth are unwilling to take up these positions. The lack of youth involvement in AC management makes it more difficult to introduce technologies which can assist the efficiency of the ACs. Many ACs still don't have computer equipment (or some have but don't have the human resources to effectively make use of them). Even some larger ACs are maintaining complicated financial recording by hand when computers would ease their workload. Some have sufficient financial resources to hire staff to operate their computer but cannot find trained persons willing to do this work. It could be expected that if the salary offered was sufficiently attractive, it would be possible to identify suitable candidates in the future. In the meantime, although aging, many committee members have the capacity to develop basic computer skills. This could be an area where FAEC can provide training and support services to members who have equipment but lack the human resources to use the equipment for efficient management of their activities.

But ACs are not only dependent on support from Uni4Coop, many of the ACs interviewed during this MTR have support from other national programs. Significant among these is the support is being provided by the Rural Irrigation and Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project (RIARIP) being implemented by MAFF under the umbrella of the Ministry of Economy & Finance. Such support includes machinery necessary for rice seed production – including transplanting machines and seed drying and sorting machines. Members of the BUAC are also being supported by the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) which is promoting the production of rice with limited use of chemicals. These ACs have contracts with large rice mills to purchase the rice they produce.

#### Working with SHGs:

Unlike ACs discussed above, SHGs are less likely to continue once the program under which they were formed has closed. There are numerous examples around the country of SHGs formed under NGO programs that stopped functioning once the NGO program finished. And most of those SHGs accumulated their savings for long periods, revolving it in loans to members. Most of the SHGs formed under this program have a different understanding of SHG; their objective is to save for one year, loaning out the money during this duration, and then to repay all the savings and interest earned to members at the end of the year. Then they may start again for another year. This makes these SHGs even less likely to continue after the end of the program as there is no accumulation of capital over time so there is less commitment of members to the group. MB is trying to change that mentality but there is very short timeframe left in the program to do so effectively. But they have another 11 groups to form so if these can be formed in villages that have not yet been “contaminated” by bad practices and group cohesion and long term focus can be built in from the beginning, then those newer SHGs

may have better chance to sustain their activities after the end of the program. Alternatively, it may be better not to form any more SHGs but to focus on Production Groups (PGs) – see further on this under AE/SA below.

AE/SA:

There is little doubt that farmers who have already experienced the benefits of adopting AE/SA techniques should certainly continue – why would they stop if they are getting increased income? The issue with AE/SA is trying to ensure that more farmers replicate what those successful farmers have done. It is not enough to have a few environmentally sustainable farms surrounded by many farms with unsustainable practices (like an oasis in the desert!).

The beneficiaries in Takeo have already been selected but there is scope in Kampong Thom for further selection of farmers; the program is targeting at least 300 farmers for SA but (due to delays caused by the change of partner from MODE to MB) very few have been supported so far. It would be good if MB can concentrate the selection to a small geographic area rather than spreading the selection over too many communes/districts. A concentration of many SA farms close to each other will ensure more viable technical support, make it easier for farmers to learn from, and support, each other, and ultimately increase the potential for collective selling of the SA produce. These producers could then form PGs for different types of SA products (e.g. vegetable PG, chicken PG, or mixed PGs). As the program does not have plans for such PGs, forming these instead of more SHGs might be a more sustainable option. Agriculture PGs would also have more potential to form into ACs than SHGs (more focus on agriculture than credit).

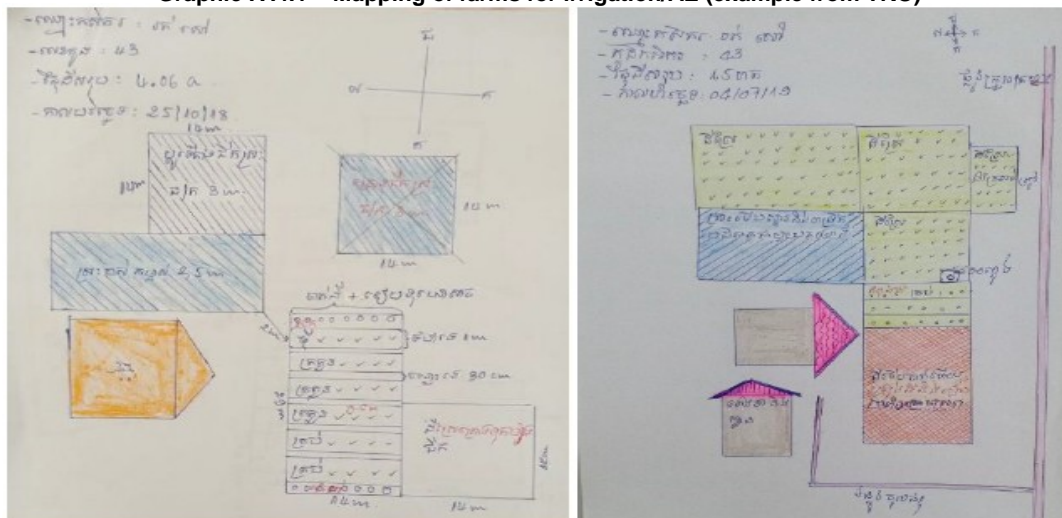
**IV.4.8 Potential for replication**

As with any program, anything that works well can be considered for replication if the appropriate conditions exist. Due to the low number of beneficiaries (and limited geographical coverage) involved in AE/SA during the course of this program, there is much scope to replicate the concept in other target areas of the partners. But it would be good if ECOLAND can conduct the study they propose on the socio-economic factors limiting confidence in AE/SA to date before any further replication. Understanding these socio-economic factors in advance may result in more successful implementation in the future.

The success of seed production by AC members should be largely self-replicating. Considering the large demand for quality seed throughout the country, it is likely that many more ACs will join this activity in the coming years.

One interesting tool used by ISC in the identification of small-scale irrigation inputs in Takeo was developing maps of the farms of the selected farmers. This is a good way to enable farmers to consider the best possible use of their land. An example below shows before (left side) and after (right side) maps for one of the farmers (Mr. Roth Sao) which shows his change in land use pattern after planning and inputs from ISC:

**Graphic IV.4.1 – Mapping of farms for irrigation/AE (example from TKO)**



This type of mapping is a good practice which should be incorporated into any future projects with AE/SA component (with or without small-scale irrigation support).



## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

### V.1 Conclusion

The TOR for this MTR was designed from a perspective that there were issues related to the overall partnership which needed to be explored. This partly stemmed from Eclasio's perceptions that the program partners did not meet Eclasio's desire for legitimacy. Another underlying issue was the question of division of program design into two Specific Objectives (SOs) whereas both SOs respond to the same Theory of Change designed for the Agriculture and Rural Economy aspect of the Uni4Coop program.

These issues have now been explored and the conclusion of the consultant is that overall the partnership is working well. Although Eclasio and LC largely implement two separation programs, there is good collaboration and sharing of lessons learnt and joint participation in workshops and other events to disseminate results from action research and other learning.

Regarding Eclasio's concerns about legitimacy and representation, it is the opinion of the consultant that NGOs (although without the elected mandate from target groups to represent them) are equally committed to meeting the needs of the target groups they represent. Naturally they can only do so with external funding support; but currently this is also the situation of representative associations.

On the issue of two SOs, there are historical reasons why this division came about (based on the historical experience and connections of Eclasio and LC from previous projects implemented in Cambodia). Actually implementing the Agriculture & Rural Economy aspects of the Theory of Change under two SOs gave the opportunity for both NGOs to work to their individual strengths and interests; neither one of the NGOs could have implemented the entire program without changing their current mode of operation – either they would have had to expand their human resources in order to closely monitor many partners or they would have had to devolve more to the partners. Based on the current strategic thinking for the next phase it is unlikely that one SO could be developed; it would seem more advantageous to again develop the program under two SOs.

In relation to the actual implementation to date, indications are that the results and objectives can be achieved by the end of the program. For SO1, there has been more progress to date than SO2. This is not unexpected as the change of partner during the second year was a disrupting event for the activities under SO2. But that is now moving forward after the new partner, Mlup Baitong, came on board. While there are a few issues listed under recommendations for program implementation, possible the most important is the suggestion not to form any more SHGs; if the program changes to formation of production groups (PGs) focused on agro-ecology (AE), they are more likely to be sustainable. Such groups can help the geographical concentration of farmers transitioning to AE where they can more easily receive the intensive support they need in the early stages (both from each other and from service providers).

### V.2 Recommendations

Recommendations from the consultant are divided into two sections – 1) Partnership issues and 2) Program issues:

SN	Issue to be addressed	Recommendation	To whom/when
1	<b>Partnership</b>		
1.1	ECOLAND raised an issue that some partners were not so active in the development phase of this Uni4Coop program. It is essential to the development of a strong partnership that all partners take full ownership of activities	To ensure full ownership of the next phase of the program, it is critical to identify the relevant partners early in the process so they can be fully involved in the development of the program proposal	Eclasio/LC – as soon as possible  [Steps are already being taken by Eclasio and LC]
1.2	The total budget is very small when spread over many partners, and many years. The implementation of SA by LC could have benefited from a more restricted geographical focus – more farmers in closer proximity rather than spread over many communes.	In developing the next phase of the program, reduce geographical focus of SA to ensure greater impact from funding	LC for new program development

SN	Issue to be addressed	Recommendation	To whom/when
1.3	More structured reflection would result if all partners (those of LC and Eclasio) had opportunities to meet more often to discuss their work with each other. This needs to take place at different levels – management staff have different issues to discuss than those operating at field level	Organize more reflection meetings for different groups (e.g. management, field staff) of partners (LC and Eclasio combined)	Eclasio/LC for current program implementation
1.4	Federations' mandate is to support their members' needs. This includes providing technical agriculture training when requested, business planning services, identifying potential financing opportunities and potential markets for members' produce, as well as advocating on their behalf with government and other relevant stakeholders. Unfortunately the capacity assessment conducted with FAEC by LC during this Uni4Coop program used the same format as that for NGO partners; the topics covered did not fully explore the key capacities that would enable the federation to fulfill the mandate described above	Develop a capacity assessment tool that is relevant to AC Federations (FAEC and FCFD) – CBA used for NGOs does not cover the required capacities (and includes some irrelevant ones)	LC/Eclasio for use by end of current program
1.5	Currently documentation (studies, research) of Uni4Coop activities is located in different places. It would be useful to collect all outputs from the program under one access point. As FAEC is a common partner for both ECLOSIO and LC, a portal on FAEC website or Facebook page would be a logical place to develop a Uni4Coop library. Alternatively, such an information portal could be established by RUA-ECOLAND	Support FAEC (or ECOLAND) to create knowledge website to collect and share all documents produced under Uni4Coop – a wider Khmer audience may access studies and research posted on such a site compared to the number who may access ECLOSIO or LC websites.	ECLOSIO or LC before end of current program
1.6	It is unclear what data will be used for measurement of the indicators at objective level: SO1: The target percentage suggests that target families' income will not only increase by 25% but will increase by 25% more than non-target families. The baseline does not mention which data is being used for non-target families – will national statistics be used for this? SO2: Similar issue for the second indicator	In order to prepare data for end of program evaluation, Eclasio and LC need to confirm the sources of comparative data for indicators at objective level	Eclasio/LC before end of program evaluation takes place
1.7	In order to allow sufficient time for capacity building, it is critical to ensure that the formation of new groups takes place in the early stages of the program. This also applies to monetary or physical support (e.g. agriculture interventions). Therefore program budgets need to be designed on a sliding scale, with most of the physical inputs taking place in the first half of the program	In designing the next phase, key project inputs (or group formation) should be planned for the first half of the program (with appropriate budget allocation)	Eclasio/LC for new program development
1.8	Currently budget amounts are re-negotiated with partners each year – but sometimes it can be well into the new year before exact budget is known. This makes it very difficult for partners to plan	Annual budget planning should be speeded up (finalized by end December of current year) so that partners are clear on amounts by the start of the new year	Eclasio and LC (annual action)

SN	Issue to be addressed	Recommendation	To whom/when
1.9	Even though budgets are agreed annually, partners have to make separate requests in order to access these budgets (quarterly for LC partners and monthly for Eclasio partners). Linked to this partners also have to scan all their invoices to Eclasio/LC. This treats partners more like contractors than real partners.	Contracts with partners should stipulate rate of release of funds (linked to plans). Transfers should then be made without further need to request.  Both Eclasio and LC should accept finance reports without copying invoices (this would respect partner independence and demonstrate trust)	Eclasio and LC for current project implementation
<b>2</b>	<b>Program</b>		
2.1	Most of the SHGs do not show willingness to continue to build up finances; rather they see the group as a short-term saving mechanism which they will close every year and start again	LC/MB should consider not forming any more SHGs; instead focus on production groups (PGs) of farmers in close proximity to each other to transition to SA	LC/MB for current program phase
2.2	There is still insufficient numbers of specialists and service providers considering the large number of AC and SHG members  For SO1, the program aims for 55 by the end of the program but only 24 trained so far. More challenging is increasing the numbers of women and youth among these. Those numbers currently fall very short of the targets	Assist FAEC/FCFD to increase the number of specialists (with more emphasis on women and youth) to provide services to AC members  Select and train additional service providers/model farmers to support SA	Eclasio during current program  MB/FAEC during current program
2.3	Regarding quantity of services provided (SO1), the program has not established any mechanism to measure this. It should be possible for each service provider to keep an account of the number of times they provide various services to each AC (or AC member). This should be put in place immediately and data should be collected monthly by FAEC and FCFD for reporting to Eclasio	Assist FAEC and FCFD to develop system for specialists/service providers to record details of services provided so that information can be reported as per indicator	Eclasio during current program
2.4	MODE final report suggested that 16 out of 18 vegetable growers were still practicing SA techniques such as composting and biological fertilizer. But now the groups they belonged to are no longer a target of MB so it is not clear if any of these families continue to practice – it would be good to know if SA practice continued after project staff no longer visited them	Suggest that if MB has the time and resources, it would be good to follow up on the 16 farmers reported by MODE as still practicing SA – it would indicate whether families may continue to practice SA even if project staff no longer visit or support them	MB during current program phase (if resources allow)
2.5	ECOLAND is interested to explore further the socio-economic reasons why SA/AE is not being adopted more despite the obvious benefits to health, economy and the environment. Such a study would be very useful and should be supported by the Uni4Coop program	Support additional research by ECOLAND on socio-economic factors influencing the adoption (or non-adoption) of AE/SA	LC – for new program phase (if insufficient time or resources in current program)

SN	Issue to be addressed	Recommendation	To whom/when
2.6	Banks/MFIs in Cambodia are risk-averse institutions. This makes them reluctant to trust ACs as they don't have track record and many have no collateral to put up as guarantee. Venture Capital institutions are more willing to take risks but few options in Cambodia or SEA)	Eclosio/LC to use their connections in Europe to explore other possible sources of venture capital (as limited options in Cambodia or SEA)	Eclosio/LC during current program phase <i>Note: Eclosio plan to contact TRIDOS; LC has also made some connections (e.g. KAMPANI)</i>
2.7	The issue of limited financing affects another challenge faced by ACs: competition with the private sector (especially for fertilizer supply). Cambodian farmers currently pay higher prices than farmers in neighboring countries.	Eclosio should commission a study on the supply chain of main types of fertilizers to understand better where ACs could enter this supply chain in order to ensure that Cambodian farmers are paying the lowest price possible compared to farmers in neighboring countries	Eclosio (or RUA-ECOLAND?) during current phase if resources can be made available (if not, plan for new phase)

The recommendations above are of course the opinions of the external consultant. It is up to Eclosio/LC and partners to discuss these internally within their management teams to decide which, if any, are appropriate to take on board. The consultant hopes that, even if not accepted in full, the recommendations will offer the opportunity for discussion which will lead to appropriate future actions.

### Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the consultant takes this opportunity to thank all those who gave up their valuable time to take part in this MTR exercise. Special thanks to the community members who participated freely and were very open in sharing their views on the program. The consultant hopes that donors will appreciate the considerable achievements of the program and will continue to support the Uni4Coop partnership and their target communities to ensure continued improvement to their livelihoods.

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### A.1 CONTEXT OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR):

In 2016, four Belgian University NGOs (ECLOSIO (formally named ADG-Aide au Développement Gembloux), FUCID, Louvain Coopération, and ULB Coopération) have decided to join forces and strengthen their synergies through the creation of the entity “Uni4Coop” and the mutual engagement in the implementation of one common program funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation (named as DGD in this file). Within the framework of this five-year Uni4Coop program (2017-2021)<sup>1</sup>, two evaluations are planned: a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2019 and a Final Evaluation in 2021.

In Cambodia the Uni4Coop Program is implemented by two of the four Belgian University NGOs, ECLOSIO and Louvain Coopération (LC). The first step undertaken to set up the program was a context analysis<sup>2</sup> that gathered inputs from all the different Belgian ANGC (Actors of Non-Governmental Cooperation) engaged in Cambodia that was ensued by a Joint Strategic Framework<sup>3</sup> that foreseen common strategies and objectives for each of the sectorial interventions to be supported by DGD. The Context Analysis presents an analysis of the situation of the Cambodian civil society, the decentralized authorities and the government institutions and elements for promoting circumstances of their strengthening. It led to the description of the different actors identified for intervening in the development of the sectors, including partnership, synergies and complementarities.

The Uni4Coop program in Cambodia is tackling two sectors, the Health and the Agriculture / Rural Economy; while ECLOSIO is involved in the agriculture and economic sector, LC is involved in the health sector and in the agriculture and economic sector. The Uni4Coop program is divided in Specific Objectives (SO) by country, by sector and by NGO. These ToRs aim to specify the scope of the Mid-Term Evaluation to be performed in Cambodia for the agriculture and economic sector. The Specific Objectives as formulated in the five-year program are:

	Specific Objectives	Partner <sup>4</sup> ; Synergy/collaboration
Eclosio	Small-scale family farmers and their family members strengthen their capacities to achieve food sovereignty, to defend their interests and to generate pro-poor growth	Partners: CIRD, FAEC, ISC, BUAC, TUAC Collaborations: WWF, FCFD, DACP, NF3, ALiSEA
LC	The food and economic security and the level of organization of vulnerable rural populations have improved in a sustainable way.	Partners: FAEC, RUA-ECOLAND Research Center, MB Collaborations: GRET, ITM, ALiSEA, UCLouvain, DEMETER, LMT

Even if ECLOSIO and LC are working on different logic of intervention, they wish to organize a common evaluation regarding the mid-term review. It is to be noted that both are working with a common partner, FAEC “Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives”.

In December 2018, Eclosio and LC undertook to evaluate their common partnership with FAEC. The exercise did not succeed to achieve the expected outcomes; however, interesting lessons learned have been retrieved from it<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Annex 1: Uni4Coop Program Commun Cambodge

<sup>2</sup> Annex 2: Cambodia Context Analysis

<sup>3</sup> Annex 3: JSF Cambodia

<sup>4</sup> Annex 4: Brief description of partners

<sup>5</sup> Annex 5: Minutes Wrap-up Meeting MTR 2018 KHM

Another important contextual element is the start of the preparatory work of the next five-year program 2022-2026, which is due to combine LC and ECLOSIO actions under one single Specific Objective in the agricultural and economic sector. Conclusions retrieved from this Mid-Term Review will be used for the organization of the scope and planning of the future Uni4Coop program in Cambodia in common between LC and ECLOSIO.



**Intervention provinces of the common program of UNI4COOP in Cambodia (Agriculture & Economic sector)**

All the specific objectives of the Uni4Coop program will be the subject of an end-of-project evaluation of the "accountability" type. Because of the strong will to undertake an evaluation on common grounds between the two partners, LC and Eclasio, this intermediate evaluation will focus on partnership relationships, an issue that is commonly experienced with difficulties in Cambodia.

## A.2 OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND USE OF THE EVALUATION

### A.2.1 OBJECTIVES:

The Mid-Term Review will have four objectives:

- Review the achievements of the global partnership strategy of LC and Eclasio in Cambodia as described in the Uni4Coop Program Document
- Appreciate the quality and performance of the partnership relations that exist between ECLOSIO, LC and their 5 local partners' structures in the execution of the program
- Appreciate the institutional capacities (understood in the sense of appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, not directly related to the program) of the partners agreeing to participate in the exercise
- Propose recommendations and suggestions for improvement in the short-term (last two years of the 2017-2021 Program) and in the medium term (Preparation of the second phase of the 2022-2026 strategic framework) regarding partnership relationships.

#### A.2.2 MAIN USERS:

- Louvain Cooperation and its partners in Cambodia.
- ECLOSIO and its partners in Cambodia
- DGD and other donors
- UNI4COOP and JSF: conclusions and lessons learned will be shared with other ACNGs.

#### A.2.3 PERIOD CONCERNED BY THE REVIEW:

In a general matter, the evaluation will focus on the current Uni4Coop Program, which commenced in January 2017. In addition, the evaluation will also consider the review of previous actions, more specifically lessons learned from the MTR<sup>6</sup> of the previous ECLOSIO program 2012-2017 and the Final Evaluation of LC program 2008-2016 in Cambodia that both provide indications on partnership relationships.

#### A.3 GLOBAL APPROACH

This is an external evaluation. The theme on which this MTR focuses was retrieved from elements of common thoughts between LC and ECLOSIO in Cambodia based on the issues faced in regard to partnership. The first draft of these ToRs was prepared in common between the two NGOs and in collaboration with local partners. Finally, the Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation of Uni4Coop made recommendations on the formulation of evaluation questions and the choice of methods and tools.

As being required in accordance with the administrative procedure, the MTR' ToRs were submitted for validation to the DGD.

#### A.4 LEAD QUESTIONS OF THE MTR

ECLOSIO and LC have the obligation by DGD to implement their activities through local partnership with the main argument put forward being the sustainability of the action. However, the particular nature of the Civil Society in Cambodia, as described in the analysis of the states of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Cambodia in the EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society<sup>7</sup>, and other articles and reports, nuance and mitigate this assumption of sustainability outreach.

#### **LQ1: To what extent have the partnerships developed by LC and Eclasio helped to create added values and to strengthen the institutional capacities of each partner?**

- a) Are CSO' partners sufficiently organizationally and financially sustainable to ensure durability of the actions?*
- b) To what extent is the partnership relevant to achieving the vision and mission of the partner institutions?*
- c) Does the capacity building of the partners remain viable and less dependent on external technical support?*
- d) To what extent the partnership enabled the reach of further collaborations, synergies, networking?*
- e) Did partners succeed to participate together to policy formulation and reform process conducive of a better environment for CSOs in Cambodia?*
- f) Did partners succeed to participate together to knowledge management processes and to increase their reflection about their actions?*

<sup>6</sup> Annex 6: Rapport Final-ADG Evaluation Partenariale ADG-CIRD et ADG

<sup>7</sup> Annex 7: EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Cambodia

**LQ2: What is the understanding of each partner of what is a partnership approach?**

- a) *What are the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership, the factors of success, the difficulties encountered, and the solutions made to solve them?*
- b) *Can we only talk about common interests in the partnership or are LC and Eclasio building a common and shared goal, objective or perspective with each of their partner which is different from each individual organization's objectives or problems they are facing?*
- c) *What are the partners feeling they receive or benefit from the partnership with Eclasio or LC?*
- d) *What are they contributing which is seen as a resource from other partners?*

These three dimensions (sharing - giving - receiving) should be explored for each of the partners of LC and Eclasio.

**LQ3: What are LC and Eclasio's approaches in the field of agroecology and the support of rural economy development in Cambodia?**

- a) *What are the commonalities and the main differences between these approaches?*
- b) *Is the current situation organized around two set of partnerships with two distinct structures the one to pursue? If so, how should it be organized and shared between LC & Eclasio?*
- c) *Or should the specific objectives of the two organizations be pooled in a single goal with a common operational structure? And how should the roles and responsibilities be shared?*
- d) *Are there additional structures or organizations, networks working in the same field with whom partnerships should be considered to reinforce the collaboration between LC and Eclasio?*

## A.5 METHODS AND TOOLS

The choice of the methodology is left to the evaluator, including in terms of the time to be given to each question.

The evaluator will propose information gathering tools and a methodology based on his particular professional knowledge, which can be refined during the preparatory work meeting for his field mission. S•he must specify in the submission of his technical offer the various information gathering tools that he will use, in particular to ensure a triangulation thereof and methods of processing and analysis thereof.

We draw attention to the fact that the partners and beneficiaries to be interviewed speak for the majority in their local language and that we want to know how and why the partners are more or less involved in the partnerships and therefore question the theories of intervention.

## A.6 REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

The consultant will have the following skills:

- Solid experience in evaluation of development projects;
- Proven expertise in institutional strategy, organizational reinforcement, institutional diagnosis
- Common practice of participatory evaluation methods;
- Abilities in the program working language of English and excellent writing skills in that language; notion of Khmer language is an asset;
- Knowledge of the area of intervention and experience in working with local Cambodian context in the field of environment, sustainable agriculture practices,



- micro-business development, farmers organizations and relevant policies and strategies and
- Sensitivity to the themes of gender and environment;

## A.7 BUDGET

The maximum budget available is 15,500 EUR including tax.

These amounts cover all the costs related to the evaluation (fees, international and local transportation, accommodation and per diem, visa, organization of workshops ...), with the following exceptions:

- The program will make one vehicle available for major trips during the field visits but not for the travel within Phnom Penh.

## A.8 MODALITIES FOR SELECTION AND CONTRACT

A contractual document will be established for the evaluation. Fees will be paid in three installments: 40% upon signature of the contract, 30% upon submission of the provisional report and 30% after approval of the final report, the quality of which will be assessed by the steering committee on the basis of a grid of appreciation (available on request).

Per diems will be paid at the start of the mission on the basis of a declaration of claim. The other expenses will be paid on the basis of the delivery of the ad hoc supporting documents.

The service will be subject to two invoices, one in the name of ECLOSIO and the other in the name of Louvain Cooperation. The distribution modalities between the two NGOs will be determined at the signing of the contract or at the latest at the end of the framework meeting.

The evaluator will report to both NGOs, ECLOSIO and LC.

The contract will take into account the costs invoiced to ECLOSIO and LC.

## A.9 MODALITIES OF THE EXPERTISE:

### A.9.1 CONTENT OF THE TECHNICAL OFFER

Proposals must provide the following:

- an understanding of the ToRs, as well as how the context and the evaluation questions were understood in relation to the theory of change of each organisation;
- a description of the methodological approach envisaged to answer the questions and objectives set out in these ToRs, detailing the information collection tools that it wishes to mobilize during its evaluation;
- a provisional chronogram of the mission;
- a presentation of the expert(s) highlighting the aspects particularly relevant to the intended evaluation;
- the profile of the expert (s) (max 3 pages per CV); and
- a detailed budget (in Euros) of the service.

### A.9.2 MODALITIES FOR THE SELECTION OF THE EVALUATOR(S)

Technical and financial offers should be sent electronically to [info-cam@louvaincooperation.org](mailto:info-cam@louvaincooperation.org)

The assessment of the proposals will follow:

Criteria	Score
Profile of the expert(s)	50
- Qualifications, experiences and skills	25

- Experience of the problem to be evaluated	15
- Knowledge of the local context	10
Technical and methodological offer	30
- Presentation of the problem and understanding of the subject	15
- Proposed methodological approach	15
Financial offer	20
- Price of the service	10
- Realism of costs in relation to the proposed methodology	10
Total	100

### A.9.3 DOCUMENTS TO CONSULT

#### For drafting the offer:

Annex 1: Uni4Coop Common Programme Cambodia

Annex 2: Cambodia Context Analysis

Annex 3: JSF Cambodia

Annex 4: Brief description of partners

Annex 5: Minutes Wrap-up Meeting MTR 2018 KHM (available upon request)

Annex 6: Final Report ADG Evaluation Partnerships ADG-CIRD and ADG-KSV (available upon request)

Annex 7: EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Cambodia (available upon request)

Reference for communication: [info-cam@louvaincooperation.org](mailto:info-cam@louvaincooperation.org)

#### After selection:

After selection, the project will make the following documents available to the consultant (s) retained:

- The project document;
- Technical reports;
- Partnership management and evaluation tools developed as part of the project and previous projects.

### A.9.4 MODALITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FIELD WORKS

The evaluator will provide:

- A framework meeting in Cambodia following which, before his departure on the ground, he will write a scoping note in case the contours of the mission were to be reviewed on the basis of the knowledge of the documentation which will be delivery and the first exchanges conducted at the offices of both organizations.
- Restitution meetings with local teams and partners of ECLOSIO and Louvain Cooperation.
- A post-evaluation meeting when the managerial response has been formulated by ECLOSIO and Louvain Cooperation whose location will be agreed at that time.

The Eclosio and Louvain Cooperation operational teams based in the intervention countries will be available to facilitate the smooth running of the evaluation (contacts, general information, logistical assistance ...).

**A.9.5 FORESEEN DELIVERABLES**

- ✓ An evaluation report;
- ✓ A 5-Page summary of the report;
- ✓ An accessible summary document for ECLOSIO and LC members, beneficiaries, the general public and donors that presents the key findings, lessons learned and recommendation of the evaluation, with illustrations (diagrams, photos, graphics, drawings, etc.) and at least one beneficiary's testimony; and
- ✓ A restitution report using Power Point format.

The documents will be written in the working language of the country of intervention, English. These documents will be sent in electronic format. A hard copy of the final version of the report will also be provided.

Each report (provisional and final) will be constructed as follows:

- 5-page summary of key findings and recommendations;
- Objectives;
- Background;
- Definition of the main concepts used;
- Methodological approach and its justification and the constraints encountered;
- Assessment of the understanding of the logic of intervention / theory of change;
- Observations and results of the evaluation based on the ToRs and above lead questions;
- Answers to evaluation lead questions with reference to the sources of information used;
- Concrete and operational reasoned recommendations, to be implemented later in the program or in future interventions;
- Conclusions;
- Appendices: Anonymous raw data

The report will separately present findings, conclusions and recommendations, and lessons learned using a logical approach. Any underlying analysis will be formulated explicitly.

**A.9.6 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

The planned period for carrying out the evaluation mission is September - October 2019.

Process	Deadlines
Publication of the call for tenders	12 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Deadline for additional questions (only in writing)	29 <sup>th</sup> August 2019
Submission of bids	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Selection of the evaluator	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Information of the selected evaluator	12 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
Signature and start of the contract	Mid-September 2019
Period of the evaluation	September - October 2019
Delivery of the provisional report	Before the restitution to the local teams
Delivery of the final report	Maximum one month after the field visits
Meeting on managerial response and how to publish the evaluation.	To be determined

**Annexes :**

Annex 1: Uni4Coop Program Commun Cambodge

Annex 2: Cambodia Context Analysis

Annex 3: JSF Cambodia

Annex 4: Brief description of partners

Annex 5: Minutes Wrap-up Meeting MTR 2018 KHM

Annex 6: Rapport Final-ADG Evaluation Partenariale ADG-CIRD et ADG

Annex 7: EU Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Cambodia

## Mid-term Review of Uni4Coop Program Cambodia (Agriculture and Rural Economy Sector)

### Guiding Questions for FGDs and KIs

### CONTENTS

Q #	Respondents	PNP	TKO	KPT	PVG
A1	Implementing NGOs (ECLOSIO & LC)	x			
A2	Specific issues to follow up with ECLOSIO and LC	x			
B1.1	Implementing partners (CIRD, FAEC, ISC, MB)	x		x	
B1.2	Implementing partners (clarify specific technical issues)	x			
B2.1	Stakeholders – FCFD				x
B2.2	Stakeholders – DACP (MAFF-GDA)	x			
B2.3	Stakeholders – RUA-ECOLAND (Chamkar Doung University)	x			
C1.1	Agriculture Cooperatives/Farmer Association – committees		x	x	x
C1.2	Agriculture Cooperatives/Farmer Association – members		x	x	x
C2.1	Self-Help Groups (SHG) – committees			x	
C2.2	Self-Help Groups (SHG) – members			x	
C3.1	Model Farmers (MF)			x	
C3.2	Alternative Income Generation (IGA)			x	
D1	Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDAFF)		x	x	x
D2	Members of NF3 (FNN, FWN)	x		x	

## **A.1 Implementing agencies – ECLOSIO and LC**

### **1. General:**

- a. *Run through clarifications and technical questions attached (A.2)*
- b. What were the criteria for partner selection? How was this carried out? Do you think the most appropriate partners/stakeholders were identified for this program? If not, who else could have been included?
- c. Discuss program management/monitoring system (at different levels – overall, ECLOSIO/LC, partners, beneficiary groups)

### **2. Concept:**

- a. Do you see any differences between the approach of ECLOSIO and LC regarding how to support rural economy development in Cambodia? What about in the approach to AE?
- b. Do you see the Uni4Coop program in Cambodia as one integrated action (explain)? How close are the overall goals of ECLOSIO and LC to each other?
- c. Could the program be developed under one single Objective (if so, how would that impact on the management structure/roles and responsibilities)? What does ECLOSIO offer that LC cannot – and visa-versa?

### **3. The partnership:**

- a. What do you see as the main strengths (and, if any, weaknesses) of the partnership in general? And specifically, strengths/weaknesses of partnership with 1) LC/ECLOSIO and 2) with local partners? What about links to the other 2 Uni4Coop NGOs (Fucid, ULB Cooperation)?
- b. What do you think has been the main contribution of each partner (staffing/technical knowledge, financial resources, etc.) to the implementation of the program?
- c. What difficulties, if any, have been encountered (and how were these addressed)?
- d. In what ways has the relationship with partners helped you to broaden its range of networks or other collaborations?
- e. To what extent have capacity building activities changed the way partners work?
- f. How frequently has ECLOSIO organized reflection meetings with partners? Have you seen any change in the way partners reflect on their work over the duration of the program?
- g. In what ways has knowledge been shared among partners and what has been the result of this?
- h. Do you think partners will continue after the end of the program? Why/why not? If continue, in what ways could their future actions be improved due to experience with this program?

### **4. Implementation:**

- a. What do you see as the main impact of the program (benefits to the target groups; other impact)?
- b. Regarding achievements to date, what do you think were the main reasons that led to these achievements?
- c. What obstacles, if any, have been faced in implementation to date (and how were these addressed)?
- d. Are you satisfied with the level of costs of partner activities? If not, in what areas do you think they could be more economical?
- e. In what ways do you think that results to date (and results expected to be achieved by the end of the project) can be sustained? What has the program done to ensure this potential for sustainability?
- f. Are there aspects of the program that indicate possibilities for replication? If so, what aspects and under what conditions?

### **5. Suggestions/recommendations:**

Do you have any final suggestions or recommendations for changes (during current program or for future program)?

## **A.2 Specific questions for ECLOSIO and LC**

### **1. ECLOSIO:**

Provinces for UPSCALE (11 provinces): Takeo, Kampong Speu, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Batambong, Kampot, Siem Reap, Otdor Meanchey, Stueng Treng, Kampong Cham and Kampong Thom (check how UPSCALE differs from Uni4Coop SO1)

Is FCFD registered as NGO or what is legal status?

CIRD – institutional analysis 2013 (have recommendations been followed)

Check in what ways MFR has been involved to date

AC-database finished data entry (student from RUA-ECOLAND to enter data)

AC financing – access to RDB; other options

SCM of AC capacity – is this tool only used by FAEC or also by FCFD

CBA tool LC used for FAEC and MB assessments (did ECLOSIO also use this for own partners)

CRA techniques (different techniques and viability of each)

PGS is fully functional (is this certification body for seed quality? who is responsible for quality control)

Bokashi fertilizer – how to ensure intellectual property right over the formula

Finance reports – consolidation per result (AR's in different formats)

### **2. LC:**

(IAR 2018): FAEC name change (to Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives) – why necessary to change name when re-registering

Main issues around change of partner from MODE to MB

Baseline survey (possible impact from delay in conducting) – explain process

South Engineer (SE) students – check collaboration (who are SE and who do they collaborate with)

Check beneficiary number – PD has 9448 beneficiaries (about 2000 families) - SHG members currently about 2200 persons (496 members)

SAP/GAP – similar approaches (have LC had any links with MAFF on Cam-GAP)

How practical do you think the EIT tool is for target beneficiaries (ease of understanding/use) – we see MODE applied for 6 cases; has MB since conducted any more

Tool used for SHG assessment

## **B1.1 Implementing partners – FAEC / CIRD / ISC / MB**

### **1. General:**

- a. Give short background to the formation of your organization and activities prior to Uni4Coop
- b. How did you come to know LC and/or ECLOSIO?
- c. In what ways did you participate in the design of the Uni4Coop program?
- d. What are the specific responsibilities of your organization in the Uni4Coop program?
- e. Did you take part in the design (develop TOR) for this MTR? Do you know the objectives?

### **2. Goal convergence**

- a. What are your overall vision, mission and goal? Who are your main target groups?
- b. In what ways does the Uni4Coop program contribute to achieving your goal?
- c. In what areas does your goal match those of ECLOSIO and LC? Are there any areas of difference (if so, in what ways)? [*Check in particular approach to AE and rural economy improvement*]
- d. (FAEC only): The Uni4Coop program has 2 SOs; do you think these could be combined into one? If so, what impact, if any, would it have for FAEC? And who should best coordinate the SO?

### **3. Partnership**

- a. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of this partnership (overall)? What about the specific relationship between your organization and LC/ECLOSIO?
- b. Did your organization already know the other partners before starting the Uni4Coop program?
- c. How often do all partners meet (when, where, and about what)?
- d. What capacity building activities has your organization received through the program (what, and from whom – and how has this impacted on the way you work)?
- e. Apart from capacity building, what other benefit(s) has your organization received from partnering on this program?
- f. What has been the main contribution of your organization to the program (human resources, technical, networks, financial, etc.)?
- g. From which partners have you learned the most (and which partners do you think learnt most from your organization)? How did such learning take place?

### **4. Implementation**

#### **[General questions – see specific technical questions for each partner attached]**

- a. What do you see as the main impact of the program (in relation to benefits to the target groups)?
- b. Regarding achievements to date, what do you think were the main reasons that led to these achievements?
- c. What obstacles, if any, have been faced in implementation to date (and how were these addressed)?
- d. Have there been any delays in the implementation of the program compared to plans? If so, what were the causes of these delays?
- e. Are you satisfied with the level of costs allocated to partners?
- f. In what ways do you think that results to date (and results expected to be achieved by the end of the project) can be sustained? What has the program done to ensure this potential for sustainability? What about your organization specifically?
- g. Are there aspects of the program that could be replicated in other areas? If so, what aspects and under what conditions?

### **5. Suggestions/recommendations:**

Do you have any final suggestions or recommendations for changes (during current program or for future program)?



## **B1.2 Implementing partners – (clarify specific technical issues)**

### **FAEC**

Explain role of FAEC in SO2 (seems SO2 mostly focuses on SHGs; there is little reference to ACs/FOs yet) – where does FAEC link with MB?

SO1: Result 5 (FAEC services) – explore issues (e.g. those reported below)

Rice seed: Another example, sometime the provincial representative report that there is no seed remaining but when check with AC and producers, there are still a lot of seed in their stock. **The inventory control and reporting system need to be improved in 2019.**

In 2018, This fertilizer service reaches to 17 ACs in 4 provinces. FAEC facilitate 175 tons of fertilizer slightly increase from 2017, which is 132 tons. However, this number is still low compare to the planning due to drought in Prey Veng and Svay rieng, a lot of ACs has problem in cash flow and decide to hold the business, and **many local competitions to the cooperative** who offer the same kind of fertilizer.

Paddy rice trading: More importantly, the **price of paddy is changing** many times a day, requiring regular update and negotiation with buyers requiring high cost of operation. The program decides to stop the activities for a while and waiting if any better strategy to help them.

### **CIRD**

Institutional analysis conducted in 2013 (COTA) – what do CIRD feel about the recommendations and what has changed since

### **ISC**

Follow up on duration of contract – why stopped half way through program

## **B2.1 Implementing stakeholders – FCFD (Prey Veng)**

### **1. General:**

- a. Give short background to the formation of FCFD and activities prior to Uni4Coop
- b. If not already reported under (a): How many ACs/FOs are currently members of FCFD? What are the criteria for membership? What services does FCFD provide?
- c. How did FCFD come to know FAEC and ECLOSIO?
- d. What are the specific responsibilities of FCFD in the Uni4Coop program? Does FCFD have a contract/MOU (if so, with whom and what costs, if any, are reimbursed)?

### **3. Cooperation**

- a. How would you describe the similarities (or differences) between FCFD and FAEC?
- b. What capacity building activities has FCFD received through the Uni4Coop program (what, and from whom – and how has this impacted on the way you work)?
- c. Apart from capacity building, what other benefit(s) has FCFD received from partnering on this program?
- d. What has been the main contribution of FCFD to the program (human resources, technical, networks, financial, etc.)?
- e. Is FCFD invited to Uni4Coop partner meetings (if so, how often; if not, are there other types of reflection meetings – with whom, about what)? Do you know all the partners well now?
- f. From which partners have you learned the most? And who do you think learnt most from FCFD?

### **4. Implementation**

- a. What do you see as the main impact of the program to date in relation to benefits to ACs/FOs?
- b. What do you think were the main reasons that led to these impacts?
- c. What obstacles, if any, have been faced in implementation to date (and how were these addressed)?
- d. Have there been any delays in the implementation of the program compared to plans? If so, what were the causes of these delays?
- e. Do you think that the costs incurred in implementation (by FCFD/others) are reasonable compared to the outputs?
- f. In what ways do you think that results to date (and results expected to be achieved by the end of the project) can be sustained? What does FCFD (or others) do to ensure this potential for sustainability?

### **5. Suggestions/recommendations:**

Do you have any final suggestions or recommendations for changes (during current program or for future program)?

## **B2.2 Implementing stakeholders – DACP (GDA)**

1. Since when has DACP known ECLOSIO/LC? How did they come to know each other?
2. Is there a contract or MOU between DACP and the Uni4Coop program (if so with whom, what are the responsibilities of DACP, and is there provision for cost reimbursement?)
3. In the context of the Uni4Coop program, what activities has DACP participated in to date?
4. Which other partners of the program does DACP know (and which do they work most closely with)?
5. Does DACP regularly attend reflection meetings about the program? If so, how frequently do they occur and how useful are they?
6. Is DACP kept regularly informed by ECLOSIO/LC about the overall progress (e.g. provide narrative, financial reports)?
7. What does DACP think about the role and capacity of FAEC and FCFD? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
8. How does DACP feel about the overall status of ACs/FOs in Cambodia right now? Are they an appropriate instrument to improve agriculture production and farmer income? What more should they be doing to further those goals?
9. Do you have any final suggestions or recommendations to ECLOSIO, FAEC or others (for current program or for design of future programs)?

## **B2.3 Implementing stakeholders – RUA-ECOLAND**

1. Since when has RUA-ECOLAND known ECLOSIO/LC? How did they come to know each other?
2. Is there a contract or MOU between RUA-ECOLAND and the Uni4Coop program (if so with whom, what are the responsibilities of RUA-ECOLAND, and is there provision for cost reimbursement?)
3. What is the overall goal/mission of RUA-ECOLAND and how does this converge with the goals of the Uni4Coop program?
4. In the context of the Uni4Coop program, what activities has RUA-ECOLAND participated in to date?
5. Which other partners of the program does RUA-ECOLAND know (and which do they work most closely with)?
6. Does RUA-ECOLAND regularly attend reflection meetings about the program? If so, how frequently do they occur and how useful are they?
7. Has the program enabled RUA-ECOLAND to develop any new links to other universities (e.g. Belgian universities)? If so, with whom and to what benefit?
8. Is RUA-ECOLAND kept regularly informed by ECLOSIO/LC about the overall progress (e.g. provide narrative, financial reports)?
9. Apart from what is already planned, are there other ways that RUA-ECOLAND could contribute more to the goals of the program (and at the same time achieve own goals)?
10. Do you have any final suggestions or recommendations to ECLOSIO, FAEC or others (for current program or for design of future programs)?

## **C1.1 AC/FO – Committee**

(Documents AC should have for reference – By-laws/R&R, latest Financial Report)

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### **A. General introduction**

1. Why did you decide to form a cooperative?
2. When was it formed? Who facilitated? How many members (M/F) – *check from starting to date (number of members per year)*?
3. Did the members pay membership fees and/or buy shares (if so how much per member) – *record number and value of shares per year since starting*?
4. Is the cooperative registered with the PDAFF? What is the management structure – management committee, monitoring/audit committee, etc. (# M/F)?
5. What are the main activities of the AC? Do these activities respond to main problems of members (are there other problems that AC cannot respond to – if so, why not)?
6. What external support, if any, has the AC received since formation?
7. Since when does the AC know FAEC and/or FCFD? How did the relationship come about?
8. What support have they received from each of these organizations? [*Check separately for each*]
9. How do they feel about the quality of this support? [*Check separately for satisfaction with each type of service provided*]

### **B. AC capacity**

10. What training (or study tours, other capacity building) received to date? From whom? How useful was the capacity building to them? Do they now feel capable of managing their AC (if not, in what aspects are they lacking capacity)?
11. Has ECLOSIO/FAEC conducted capacity assessment of the AC? What was the AC score? *Check if they have copy of the results.*
12. Do you think this type of assessment is useful to your AC (if so, in what way)?

### **C. AC implementation**

13. Has the AC made business plan (*if so, check copy*)? Has the AC been able to access sufficient finance to implement this plan – if not, what have been the main obstacles and how do they plan to address these?
14. Implementation: What has the AC done to date; main activities? How much did implementation cost (who paid)? If contributions from FAEC/ECLOSIO/others, will they have to repay these amounts?
15. Have any members of this AC started to move towards agro-ecology (AE) in their farming methods? If so, how many and what have they practiced? What has been the result? Does the AC feel that AE is a good strategy for farmers (if so, why; if not why not)?

### **D. Meetings and assemblies**

16. Has the AC organized annual assembly of members (if so, how often, who attended and is there a report available)? *Check latest report (and copy/record financial data)*
17. Do they pay out annual dividends to members at these assemblies (if so, what is the percentage of profits paid out in dividends)?

### **E. Issues and recommendations**

18. What are the main problems currently faced by the AC – in particular check any impacts from natural disasters and what steps, if any, members have taken to mitigate possible disaster impacts
19. How does the AC plan to address these problems?
20. Suggestions/recommendations for the future (and any specific recommendations for FAEC/FCFD/ECLOSIO in their support to the AC)

## **C1.2 AC/FO – Members**

1. Why did you decide to become a member of this cooperative? What were the conditions to become a member? Did you have to pay membership fees and/or buy shares (if so how much per member)?
2. What are the main problems faced by farmers (members of this AC)?
3. What are the main activities of the AC? Do these activities respond to main problems (are there other problems that AC cannot respond to – if so, why not)?
4. What other activities (if any) would you like your AC to do?
5. Does your AC pay out annual dividends to members at annual assemblies (if so, how much did you get per share each year since starting; and are you satisfied with this amount)?
6. How many of the AC members have access to irrigation? What types of irrigation (e.g. natural river or stream, constructed canal, ponds, DRIP, etc.) – and about what % of land can be irrigated (in wet season; in dry season)?
7. Have any members of this AC started to move towards agro-ecology (AE) in their farming methods? If so, how many and what have they practiced? What has been the result?  
*[Check in detail about activities of each member who has done]*
8. Do you think that AE is a good strategy for farmers (if so, why; if not why not)?
9. Did any of the AC members attend training on DRR/CCA? If so, when and from whom?
10. Do members of this AC have a Climate Change Mitigation plan? If so, what is included and what, if any, actions have been implemented to date?
11. Do members of this AC have waste disposal pit? Do you think waste is properly disposed of in general in your village?
12. What suggestions or recommendations do you have for your AC management (or others) to improve the agriculture production and income of your cooperative members?

## **C2.1 SHG – Committee**

### **Documents to review:**

- List of members (with gender, date joined)
  - Group rules & regulations
  - Member savings/loans books (individual) and group savings/loans records (all)
  - Minutes of SHG meetings
- 

### **Formation & membership:**

1. When was this group formed? What was the objective, and who facilitated?
2. How many members in this group (M/F)? What were the criteria for becoming a member? Have there been changes in membership since starting?

### **Structure & meetings:**

3. What is the structure of the group (e.g. leader, cashier, etc.)? Check gender of group leadership?
4. How were the committee chosen? What were the criteria? Have there been any changes since the start?
5. Does the group have written rules and regulations (*check copy*)? Can you list some of the main rules that you remember?
6. How often does the committee meet? Do they have attendance records/minutes of their meetings? *Check copy of attendance/minutes*
7. How often do all members meet? Are these meetings separate from committee meetings?
8. Have you had opportunity to have reflection meetings with other SHGs? If so, how often, and how useful were these?

### **Capacity building:**

9. What training has the committee received to enable them to carry out their duties (what was the content of the training; and who provided this training)?
10. Do they now feel capacitated to run their group – if not, what areas do they still need help with?
11. Did committee members receive any training on DRR/CCA? If so, have they disseminated to their members (or to others in the community)? What has changed as a result of dissemination?

### **Savings & credit:**

12. How often do members save (and how much do they save each time)? Is it difficult to find this money to save?
13. What are the group rules for providing credit to members?
14. Has the group received any outside funding to add to their own savings for revolving credit fund (if so, from whom, how much, and does it need to be repaid)?  
*[Copy latest financial update on savings and credit status]*

### **Other activities:**

15. Have any members started to practice Agro-Ecology (or Sustainable Agriculture) techniques in their agriculture activities)?
16. Have any new income generation possibilities been identified by members? If so what, and did they receive training on how to do (if so, by whom)?

### **Obstacles and impact:**

17. What obstacles, if any, has the group faced since formation – and how overcome these?
18. In what way has membership of the group helped members' lives (what has changed, how and why)

### **Future of group:**

19. Does this group intend to keep saving in the future (if so, why; if not, why not)?
20. Does the group have any plan to register as an AC/FO? If so, how could that help them? If not, why not?
21. Suggestions/recommendations for the future improvement

## **C2.2 SHG – Members**

### **Joining the group:**

1. How many members in this group (M/F)?
2. Why did you decide to become a member of this group?

### **Savings & credit:**

3. How often do members save (and how much do they save each time)? Is it difficult to find this money to save?
4. What are the group rules for providing credit to members?
5. What activities have you carried out with your loans? Are they profitable (*check each member*)?
6. Do all group members repay loans on time? If not, what happens?
7. Is the credit available enough to meet your needs? If not, how do you solve?

### **Other activities:**

8. Have any members started to practice Agro-Ecology (or Sustainable Agriculture) techniques in their agriculture activities)? If so, what techniques have they practiced? What training or other support did they get for this (from whom)? Do they have to repay the cost of any material support?
9. Did any of the group members attend training on DRR/CCA (if so, when, and from whom)?
10. Have any members developed a Climate Change Mitigation plan (if so, how many members and what kind of actions did they include in their plans)? Have any of them implemented activities from their Climate Change Mitigation plan – if so, what did they do?
11. How many group members have a waste disposal pit? Do you think waste is properly disposed of in general in your village?

### **Impact:**

12. In what way has membership of the group helped your livelihood (what has changed, how and why)

### **Future of group:**

13. Do you intend to continue with this group in the future (if so, why; if not, why not)?
14. Suggestions/recommendations for the future improvement



### **C3.1 Model farmers (MF)**

1. When were you selected as a MF? By whom? What were the criteria for selection?
2. What are your duties as a MF?
3. What kind of activities are you promoting as a MF (e.g. chicken hatchery, vegetable growing)?
4. What training did you receive to fulfill your role as MF (from whom, where, about what)?
5. Have you received training about Agro-ecology (AE)? If so, what do you think about the value of adopting AE techniques – what are the benefits (or difficulties)? Have you put any AE techniques into practice? If so, what did you do (and what has been the result)?
6. What material support did you receive? What was the cost of this – and do you need to repay this amount?
7. How is progress to date with your activity?
8. Have many other farmers been interested in what you are doing? Have any others started to replicate your methods?
9. Did you attend any training on DRR/CCA? If so, when and from whom?
10. Have you made a Climate Change mitigation plan (if so, what kinds of actions are included; and have you implemented any of these actions already)?
11. Do you have a waste disposal pit for rubbish? If not, how do you dispose of rubbish?
12. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for improving effectiveness of MFs?
13. Any other final suggestions or recommendations?

### **C3.2 IGA (alternative income generation)**

1. When were you selected for IGA? By whom? What were the criteria for selection?
2. What kind of activities are you doing? Is this new or extension of existing activity?
3. What training, if any, did you receive to help with this activity (from whom)?
4. What material support did you receive? What was the cost of this – and do you need to repay this amount?
5. How is progress to date with your activity? Are you making a profit (*check income and expenditure – see if they keep record of this*)
6. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for improving IGA in your village?
7. Any other final suggestions or recommendations?

## **D1 PDAFFs**

1. How many ACs currently registered in this province? Do you know how many of these are supported by FAEC/ECLOSIO – and where are they located?
  2. What has been the role of the PDAFF in the formation of the cooperatives
  3. After formation, how does the PDAFF support them (e.g. capacity building, technical support)?
  4. What additional support has FAEC/ECLOSIO given (does PDAFF feel this support has been adequate)?
  5. What kind of activities do these cooperatives carry out for their members
  6. What does the PDAFF feel are the main challenges faced by cooperatives (how can these challenges be overcome, and by whom)
  7. What have been the most important impacts of the cooperatives towards benefiting their members (give some concrete examples)
  8. What are the main lessons learnt by PDAFF in working with cooperatives to date (and in particular by cooperatives supported by FAEC/ECLOSIO)
  9. Suggestions/recommendations for the future improvement
- 

## **D2 FNN / FWN (members of NF3)**

1. Tell me a little bit about the background, mission/goal of your organization
2. When and how did you come to know ECLOSIO/LC (Uni4Coop program)?
3. Did you already know the other members of the NF3 network (FAEC, FCFD, FNN, CFAP and FWN) prior to the Uni4Coop program?
4. How did the NF3 network get started? What is the main aim of this network?
5. How does the Uni4Coop program help to achieve these goals?
6. What have you achieved to date as a group?
7. What obstacles, if any, have you faced?
8. What suggestions or recommendations do you have to ECLOSIO/LC (or others) to help improve the work of the network?
9. Any final suggestions or recommendations for future actions?

## List of persons who contributed information

SN	Category	Institution name	Location	Respondent name	Gender	Position	Telephone
1	Implementing NGO	Louvain	Phnom Penh	Amaury Peeters	M	Country Director	N/A
2	Implementing NGO	Louvain	Phnom Penh	Khem Thann	M	Program Manager	012 768 682
3	Implementing NGO	Louvain	Phnom Penh	Lim Kuntha	F	Admin & Finance Manager	098 988 116
4	Implementing NGO	ECLOSIO	via Telephone	Christophe Goossens	M	SEA Representative	048 528 8531
5	Implementing NGO	ECLOSIO	Phnom Penh	Im Sothy	F	Program Manager	012 401 407
6	Implementing NGO	ECLOSIO	Phnom Penh	Nhem Sokha	M	Senior Admin/finance Officer	088 8943 374
7	Partners	CIRD	Phnom Penh	Chiev Sonnary	F	Technical staff, seed production	089 553 403
8	Partners	CIRD	Phnom Penh	Chan Sokha	M	Senior Technical Advisor	012 584 715
9	Partners	CIRD	Phnom Penh	Nem Chan Moly	F	Finance & Admin Manager	012 976 973
10	Partners	FAEC	Phnom Penh	Pen Sony	M	Executive Director	099 690 556
11	Stakeholders	DACP	Phnom Penh	Chea Saintdona	M	Director of DACP	017 636 464
12	Partners	Mlup Baitong	Phnom Penh	Om Sophana	M	Executive Director	012 840 136
13	Partners	Mlup Baitong	Phnom Penh	Lee Rotha	M	Program Officer, Kg. Thom	097 233 9787
14	Partners	Mlup Baitong	Kampong Thom	Sok Lay	F	MB staff, Kg. Thom	097 544 3863
15	AC union	BUAC	Battambang	Yan Srey Yath	F	President	089 445 855
16	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Prak Sim	M	AC Chief	012 216 593
17	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Cheom Chan	M	AC Deputy	NA
18	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Chan Sophaon	M	Financial	NA
19	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Say Savon	M	Secretary	097 2745 272
20	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Nob Khorn	M	Monitoring	089 407 690
21	AC committee	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Pheom Phorn	M	Marketing	012 371 893
22	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Loeum Lorn	M	AC member	097 2810 768
23	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Im Davy	F	AC member	097 2019 719
24	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Ann Am	F	AC member	NA
25	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Kob Phaon	M	AC member	NA
26	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Reth Sarath	F	AC member	088 9264 316
27	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Hoeung Saren	F	AC member	060 701 414
28	AC member	Kear Meanchey	Kear, Moug Russei	Vann Nei	F	AC member	088 5347 586
29	AC committee	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Tep San	M	AC Chief	092 532 494
30	AC committee	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	San Ven	M	Secretary	077 872 728

## List of persons who contributed information

SN	Category	Institution name	Location	Respondent name	Gender	Position	Telephone
31	AC committee	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Phorng Phan	M	Deputy Monitoring	095 393 527
32	AC committee	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Hov Kimhong	F	Financial	095 555 845
33	AC member	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Yong Heng	M	AC member	012 428 616
34	AC member	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Nan Sokha	F	AC member	092 299 262
35	AC member	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Pich Thoeun	F	AC member	077 467 592
36	AC member	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	The Heng	M	AC member	088 8267 721
37	AC member	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Bay Damram, Banan	Inn Hov	M	AC member	NA
38	Stakeholders	PDAFF, BTB	Battambang	Kea Chhun	M	AC office of chief	012 560303
39	Stakeholders	PDAFF, BTB	Battambang	Tech Saravuth	M	AC office of deputy	012 571 860
40	Stakeholders	PDAFF, BTB	Battambang	Chhom Sopheaktra	M	AC office of officer	095 911 707
41	AC committee	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Yorn Sareth	M	AC Committee	012 381 904
42	AC committee	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Noun Chanboraksmei	F	AC Committee	011 654 528
43	AC committee	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Ong Hak	M	AC Chief	092 259 416
44	AC committee	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Horn Han	M	AC Deputy	092 881 646
45	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Sun Sopheap	F	AC member	077 704 248
46	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Neam Poeun roeun	F	Non-member joined	077 663 053
47	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Loy Roeut	M	Non-member joined	099 577 071
48	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Tuo Hoe	M	Non-member joined	071 4708 891
49	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Pel Sarith	F	Non-member joined	NA
50	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Lon Nimol	F	Non-member joined	096 6696 041
51	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Pich Rath	F	Non-member joined	NA
52	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Neam Chanrei	F	Non-member joined	NA
53	AC member	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Chrap Krasang, Wat Koh	Chhoun Mom	F	Non-member joined	NA
54	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Song Sorng	M	AC Chief	077 581 427
55	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Soun Leng	M	AC Committee	092 625 961
56	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Khoeun Lakhena	F	AC Committee	077 784 152
57	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Sen Channy	F	AC Committee	096 4437 349
58	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Seng Sitha	F	AC Committee	089 748 071
59	AC committee	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Sam Sinath	F	AC Committee	NA
60	AC member	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Sory Chom	M	AC member	096 7070 723

## List of persons who contributed information

SN	Category	Institution name	Location	Respondent name	Gender	Position	Telephone
61	AC member	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Roeum Socheth	M	AC member	077 837 996
62	AC member	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Hou Kimhak	F	AC member	096 5331 763
63	AC member	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Loun Sour	F	AC member	NA
64	AC member	Reang Kesei, Chamroeun Phal	Reang Kesei, Sangkae	Hy Srei	F	AC member	081 264 782
65	Partners	RUA-ECOLAND	Phnom Penh	Phoeurk Raksmeay	M	Research Assistant	098 700 601
66	Partners	RUA-ECOLAND	Phnom Penh	Neang Malyne	F	Researcher	077 220 147
67	Partners	RUA-ECOLAND	Phnom Penh	Sok Kimchin	M	Researcher	092 273 028
68	Partners	RUA-ECOLAND	Phnom Penh	Vorn Thary	F	Research Assistant	096 9268 809
69	Partners	ISC	Kampong Thom	Neang Leng	M	ISC staff member	092 345 627
70	Stakeholders	PDAFF-KPT	Kampong Thom	Siv Chhoeun	M	Chief of AC office	097 9917 445
71	SHG committee	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Prom Cheng Ly	F	Leader	092 164 593
72	SHG committee	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Toch Sopheap	F	Deputy	077 320 600
73	SHG committee	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Chhim Mei Nath	F	Cashier	092 204 437
74	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Srey Voeun	M	Member	092 329 157
75	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Yeng Bunthat	M	Member	061 240 665
76	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Pen Chhorn	M	Member	092 952 926
77	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Soeun Nary	F	Member	097 9918 009
78	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Mao Kanha	F	Member	017 907 597
79	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Prom Chheng Ky	F	Member	089 924 441
80	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Bou Loth	F	Member	088 4445 528
81	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Sem Sokhoeun	F	Member	097 5878 562
82	SHG member	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Phlech Chrib	F	Member	088 6032 487
83	IGA	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Prom Cheng Ly	F	Grocery shop	092 164 593
84	Model Farmer	Samakir Pramat Dei	Srayov,Stung Sen	Yeng Bunthat	M	Chicken Hatching	061 240 665
85	SHG committee	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	San Chanthy	F	Leader	071 2882 761
86	SHG committee	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Nath Kunthea	F	Cashier	097 7921 959
87	SHG committee	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Eang Srei Roth	F	Deputy	097 5255 895
88	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Soeun Nhoeng	F	Member	097 3455 636
89	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	San Sinan	F	Member	097 3442 906
90	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Yoeng Samom	F	Member	071 8822 105

## List of persons who contributed information

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91	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Thean Norm	F	Member	097 7584 640
92	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Pen Sok Ry	F	Member	097 3950 515
93	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Pen Vann	F	Member	088 6807 417
94	SHG member	Sampong Rik Reay	Prasat, Santuk	Tha Theary	F	Member	097 4330 291
95	SHG committee	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Keo Seang	F	Leader	097 2605 102
96	SHG committee	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Chhin Linda	F	Cashier	088 2323 200
97	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Phea Saing	F	Member	N/A
98	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Yan Sophat	F	Member	088 6766 417
99	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Sous Chhorvorn	F	Member	N/A
100	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Toem Mun	F	Member	N/A
101	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Phorn Khin	F	Member	088 6549 518
102	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Phorn Sokhom	F	Member	N/A
103	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Phorn Seak	F	Member	096 4536 256
104	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Phea Ann	F	Member	N/A
105	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Sim Sann	F	Member	096 7090 589
106	SHG member	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Prasat, Santuk	Mai Pisei	F	Member	N/A
107	SHG committee	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Sorn Hom	F	Leader	088 8008 429
108	SHG committee	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	In Namm	F	Cashier	N/A
109	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Pros Pos	F	Member	N/A
110	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Chheng Long	F	Member	N/A
111	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Khoeun Pach	F	Member	097 8606 395
112	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Reth Sen	F	Member	N/A
113	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Hanh Leang	F	Member	N/A
114	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Mao Sa	M	Member	N/A
115	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Chhai Sim	F	Member	N/A
116	SHG member	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Prasat, Santuk	Yoeung Ny	M	Member	N/A
117	SHG committee	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Nov Sam Nei	F	Leader	088 4203 104
118	SHG committee	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Mei Sophea	F	Deputy	088 2241 858
119	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Phun Thy	M	Member	N/A
120	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Keath Phal	M	Member	097 4237 726

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SN	Category	Institution name	Location	Respondent name	Gender	Position	Telephone
121	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Chhun Chamroeun	M	Member	077 371 129
122	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Soun Thy	M	Member	097 6284 288
123	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Keo Norn	F	Member	088 7638 101
124	SHG member	Raing Khang Tbong Meanrith	Prasat, Santuk	Sdoeng Savat	M	Member	097 8985 102
125	SHG committee	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Khy Morm	M	Leader	071 5151 550
126	SHG committee	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Chann Nan	F	Deputy	N/A
127	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Sim Hun	F	Member	N/A
128	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Heng Rorn	F	Member	N/A
129	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Heng Kimly	F	Member	N/A
130	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Chy Phorn	M	Member	N/A
131	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Eang Chea	F	Member	N/A
132	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Houn Phoeun	M	Member	N/A
133	SHG member	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Lach Lai	F	Member	N/A
134	IGA	Samakir Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Thnot Chum, Baray	Yeng Sokhim	F	Grocery shop	097 2949 898
135	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Brak Yoeun	F	Leader	066 405 988
136	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Sun Yorth	F	Deputy	092 702 023
137	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Keath Kunthea	F	Member	088 5405 052
138	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Men Sokhom	F	Member	088 6405 719
139	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Say Lorn	F	Member	060 887 635
140	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Long Sokhoeun	F	Member	097 6893 406
141	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Chum Sarann	F	Member	N/A
142	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Chhom Sophal	F	Member	N/A
143	SHG member	Sansom Phum Thnot Chum	Thnot Chum, Baray	Meas Un	F	Member	N/A
144	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Uk Sim	F	Leader	015 352 350
145	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Doeur Sovanny	F	Deputy	096 7768 153
146	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Nhik Doeun	F	Secretary	012 357 644
147	SHG committee	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Sour Phat	F	Cashier	N/A
148	SHG member	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Seng Kan	F	Member	016 979 723
149	SHG member	Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Andong Pou, Baray	Lach Non	F	Member	088 9899 378
150	SHG committee	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Heng Chan Phal	F	Leader	071 6633 994



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151	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Morn Yeng	F	Member	N/A
152	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Rith Rom	F	Member	N/A
153	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Yean Yei	M	Member	096 4062 927
154	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Yim Yath	M	Member	N/A
155	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Rith	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Phoung Nhanh	M	Member	016 461 248
156	SHG committee	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Yan Seap	F	Leader	097 2850 437
157	SHG committee	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Kon Sokheang	F	Cashier	097 3793 878
158	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Choun Oun	F	Member	N/A
159	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Penh Hei	F	Member	N/A
160	SHG member	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Heng Phalla	F	Member	N/A
161	IGA	Bos Sbeng Mean Chey	Chrolong, Tang Kouk	Soeung Phally	F	Tailor business	N/A
162	Stakeholders	FCFD	Prey Veng	Nil Sopheap	M	Director	012 344 631
163	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Va Chhoun	M	Chief Management	016 554 751
164	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Ros Saroeun	M	Deputy Management	016 387 299
165	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Pech Sonly	M	Chief Monitoring	N/A
166	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Hong Sakhorn	M	Deputy Monitoring	N/A
167	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Uk Oun	F	Treasurer	N/A
168	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Nou Saron	M	Secretary	015 375 200
169	AC committee	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Pech Simorn	F	Committe member	N/A
170	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Chin Horn	F	Member	N/A
171	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Noun Lim	F	Member	N/A
172	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Yin Sitha	F	Member	096 4034 645
173	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Pann Orng	F	Member	093 213 148
174	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Meas Eim	F	Member	N/A
175	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Va Sim	F	Member	N/A
176	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Nong Mol	F	Member	088 7313 558
177	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Nong Oun	F	Member	N/A
178	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Un Khean	M	Member	N/A
179	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Phuk Chorn	F	Member	N/A
180	AC member	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Khim Uy	F	Member	N/A

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SN	Category	Institution name	Location	Respondent name	Gender	Position	Telephone
181	AC committee	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Chea Bunthoeun	M	Chief Management	096 9273 342
182	AC committee	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Sok Yath	M	Deputy Management	096 7288 673
183	AC committee	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Chea Moeun	M	Chief Monitoring	081 951 358
184	AC committee	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Um Sochea	F	Monitoring committee	N/A
185	AC committee	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Em Savy	F	Treasurer	069 880 288
186	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Kong Sophea	F	Member	096 9536 660
187	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Leang Mun	M	Member	096 4946 963
188	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Soy Mach	F	Member	086 918 324
189	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Neth Loth	F	Member	N/A
190	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Sin Vanna	M	Member	071 6395 157
191	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Hoeng Nin	F	Member	N/A
192	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Hoeng Natt	F	Member	N/A
193	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Seang Samoeun	F	Member	N/A
194	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Mom Som Oun	F	Member	N/A
195	AC member	Akphiwat Kasikor, Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Kann Sarann	F	Member	N/A
196	AC committee	Kasikor & Thomcheat	Kansaom Ak, Kg. Trabek	Mom Sokha	M	AC leader	093 956 703
197	AC committee	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Long Samoeun	M	AC Deputy	010 558 453
198	AC committee	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Ei Setha	M	Treasurer	096 2926 729
199	AC committee	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Tum Doeun	M	Secretary	071 7200 913
200	AC committee	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Um Eap	M	Cashier	097 5219 433
201	AC committee	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Meas Piseht	F	Chief Monitoring	088 6077 718
202	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Oem Oun	M	Member	N/A
203	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	So Un	F	Member	N/A
204	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Sea Ith	F	Member	096 3153 610
205	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Ek Ra	F	Member	070 415 036
206	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Pich La	F	Member	N/A
207	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Sea Phorn	F	Member	N/A
208	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Prach Chan	F	Member	N/A
209	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Hin Srey Neang	F	Member	N/A
210	AC member	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Khut Sophorn	M	Member	N/A

**List of persons who contributed information**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Institution name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Respondent name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
211	AC committee	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Seng Chansotheara	F	AC Leader	092 780 367
212	AC committee	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Muth Sim	F	AC Cashier	087 611 762
213	AC committee	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Hem Sina	F	Committe member	088 2613 704
214	AC committee	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Mom Neang	F	Committe member	088 8076 769
215	AC committee	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Yi Saroeun	M	Committe member	096 4645 610

## Findings from fieldwork

The findings are presented under the following categories:

1. Partners & stakeholders
2. Agriculture Cooperatives (SO1)
3. Self-Help Groups (SO2)

### 1. Partners & Stakeholders

Before presenting findings from partners and stakeholders, it is firstly important to summarize some key points from the interviews with the two implementing agencies – LC and ECLOSIO.

#### 1.1 Implementing agencies

##### a) Louvain Cooperation (LC)

Convergence of concept and SOs:

LC feels that overall there are close similarities between LC and ECLOSIO as both are Belgian University NGOs which means they come from similar backgrounds. But both also have their own individual identities. Working together on this Uni4Coop program has brought them close for some activities but still the program is implemented like two separate programs. Both NGOs share information and attend each other's partner meetings but other than that the work is implemented separately. But there is one common partner (FAEC) that involves in activities under SO1 and SO2.

LC and ECLOSIO are taking steps to at least be physically closer by attempting to locate an office that they can share together from next year. This could lead also to sharing some human resources.

Although ECLOSIO (SO1) talks about Agro-Ecology (AE) and LC (SO2) talks about Sustainable Agriculture (SA), LC feels that these are only different in the terminology used; basically the concept in practice is the same. But whether SO1 and SO2 could be brought together under a single objective, LC feels this would be very difficult. As each NGO has different style of working, it would be difficult to jointly manage one objective. If the objective was assigned to only one of the two NGOs, then that would stretch their resources to manage many partners – both LC and ECLOSIO have very low numbers of support staff in their Phnom Penh offices.

The Uni4Coop partnership:

Although Uni4Coop is a cooperation between four Belgian university NGOs, only two of them are involved in the program in Cambodia (the other two, Fucid and ULB cooperation, are not involved – except to be kept informed and share any learnings that may be relevant to them).

Working with ECLOSIO is not a very close relationship as both NGOs are busy with own work and thus have little time for interaction. Both meet on an annual basis for joint planning but there is little need for more frequent planning as there is no overlap in activities with target groups (although working on some activities with same partner, FAEC). But when time allows, LC attend ECLOSIO partner meetings and ECLOSIO also come to LC meetings.

Regarding partnership with FAEC, LC has experienced delays with implementation mainly due to turnover of personnel assigned to work on the activities assigned to them. But technically there is no problem; they are capable of implementing the tasks. LC has more confidence in their financial system now because they have carried out an external audit. But there are some practical difficulties with sharing monthly financial data as LC and FAEC use different accounting packages – FAEC uses Quick Book whereas LC uses WinBook. But because WinBook is not working well for LC (it should be able to accept data from Quick Book), LC scans all invoices to their HQ for data entry.

Change of partner from MODE to Mlup Baitong (MB): The main problem was MODE director got full time job with private sector (ManuLife) so was no longer paying strong attention to the project. But MODE board helped to identify NGOs working in Kampong Thom who could be follow-on partner; MB was on the short list and was selected as the best partner available (although they had already closed the office in Kampong Thom for about 6 months so had to re-open again). That took time as district and commune officials requested letter from Provincial Government approving their status as partner in order to accept the change.

Since signing partnership agreement, working with MB is good; they are more professionally organized than the preceding partner (MODE). They implement work on time and report on time. They also are more financially sustainable and present a good profile. But LC wonders if their staff have sufficient agriculture technical

knowledge (e.g. on sustainable agriculture) – as MB is a new partner, they did not like to request CVs of staff as that might have led to a feeling that LC lacked confidence in MB. This is the same regarding external audit reports; MB don't share their report with LC and LC has been reluctant to request them for it.

Regarding contribution of partners to the partnership, the most important contribution from all partners is their human resources for implementing the activities to achieve the objectives. There are some differences between MB and MODE in that whereas MB has much more experience with SHGs, MODE had developed a system for supporting IGA (passing on the skills) that MB is not so committed to. FAEC has a lot of experience with ACs/FOs so their contribution is to assist SHGs who want to transition to become ACs/FOs. The contribution of LC to the partners is to facilitate cooperation and capacity building opportunities for them. Part of this capacity building is provided by another partner, RUA-ECOLAND. As well as managing their own research work related to the program, they also assist the other partners by building their capacity to develop monitoring tools and data management. LC also imparts technical knowledge through 3-monthly field visits by their agronomist. LC also conducts Capacity Building Assessments (CBA) and supports development of capacity building plans (but only small amount of funds in the program to implement this so partners need to find funds elsewhere to implement).

#### Implementation of the activities

One of the main problems LC faced is with the baseline data. MODE initially collected the data but did not finalize data entry or produce a report. When MB took over, they collected new data but this has not been fully entered yet so still no report is available. RUA-ECOLAND is now helping with this so LC hopes to have a report soon.

The main benefits LC feels that target groups will gain from their participation in SO2 is that they will implement more sustainable agriculture practices (SAP) which will lead to increased income for them. This can be achieved due to the experience of the local partners but will take a bit of time due to change of partner from MODE to MB. The situation in Kampong Cham is likely to be less successful due to migration of families for labor work which makes it difficult to form SHGs (there are many large farms and plantations that require agriculture labor).

When asked to what extent SAP matches GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) as recognized by MAFF under the Cam-GAP (Cambodian GAP standards), LC said they have not had any relation with MAFF about this. In relation to the use of the Environmental Integration Tool (EIT), LC reported that MODE were able to apply in for 6 cases but it was a bit difficult to do. LC does not know whether MB followed up with these 6 cases but they know that MB conducted 3 more cases as well as an organizational EIT (but not sure what were the results).

LC does not use any organizational assessment tool for assessing SHG capacity. But LC believes that if SHGs transition to become ACs, they will be more sustainable. ACs have official recognition and more possibilities of support than SHGs.

#### *Collaboration with South Engineer (SE) students:*

These are engineering students from Louvain Catholic University. The first group of 5 students (partnering with 5 students from RUA) came in 2017 and helped to design a water pond with roof (cost about \$1000). The second group of 4 students (partnering with 4 students from RUA) came in 2019 and helped to design an evaporation cooling system for keeping vegetables at cool temperature after harvest and before selling. Two models were developed – small one cost \$300 and larger one cost \$700. These are in Pramat Dei and Andoung Pou (both in Kampong Thom). All concepts and project design are agreed in advance with RUA before students come to Cambodia

#### Suggestions/recommendations for new program

LC and ECLOSIO have already had some preliminary discussions about the content of the next program phase and are considering the following components:

- Strengthening FOs
- Developing value chain
- Promotion of AE
- Research and knowledge management
- Access to employment (adaptation of IGA approach)/entrepreneurship
- Conservation of bio-diversity (e.g. mangrove – to align with cross-country approach)

#### **b) ECLOSIO**

Transcript of discussions with ECLOSIO below is a combination of the interview with staff in the Phnom Penh office plus discussion by telephone with Christophe Goossens.

### Convergence of concept and SOs

Up to now ECLOSIO understood that LC has mostly been involved in health and ADG in agriculture. It was only for this recent program has LC now involved in agriculture. But there is similar approach, with AE being one aspect of sustainable agriculture. But really it is like two separate programs although both NGOs keep each other informed. It would be difficult to combine SO1 and SO2 under one SO unless only one NGO takes charge. One issue is that both NGOs use two different accounting systems; ECLOSIO wants to decentralize more to target countries but LC is more centralized. In future ECLOSIO could implement SO1 and SO2 but would need more personnel to manage more partners.

### Expected focus of the MTR:

ECLOSIO is not so interested in usual areas of efficiency, effectiveness, etc; want to have more focus on partnership aspects of the program. LC and ECLOSIO apply different approaches: LC is more top-down – select partners (not interested whether membership organization or not) to implement and manage budget; ECLOSIO wants partners who provide legitimacy (membership organizations), not NGOs. They want to support FOs but not to disrupt their main function (provision of services to members); prefer to fit into FO strategic plan rather than have FO adapt to their program. Since registration under LANGO, FAEC has been operating more like an NGO. Previous evaluations did not fully address the issue of partnership which is why ECLOSIO wants this MTR to focus strongly on this issue.

### The Uni4Coop partnership

ECLOSIO has had good cooperation with LC (but this is the first time working together on one program). For local partners, both CIRD and FAEC are long term partners and have always had a very good relationship. ECLOSIO staff feel that FAEC has more organized structure than FCFD. CIRD is mostly involved in seed production and GI (geographical indication) products such as BTB/PST oranges. Another partner ISC finished partnership in mid-2018. They completed all the work that was assigned to them under the partnership agreement. The main contribution from partners is the experience (in terms of human resources) that they bring to effectively implement the activities. The partnership benefits all partners through increased knowledge of, and participation in, various networks (e.g. ALISEA network has introduced many partners to new contacts as there are over 50 members in this network). Joint visits to each other's projects are another way for partners to learn from each other. But there has been less cross visits between ECLOSIO and LC partners; exchanges mostly confined to their own partners.

### FAEC:

Membership fees not an important issue for ECLOSIO; most important is how representative the organization is. ECLOSIO does not want NGO project to direct focus of FO away from its service provision to members (their first priority should be their mandate to members). FAEC is not an NGO and should not be dependent on donors (as this can be a distraction from their main mandate). To avoid this type of distraction, FAEC needs to be financially sustainable; they need to earn their operational costs from provision of services to members (or others who contract them). From the Uni4Coop program to date they have seen that they can earn from rice seed component (provide volume, quality) and get fees for services provided. But the most important service is from specialist trainers (agriculture, business planning, financial, etc.). Specialists are farmers who have received specific training – NGOs also contract them (e.g. for fish raising or chicken raising training). It is farmer to farmer approach; in the past, FAEC questioned the quality of this but ECLOSIO feels that the practical nature makes such trainings more relevant to participants (and FAEC seems to agree now). ACs can, and are, willing to pay for such services: ECLOSIO raised the example of Kampong Speu Sugar Palm AC: before producing only 2 tons, now expanded to 200 tons – extra volume so can afford specialist services (and have needed them in the past when getting into financial difficulties). But so far service delivery fees for FAEC not providing sustainability (not covering the operational costs) so there is a need for them to focus more on this (but NGO funding that covers their costs can push them to give this less priority).

### Partnership in Takeo:

ECLOSIO wanted a representative organization to partner for AE in Takeo (in the proposal, they called it KHAE temporarily until partner had been identified). If the Takeo Union of Cooperatives (TUAC) had been officially formed, they would have been the ideal partner. But this union could not be formed because MAFF/PDAFF would not allow another union in Takeo (as they already have one). So ECLOSIO decided to implement the AE component through FAEC.

### Links with ARES:

ARES is an association of French speaking universities. ARES manages research funding from DGD. But ARES and ECLOSIO is that they use different project cycle management. ECLOSIO wants research that can be applied by target groups (responding to needs of target groups) but ARES does more theoretical research (cannot necessarily apply immediately). ECLOSIO and ARES are now trying to develop a tool together linking development and research (but this may take time to achieve).

### Uni4Coop program implementation

ECLOSIO notes the following as positive change that has occurred through Upscale to date:

- ACs are now more business orientated; they have business plans (more activities than credit)
- Farmers (small farmers) are now also more business orientated in their production
- Producer groups are more organized
- Capacity of AC committees are much stronger and network better to mobilize resources for their ACs
- 7 ACs in Takeo have common interest to build union (but not yet approved)
- Good long term cooperation between Takeo ACs for chickens and rice seeds

The main reasons they gave for these achievements were:

- Training provided by FAEC
- Joint workshops with CIRDA, joint field visits
- Business planning – before ECLOSIO do, now FAEC can do

The only obstacle mentioned by ECLOSIO staff was the problem with meeting some ACs due to political situation (but this is perceived to be temporary). But there have been challenges such as working with Rural Development Bank (RDB) to provide loans to ACs. This seemed difficult in the first year but now RDB is more flexible and have reduced the minimum loan size; so some ACs already got loans (e.g. Odom Soriya and Trapeang Srange – both in Takeo).

Status of Bokashi fertilizer:

This started because a need arose from the provision of irrigation for dry season production (as the soil lacked organic matter). Already the AC is able to produce and sell but the students are still testing how it reacts in anaerobic conditions. A problem is that the ingredients are still too costly. It was not ECLOSIO expectation that Bokashi can replace chemical fertilizer for rice production but possible for vegetables. Overall ECLOSIO is not really focused on rice (as it gives lowest economic return per land used) – but they still support rice seed and rice selling activities with ACs.

AE in BTB:

ECLOSIO was approached 2 years ago by BUAC as they worried they could not fulfill contracts for SRP rice to AMRU company. ECLOSIO tried a few approaches like direct seeding, green manure. But now BUAC says that premium paid by AMRU only barely covers logistic costs and does not compensate farmers for the extra inputs(especially time) needed to produce SRP rice. MAFF does not allow use of SRP as branding on rice bags (this does not seem logical).

### Suggestions for new program phase (2022-2026)

An issue under discussion is what will be the point of entry (regarding partners)? – is partner (FAEC) ready or is ECLOSIO still building capacity/sustainability? And do they still retain their legitimacy (or being driven by donor projects)?

ECLOSIO has already had internal discussions about possible components of the new program (as they had to prepare a technical strategic paper; the thinking now is to focus on 4 points:

- AE
- Value chain/FOs
- Entrepreneurship
- Conservation biodiversity (previously supported activities with WWF and WCS)

Including FOs with value chain is considered logical because this is a key focus of all FO members (ACs). Entrepreneurship could focus on vocational training (now there are many provincial centers but they are not responding to market needs – e.g. need more mechanical or electricity skills). The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MLVT) also needs guidance to develop these training centers to respond to such market needs. ECLOSIO could also partner with ITC (good relationship with ECLOSIO) or RUA (close relationship with LC).

Final comment for new program: ECLOSIO must have local partners (also it is a requirement of DGD)

## **1.2 Implementing partners**

The key partners involved in the implementation of the Uni4Coop program have been the Cambodian Institute for Research and Rural Development (CIRDA), Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives (FAEC), Irrigation Service Center (ISC) and Mlup Baitong (MB).

**a) CIRD**

*Introduction and background*

CIRD was formed in 2009. Their main focus is on research, training and standardization of agriculture produce. They now work in 20 of the 24 provinces of Cambodia (the only provinces where they do not work are Kep, Kampong Speu, Koh Kong and Ratanakiri). They have 53 staff spread over head office and six provincial offices. CIRD have a budget of about \$500,000 per year (from about 7 donors) and they conduct annual audits. They used to have 5-7 board members but difficult to get all together for meetings; now they have a board of 3 persons who meet twice a year.

*Relationship with Uni4Coop implementing agencies*

CIRD has known ADG since soon after formation and have received funding from them since 2010. They were closely involved in the development of the current Upscale program (SO1 of this Uni4Coop program). Upscale has now expanded to 11 provinces (from the initial 6 provinces) for rice seed production component; Agro-Ecology (AE) is only implemented in Tram Kak district of Takeo province. Another component of the program is GI (Geographic Identification) and this has been implemented in two provinces (Battambang and Pursat), focusing on oranges (*Kroich Pursat*).

CIRD feels that the goal of ECLOSIO Upscale program contributes to the achievement of CIRD's own vision. Through the joint collaboration, CIRD has increased in technical knowledge (in particular seed production); they have acquired additional funds to expand their operations and have improved organizational capacity (e.g. increased ability to use information technology; they are currently developing APPs for rice production and chicken selling). CIRD in turn has contributed to ECLOSIO through providing the human resources to implement the relevant aspects of the Upscale program assigned to them and CIRD can also contribute to the co-funding of the program through funds provided by their other donors. Both organizations (ECLOSIO and CIRD) benefit jointly from sharing experiences through meetings and workshops organized throughout the program duration.

CIRD did not know the other implementing partner (LC) before this Uni4Coop program. But over the last few years, LC has attended a number of ECLOSIO partner meetings. However, while they now know more about LC, CIRD still does not really know LC partners very well as all partners do not meet – the partners for each SO meet separately, with only LC and ECLOSIO joining both sets of meetings.

*Issues related to partnership*

In relation to working with FAEC, CIRD notes the following points in relation to sustainability:

- CIRD has worked long time with them but still they need support (seems they intend to operate more as NGO rather than as representative association)
- Would be more efficient to implement seed production component directly with ACs rather than through FAEC
- A problem with FAEC is that strongest board members from ACs are elected to FAEC board and then they become too busy with that so impacts on the quality of their own ACs

Some issues related to finance included:

- The budget is not fixed for the duration of the program; it changes year by year and sometimes it is half way through the year before the annual budget is clear
- Need to report in Excel but CIRD keep accounts in Quick book; takes time to reformat to meet needs of ECLOSIO
- They have to scan all supporting documents every quarter which is very time consuming (and should not be necessary as CIRD do own global audit which confirms income and expenditure in relation to each donor and each program being implemented)

*Implementation of the program*

For the seed production component, CIRD work with FAEC. Currently FAEC has 46 member ACs and there are 411 seed producers among their members. At the start of this program in 2017 there were only 70 seed producers. CIRD supports them with training materials, seeds and other materials, as well as banners and leaflets for advertising the sale of their seeds. The producers produce five different types of seeds – Pkar Rumdoul (purchased from CARDI), Sen Kraop (Aquip), Smach Svay Rieng, Kha 15, and Damnab Sbay Monkol (IRRI). The seeds are purchased by CIRD from these institutions and then provided to FAEC/FCFD for distribution to their seed producing members. The seeds cost \$3.5 per kg and 100 kg can produce about 9 tons of seeds. These are sold to farmers for about 2,500 Riels per kg. Generating this income is important because new seeds need to be purchased every three years. CIRD estimates that 400 tons of seeds can be produced per year which can produce 12,000 tons of rice. An internal quality monitoring system has been established; this is called the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS). They term it participatory because it involves the seed producers, private sector/buyers and department of agriculture staff.



CIRD also provides Training of Trainers (TOR) to identified farmers from among FAEC and FCFD ACs. To date they have 24 trainers (between 2 and 3 per province) and they estimate that between 40-50% of these can function well in training other farmers.

CIRD has also been active in the support to 100 orange growers in Battambang to get recognition for their produce as GI. This was initially opposed by growers in Pursat who felt that the quality differed between Battambang and Pursat provinces. Subsequent studies showed that some areas of Battambang were indeed different and did not qualify for use of the Kroich Pursat GI brand but that other areas had similar geographical structure. Acquiring GI status for a product is a very long and expensive process. Initially the producers have to register as an association with the Ministry of Interior (this process may take up to \$10,000 to complete) and the final step will be to register their GI product with the Ministry of Commerce. The total process from start to finish may take between \$30,000 and \$40,000.

CIRD has also promoted Agro-Ecology (AE) through encouraging farmers to grow a cover crop (in Khmer it is called “*Chongkrom Sva*”). This has previously been tested by CIRAD on corn but not on rice. So this Upscale program is testing this but will take time to see full benefit; the main benefit they expect is that as soil improves, gets softer bit by bits, eventually farmers can give up the need to plough.

*Suggestions/recommendations:*

- Budget needs to be clearer and agreed well in advance
- [Now sometimes towards end of year can be told to stop something because no more budget or to push quicker on something because money left over – maybe this comes from many partners using some budget]
- Need Excel standard accounting that links from Quick Book
- Would be good to get quarterly installments; now have to apply every month and takes time to process

**b) FAEC**

*Introduction and background*

FAEC was formed since 2009, initially called Federation of farmer associations promoting family agriculture enterprise in Cambodia. This name has recently been changed to Facilitation Association of Economy for Cooperatives as registration under the new Law on Associations and NGOs required that they not be referred to as a Federation. FAEC now has 68 members of whom 48 are ACs and 20 are Farmer Associations (FA). FAEC has only 8 full time staff (others are AC members who implement the various projects – they get only per diems and travel costs).

As a membership organization representing ACs/FAs, the most important services provided by FAEC are training/capacity building (agriculture technical issues as well as business planning and financial/management needs identified by members) and advocating for policy change that can address issues of concern to members. There are many policy issues that FAEC needs to work on including:

- Access to finance – reduce interest rates, Rural Development Bank (RDB) focus, possible government bank with low interest to force down market rate (MFIs now operate like cartel; competition among them is not leading to reduced rates of interest – but recently FAEC has had some successful discussions with Chamroeun MFI about no collateral (but still interest high – between 1% to 1.5%)
- Access to water – advocate with Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology (MOWRAM)
- Access to markets – to identify varied markets and better prices for farmers

*Partnership in Uni4Coop*

Although FAEC has worked with ECLOSIO before (as ADG), this time it is different as they have contracts with two different partners – ECLOSIO and LC. They feel this is good as two advisors are better than one. Compared to their other donors (who also support their work in capacity building of ACs), Uni4Coop also supports capacity building of FAEC itself and this is very much appreciated. But there is a clear difference between the focus of the work of FAEC with the two organizations: LC focus on food and economic security, mainly in Kampong Thom; ECLOSIO program covers many provinces and their focus is more on capacity building of ACs for sustainability. So far, the main role of FAEC in partnership with LC has been preparing SHGs to transition to ACs/FOs. The main work of FAEC to date under Uni4Coop has been on the ECLOSIO aspects. The key benefit to FAEC from the partnership has been capacity building; this includes improved organizational structure including functioning board of directors.

While FAEC is very happy with the partnership, there are a few issues of concern:

- There is some confusion about who is implementing some aspects – e.g. AE in Takeo, budget is with FAEC but ECLOSIO own staff do much of the work and then request FAEC to include in budget request for planned activities; ECLOSIO also support directly to farmers who test various techniques (not via their AC)

- Decision making is also a bit mixed up – sometimes agree at national level about some activity but then ECLOSIO staff at province level change that
- Monthly budget requests to ECLOSIO are time consuming – as are scanning all supporting documents
- Delay in receipt of monthly transfer from ECLOSIO (e.g. September amount not yet received even now already October – means FAEC has to use other donor money to operate)
- FAEC did global audit – for total income of about \$150,000 the cost was \$3,000 (Uni4Coop did not pay anything towards this as they do own audits)
- CIRDP partnership also has some confusing responsibilities like ECLOSIO – e.g. seed production: FAEC had the budget but CIRDP also doing the work (suggest CIRDP should only be technical support for training – FAEC should organize the community and invite CIRDP to conduct the training)
- For Mlup Baitong (MB) – also not clear division of responsibilities; they support service providers (who are farmer to farmer trainers but also collective sellers)

#### *Implementation of the program*

In relation to advocacy component, FAEC was actively involved in the Farmer Forum which was held at national level. This was attended by almost 200 persons including AC members, government ministries, private sector companies, journalists and many civil society and non-governmental organizations. This main importance of this forum was to give voice to farmers but now the most important thing is to follow up on actions taken based on recommendations. FAEC plans to hold another forum this November which will follow up on these as well as disseminating on the UN Resolution on Peasant Rights.

In addition to advocacy, FAEC has been involved in many other activities under this program. These included conducting capacity assessments of ACs, providing training and capacity building to ACs to improve their management and governance, cooperating with ECLOSIO in the implementation of AE with farmers in Takeo and Battambang, cooperating with CIRDP on the seed production component, and supporting the training of master trainers for each province. FAEC feels that most of these components will achieve good results but AE in Battambang (especially cover grass) is not likely to be successful. This partly due to climatic conditions where there is little water available after rice harvesting and also due to farmers releasing cows to roam freely after harvest – so any cover grass that may grow will be eaten by them.

One plan that could not be completed was the formation of a union of ACs in Takeo (TUAC). The Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDAFF) in Takeo estimated it would cost \$10,000 to form such a union and FAEC did not have this money available. For transition of SHGs to ACs, PDAFF in Kampong Thom requested a budget of \$3,000 per SHG (but discussions with PDAFF suggest that they agree to reduce this cost to \$1,500 per SHG). None of the three SHGs who plan to form ACs have yet done so.

FAEC feels that the aspects of the program most likely to be sustained in the long term are: for LC aspects, the training of service providers in Kampong Thom; and for ECLOSIO aspects, training of specialists in vegetable growing, rice seed production, business planning, and AC financial management. The development of these human resources will ensure quality services to AC members and other farmers in the years to come.

#### *Suggestions/recommendations*

- If ACs want to engage in contract farming, they need specialist advice to prepare relevant documentation
- ECLOSIO needs to define its role (as executive agency) and work should be clearly divided between implementing partners (not overlap like with AE in Takeo)
- ECLOSIO should change from monthly to quarterly fund request like LC (LC approves quarterly and no need to scan invoices)
- Asset management – implementing agency should have access to car (not executive agency)
- So far, project size is too small to have significant impact on AC members (they wonder the benefit of FAEC if they cannot do so much – as fund cannot support all 68 members)

#### **c) ISC**

ISC was initially formed after the Ministry of Water Resources & Meteorology (MOWRAM) constructed the Stung Chinit irrigation scheme in Kampong Thom. The purpose was to support the Farmer Water User Groups (FWUG) to sustainably maintain and manage the water from the scheme. ISC was registered as a local NGO at the Ministry of Interior in December 2011.

ISC became a partner of ECLOSIO in 2017, with an 18-month contract to provide small-scale irrigation services in Takeo province. The main activities they carried out were:

- Interviewed prospective farmers for support
- Prepared maps of the farms of the selected farmers
- Selected and supplied materials for DRIP irrigation (10 farmers)
- Constructed small family ponds (30 farmers)

- Filled soil for vegetable growing (6 farmers)
- Provided water pumps, hoses etc (13 farmers – 8 of whom receive electric motor pumps)

In total 47 farmers were supported with the above activities (as some farmers receive more than one of the above types). In addition ISC coordinated with ECLOSIO in the selection and training of model farmers. Overall a lot of work was implemented with a very low cost (even considering that the farmers paid about 50% of the cost).

An important benefit to ISC in participating as a partner on this project was to learn about new ways that they could support other FWUGs in the future. ISC respondent was unable to provide much more information about the partnership with ECLOSIO as he had not been directly managing the project. ISC inputs had finished before this MTR was conducted so the relevant staff were not available.

But the respondent was aware that an important learning from the project was about the types of water pumps used by farmers. Often they purchase cheaper pumps but spend higher cost on energy (either fuel or electricity). Better quality pumps are available at slightly higher cost which can reduce operational costs. Solar pumps would be the most environmentally sustainable solution but so far the cost is still prohibitive.

ISC suggests that for future interventions, ECLOSIO should investigate cheaper solar pumping options (e.g. Israeli technology). More study also needs to be done on the use of automatic pumping systems – i.e. the system knows when water is needed and pumps accordingly; no need for human input (this can be very useful for farmers who lack labor to monitor their plots regularly).

#### **d) MB**

##### *Introduction and background*

Mlup Baitong (MB), literally translated as “green shade”, is a Cambodian non-governmental organization (NGO) that started its operation in the Kingdom of Cambodia in 1998 aiming to collaborate with the royal government of Cambodia and other development partners in addressing environmental issues and supporting environmental sector by focusing on public education about environment, natural resource conservation, and livelihood improvement. In August 2003, MB was conferred official recognition by the Ministry of Interior as a Cambodian nongovernmental organization headed a Cambodian Executive Director.

MB was not one of the original partners selected to implement this Uni4Coop program. Initially an existing partner of LC – Minority Organization for Development and Economy (MODE) – had been assigned the role currently being carried out by MB. But lack of appropriate human resources meant that MODE could not fulfill their commitments so the partnership was discontinued after the first 18 months of the project. But MODE board of directors cooperated closely with LC in the selection of MB as the partner to follow on the work they had started. A number of NGOs based in Kampong Thom were proposed and MB was selected as the one with the most appropriate experience and resources to carry out the work. MB signed the partnership agreement with LC in August 2018.

##### *Partnership with LC*

MB is clear that the overall goals of LC and MB closely adhere to each other. Although MB has stronger focus on natural resource management, improving the livelihood of the people dependent on these natural resources has always been a clear objective. MB also has a strong focus on climate change adaptation which aligns closely the LC objectives for sustainable agriculture and cleaner environment.

Although this is the first time MB has worked in partnership with LC, they feel that already there is a very good relationship. MB has received new knowledge from the partnership and developed links with new networks (e.g. ALISEA). They have also increased understanding on the use of digital tools for data collection (through collaboration with RUA-ECOLAND). MB has also contributed to the partnership; in addition to the human resources allocated to achieve the objectives, MB has also provided co-funding both in cash and in-kind. They have also been flexible in supporting the goals of other partners such as assisting RUA-ECOLAND request for supporting SHGs in Sralov commune of Stung Sen.

No major issues have arisen except that MB feels the design of the program did not allow sufficient time to work with some of the groups – the program spread the formation of SHGs over the duration of the program which means that little time would be available to support the groups formed in the latter years. Another issue they raised is that there are many visitors to the project which takes up the time of the implementing staff. In collaboration with the other partner (FAEC), MB also experienced some difficulties as FAEC has changed the staff many times so it takes time for new persons to become familiar with the work. Overall MB feels that the program design requires large coverage of beneficiaries but at a relatively low cost (compared to other projects implemented by MB).

An important partnership aspect has been working with South Engineer (SE) students who, through RUA-ECOLAND/LC, have come to do action research in their program area. In 2017, they developed a pond that increases rainfall intake through tarpaulin covering around the pond; and this year SE students helped to design an evaporation cooling system for keeping vegetables fresh between harvesting and transporting to markets. For the pond, MB does not feel it is very useful as it does not retain much water but the cooling system could be useful (but it is too early to know yet as the weather has been relatively cool since the system was installed). MB raised an issue related to surveys: students who design questionnaires tend to try to cover too many subjects which means it takes a long time to administer the questionnaire with respondents; this reduces the accuracy of the information they collect due to “respondent fatigue”.

#### *Implementation to date*

Due to the circumstances mentioned above (change of partner from MODE to MB), MB had only been implementing activities for just over one year when this MTR came around. In particular, most of the SHGs they are supporting were newly formed (only a few continued from those formed initially by MODE).

From MB perspective, the most important aspect of the SHGs is the “self-help” part; they should not be developed as saving groups. There had been some precedents from MODE time of SHGs liquidating the group funds each year and starting again. MB is trying to change this by encouraging groups to accumulate their resources over time. This would be important if SHGs wish to transition to ACs and MB feels that if SHGs become ACs, they will be more sustainable and have official recognition and more avenues of possible support.

In addition to supporting capacity building of SHGs on management, leadership and record-keeping, the program also includes introducing Sustainable Agriculture (SA) techniques and environmental considerations. For SA, MB feels that implementation will help SHGs to improve their production but so far it has just started so it is too early to know the extent of such impact. But key to vegetable production is accessing good quality seeds (e.g. from Kbal Koh seed station) and especially to train producers on seed harvesting to reduce expenditure on new seeds each season. For assessing environment impact, LC introduced a tool to MB for use in the communities. This tool is called Environment Integration Tool (EIT). MB feels that it is a bit difficult for communities to use and also not useful unless the program has clear activities to address issues identified through applying the tool. In previous programs, MB used to form a Village Environment Action Team (VEAT) which proved effective in coordinating actions on clean environment in their target villages. It would be nice if LC included such activity in future programs.

#### *Suggestions/recommendations*

- Main recommendation is linked to the issue mentioned above: program design should ensure that all planned groups are formed early in the program (not spread out evenly over program duration)
- It is also important that if SHGs transition to become ACs, that sufficient time is given to support them before withdrawing activities
- Request to LC not to all new activities; give time for partners to fulfill their obligations under existing contracts

### **1.3 Stakeholders**

Relevant stakeholders interviewed included Federation of Cambodian Farmer Organizations for Development (FCFD), Department of Agricultural Cooperative Promotion (DACP), and Royal University of Agriculture, ECOLAND Research Center (RUA-ECOLAND).

#### **a) FCFD**

*[Note: The interview with FCFD was relatively short as it was conducted via telephone because the schedule of FCFD representative and MTR team could not coincide due to many pressing activities of FCFD with provincial authorities]*

#### *Background*

FCFD was founded in 2010 with 40 farmers' organizations as founding members and officially registered with Ministry of Interior in 2011. FCFD now has 56 members of whom 26 are ACs. Members are spread over six provinces of Cambodia. The main objectives of FCFD in supporting its members are:

- To improve productivity of production groups
- To improve market access for members
- To facilitate development of business plans
- To help members to access credit for their activities at a reasonable rate

*Main problems faced by member organizations*

- Producer groups do not produce as per market demand
- Access to credit is still a problem (many negotiations but still no clear solution)
- Business plans are limited (often due to lack of initiative/entrepreneurship of leaders)
- ACs lack ability to compete with private sector (either as seller or buyer)

*Partnership with Uni4Coop (Upscale)*

FCFD has worked before with ADG/CIRD so is very familiar with their working arrangements. FCFD has no problems with this partnership. The Upscale program has enabled FCFD to continue capacity building with its member organizations, especially focusing on governance and planning. The program has also supported technical training to farmers who are members of ACs/FOs. The involvement of FCFD in the seed production and fertilizer supply also ensured some additional income (although only small amount so far) for FCFD. None of FCFD members have yet engaged in agro-ecology.

*Suggestions for future support*

- In addition to building capacity of AC/FO committees, need to strengthen the production groups within these ACs/FOs
- Find better markets (help ACs to link to these)
- Further explore credit/funding of ACs for increased sustainability
- More capacity building of FCFD (as well as ACs)

*Final note:*

FCFD feels that even if government is now developing national federation of cooperatives, FCFD (and other NF3 members) still have strong role to play in providing services (training etc.) to ACs.

**b) DACP (and PDAFFs)**

*[Note: Meeting with DACP director was brief as he knew relatively little about the Uni4Coop program. Following report on meeting DACP, findings from meetings with PDAFFs are report here. But PDAFFs were only interviewed in Battambang and Kampong Thom; PDAFF in Prey Veng said he had not been schedule to meet and was not available (he also suggested a meeting would not be relevant as the program partners do not cooperate much with PDAFF)]*

DACP:

DACP reports that there are currently over 1,000 ACs registered and there are 10 Unions of Cooperatives already approved (with 2 or 3 more currently being processed). The director of DACP said he only knows about one activity that DACP involved in related to the program of ECLOSIO/FAEC. That was a Training of Trainers (TOT) recently conducted for ECLOSIO and FAEC staff (held at ECLOSIO office). He has not received any reports from ECLOSIO or FAEC (but says that maybe they are submitted to the Office of International Cooperation of MAFF and copies were not sent to him). The main support to DACP in their work with ACs comes from DGRV (German Cooperation) and JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency). The business plan formats currently being trained to ACs by PDAFFs are those supported by JICA. DACP director agrees that these formats need more work to reduce detail but give more strategic view.

Recommendations for future ECLOSIO/FAEC program focus:

- The program can call on DACP support because DACP has many trainers (about 40 persons); but they focus more on institutional capacity (other departments of MAFF give technical support)
- NGOs should be the main recipient of their training in order to enable them to work with ACs because many NGOs support ACs but not all are fully competent on business planning (and PDAFFs only have 2 or 3 staff in the AC support office so they don't have resources to support all the ACs that have been formed)
- Most important NGOs supporting ACs should focus on are leadership, entrepreneurship, business plan development (encouraging ACs to fulfill their main role, not just be credit provider)
- Support ACs to focus on value chains – from production, processing, value added to market
- Need to have clear links to private sector – contract farming

Final comment: ACs are the most sustainable form of community organization as they continue to function after NGO projects are finished

PDAFFs:

*Battambang (BTB)*

There are already many ACs registered in BTB: currently 87 ACs there is one Union of ACs made up of 4 ACs (2 from Sangkae district and 2 from Banan). Some of the ACs were formed by the PDAFF, some by NGOs and some others by AC members themselves. PDAFF is not interested in forming more ACs in BTB as there are

more than enough already. The role of PDAFF is to support these ACs but they have limited personnel and budget to carry out this work. PDAFF does not really know much about FAEC; they know that FAEC supports capacity building for ACs but FAEC does not invite them to attend trainings.

The main problem with ACs in BTB is that they invest most of their resources into credit for members. Some have other activities such as agriculture input supply, collective marketing, seed production and training of members. One obstacle is that members still don't really understand the benefit of cooperative membership. They see small annual dividend but don't realize the rate of return this produces on the relatively small value of their share (for example an AC pays out 2,000 Riels per share in dividends but each share is only valued at 10,000 Riels – this means 20% return per year which is much higher than the rate they would get at a bank or other location). So investment in more shares would increase AC profits, enable more activities to generate these profits and result in higher dividends.

Another challenge is that committee members are getting older and youth are not interested to take up such positions (they want to leave their villages for jobs in the towns and cities). A problem with a few ACs is that NGOs pushed them to invest their resources in land or equipment, leaving them very low on operational capital; this reduces member interest in the AC as there is little money for credit.

Two key issues can be noted as examples of good cooperative activities:

- Contract farming is now improving – last year there were about 10,000 tons of rice produced under contract to rice mills
- ACs are now understanding that they can produce rice seeds instead of eating rice and sell for higher price (2,000 Riels instead of only about 1,000 Riels)

Suggestions for future support to ACs:

- Request FAEC to invite PDAFF to join activities and should provide short reports at least every quarter (PDAFF does not want anything from them, only information)
- In particular, when FAEC do capacity assessments, these should be done jointly with PDAFF (as PDAFF also has system for assessing capacity and it can confuse ACs to have two systems)

#### *Kampong Thom (KPT)*

PDAFF in KPT only met FAEC for first time about three months ago when they contacted them about the three SHGs that wish to form as ACs. These three groups are: SHG from Damrei Slap village in Andong Pou commune, Tang Kouk district; SHG from Banok village, Baray commune, Baray district; and SHG from Prasat village, Prasat commune, Santuk district. PDAFF requested \$3,000/SHG for dissemination, training and preparation of all documents but FAEC had only \$1,500 available per SHG. PDAFF has already held two meetings with each of the SHGs to explain to them about benefits of forming AC, AC Law, rules & regulations and process of formation.

Currently these SHGs only have savings and credit activities; they have not yet started any other collective agriculture activities (but members have their own individual rice, vegetable and chicken activities). PDAFF assessment of their potential to date is that Damrei Slap and Prasat SHGs understand more about the benefit of forming AC but Banok village is weaker as they pay out all their capital and profit each year. They should only pay out profits in dividends and keep capital to build up their resources.

Suggestions/recommendations:

- Should provide capacity building on vegetable and other agriculture technique to SHG/AC members to improve their productivity
- Support building office and warehouse so that when these SHGs become AC they have place to work and store inputs and produce for selling
- Provide training on processing and marketing their produce
- Organize exchange visits to other developed ACs in other provinces so that they can learn more (study tour more effective than theoretical training)

#### **c) RUA-ECOLAND**

##### *Introduction & background*

ECOLAND is a research center based at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Phnom Penh. As their main function is research, ECOLAND is not registered as an NGO or association (but is recognized as a research institute by the RUA). ECOLAND spent their first three years building up research network. Malyne used to be director but now that ECOLAND is well established she preferred to concentrate on research so new director appointed (Samnang – not present at MTR interview as he was on mission to Philippines). ECOLAND has many research grants – from ERASMUS, IRD, CIRAD. They also have a lot of collaborations with universities in the region (Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Australia).

### *Partnership in Uni4Coop*

ECOLAND has known LC since 2014 as they attended many thematic workshops together. But they only became a partner in 2017 (start of the Uni4Coop program). ECOLAND was actively involved in Uni4Coop design. Actually all partners were invited to prepare proposals but some did not do quickly enough so LC invited them to joint meeting to present and decide on overall proposal.

For Uni4Coop partnership, some confusion between MOU and what they are asked to do – especially in relation to data management. They feel their role is capacity building of partners to be able to do themselves but partners seem to expect that ECOLAND will do all cleaning, entry, analysis and reporting. Partners (especially FAEC) do not assign staff to learn and follow up. For MODE, they got raw data that needed a lot of follow up and cleaning before it could be entered. This data then became irrelevant when partnership of MODE changed to MB (whose target groups are different so needed new baseline data). ECOLAND helped to train MB staff on digital data collection. For AC data, ECOLAND also helped FAEC with questionnaire development and data entry; most data has been entered by RUA students but ECOLAND is keep the remaining (about 60 questionnaires) for training FAEC staff on data entry (waiting for FAEC to allocate staff for this). ECOLAND is currently working on MB baseline data – *copy of raw data shared with MTR team*. ECOLAND say that facilitating this data management falls on them; LC does not use its role as implementing agency to promote better cooperation from its partners.

### *Action Research*

ECOLAND has involved in a lot of action research during this program (in cooperation with students from Belgium). Most recently Thary (researcher) is involved in research on quality of water around farms (compare those using SA techniques with others not using).

The main constraints ECOLAND sees with SA are:

- Farmers lack confidence in self (feel they are the lowest rung on the social ladder)
- Youth now educated and confident but do not want to engage in farm work (and even if they do, their parents sometimes oppose – what did we send you to college for?)
- Farmers often cannot find the inputs they need to prepare natural fertilizer, pesticides or animal feed
- There is still a lack of recognized markets for SA produce (especially local markets in the provinces)
- Insufficient interest in SA overall in Cambodia – e.g. input sellers push their produce and show immediate results (fertilizer => higher yield)
- Q: where will smallholder farms be in 20-30 years time without the youth?
- AC needs to be proven – ECOLAND plans some more research but difficult to find farmers to participate – MB says farmers are too busy (but then sometimes when ECOLAND contacts directly, they agree)

Suggestions /recommendations:

- Both signatories need to respect MOU terms (not asking to do things outside what has been agreed)
- In developing new program, partners should write and submit their own proposals for inclusion in new program (need to take more ownership)
- Partners (especially FAEC) need to assign specific staff to learn about data management (and continue from what ECOLAND has done)
- ECOLAND does not do technical research – they want to focus on Socio-Economic and Environment/Climate issues
- Would like to do study/research on why farmers do not adopt SA (but it also needs to be proven to be sustainable and lack of data is an impediment)
- Need to study on pesticide impact (on rice, vegetables and fruit) – still lack evidence (*maybe focus on health issues rather than soil quality may be more productive*)
- Must be good collaboration between all partners for program to succeed

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## 2. Agriculture Cooperatives (ACs)

As noted in the methodology section above, it was not possible to visit Takeo province during this MTR. This meant that only 9 ACs were interviewed. It also meant that agro-ecology and small-scale irrigation aspects of the program could not be verified by field visits so the MTR team had to rely on data and other information provided by program partners. Apart from 2 ACs in Kompong Trabek (Ta Aong and Ansaong) who are members of FCFD, all others are members of FAEC. These ACs who provided information are shown in the table below:

**Table 2.1 – ACs interviewed during MTR**

SN	Province	Name of AC	District	Commune	Member of
1	BTB	Kear Meanchey	Moung Russei	Kear	FAEC
2	BTB	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	Banan	Bay Damram	FAEC
3	BTB	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	Battambang	Wat Koh	FAEC
4	BTB	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	Sangkae	Reang Kesei	FAEC
5	PVG	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	Kompong Trabek	Ansaong	FCFD
6	PVG	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	Kampong Trabek	Ansaong	FCFD
7	PVG	Kasikor & Thomcheat	Kampong Trabek	Kansaom Ak	FAEC
8	PVG	Prek Pdao AC	Kompong Trabek	Kompong Trabek	FAEC
9	PVG	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	Preah Sdach	Kampong Soeng	FAEC

These ACs have been in existence now for some years, the most recent year of formation being 2013 (for 4 of the 9 ACs); the other 5 were formed before that (one, Kampong Soeng, as long ago as 2005). For most of the ACs, membership has increased significantly between formation and now. The exceptions are the two ACs mentioned in the table below who experienced problems (loss of fund, migration of members) but one other AC (Ansaong) has maintained the same number of members over the last six years while significantly increasing overall fund balance. See details of formation, membership, shares and funds in table below:

**Table 2.2 – AC data (formation, membership, shares & funds)**

SN	Name of AC	Formed (year)	# members		# shares	Share capital	Comments
			Starting	Current			
1	Kear Meanchey	2013	86	322	328	32,800,000	Total fund now over 70 million Riels
2	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	2007	41	136	340	34,000,000	Total fund now 67 million Riels
3	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	2012	70	67			Treasurer took money, now only 5 million left for credit
4	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	2013	185	315	2183	32,745,000	Total fund now over 66 million Riels
5	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	2010	90	114	1000	10,000,000	Total fund now 60 million Riels
6	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	2013	50	50	239	2,390,000	Total fund now 72 million Riels
7	Kasikor & Thomcheat	2011	12	12			All members migrated, AC not functioning
8	Prek Pdao AC	2013	30	73	1739	17,390,000	Total fund now over 193 million Riels
9	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	2005	8	60	300	30,000,000	885 savers but only 300 shareholders; fund over 2,000 Million Riels

### Activities of ACs:

Most of the ACs engaged in more than one activity; the exceptions being Wat Koh (as mentioned above, this AC has no funds until the money stolen by the treasurer is repaid; they only have a small amount of 5 million Riels to revolve in credit) and Ansaong (although this AC provides only credit, members are very active in livestock production and use their loans exclusively for agriculture production). The AC with the most activities was Kampong Soeng with 6 activities running.

As would be expected, credit provision is the one activity carried out by all ACs that are functioning. The next most common activity was fertilizer credit (provided by five of the 8 functioning ACs). Four of the ACs engaged in seed production (2 in BTB and 2 in PVG). Rice trading (buying members' rice for collective selling was only engaged in by ACs in BTB – 3 of the 4 ACs). Two of these three ACs sold some of their rice under contracts to



buyers (rice mills). Other activities included selling fuel, drinking water production, rice bank, saving service for members and selling rice for eating.

**Table 2.3 – Activities carried out by ACs interviewed**

SN	Name of AC	Money credit	Seed prod	Rice trading	Contract farming	Fertilizer credit	Fuel selling	Other	Other description
1	Kear Meanchey	X	X	X	X				
2	Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum	X	X	X	X	X			
3	Wat Koh Chamroeun Phal	X							
4	Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal	X		X		X		X	Drinking water production
5	Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong	X				X		X	Rice bank
6	Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong	X							
7	Kasikor & Thomcheat (not functioning)								
8	Prek Pdao AC	X	X			X	X		
9	Ponleu Kaksikor Kampong Soeng	X	X			X	X	X	Savings & sell rice for eating

Summary of key points from discussions with ACs:

*Purpose in forming AC*

The reason for forming an AC given by all ACs were relatively similar; the purpose was to assist members to improve living condition and access to credit loans with lower interest charge compare with other micro-finance (or even if at same rate, could keep interest paid in the community rather than giving to banks). A number of the ACs had previously been savings groups (e.g. Saving for Change program of CEDAC) or livestock production groups (of AVSF).

*Structure of ACs*

The majority of the ACs follow the structure recommended by PDAFFs with 8 committee members – a management committee of 5 persons and a monitoring committee of 3 persons. Only one AC differed (Reang Kesei Chamroeun Phal) where they have 10 committee members. All committee members were elected at their annual general assemblies and all serve for a 5-year term after which they have to stand for re-election (if they want to continue).

*Membership of FAEC/FCFD and capacity building*

All ACs pay an annual membership fee of 100,000 Riels (some to FAEC and some to FCFD). For this fee, their expectations are threefold:

1. That they can call on the expertise of FAEC or FCFD to provide technical and/or managerial training when required (including assisting them with development of business plans)
2. That they will be invited to workshops or study tours where they can share experience and develop new contacts that can be useful to their AC businesses
3. That FAEC/FCFD can link them to new markets for the agriculture produce of their members

In relation to point 1 above, all ACs were able to list a number of areas where their capacity has improved due to trainings conducted by FAEC/FCFD. These included support with record keeping and facilitating meetings, and preparation of business plans. For point 2, at least some members of all ACs have attended workshops organized by FAEC/FCFD and some other members of 3 of the ACs have had the opportunity to participate in study tours to other provinces (and other countries such as Vietnam, Thailand). For point 3 most ACs have not yet been linked to any new markets but the three well functioning ACs in BTB noted the increased income for members who now engage in seed production; the links to quality seed acquisition were facilitated by FAEC.

On the topic of capacity building, five of the eight functioning ACs has participated in the capacity assessments conducted by FAEC (some participated in this only one time; others twice or three times already). All of them felt this was a very useful exercise to identify areas where they needed to improve. This can help them to develop plans to address these weaker areas. The weak areas differed per AC; but in general weak points included lack of capacity to attract external financing and unsustainable agriculture practices.

*Implementation of activities*

The overall activities have already been summarized in Table III.2.3 above. Here are some additional comments from ACs in relation to the implementation of these activities.

**Kear Meanchey**

- First contract for rice selling was for about 1,200 tons but they could only supply about 800 tons
- BRICO paid 1,320 Riels per kg and gave bonus of \$11 per ton
- They pay own transport costs to deliver to rice mill
- This year contract is for 1,479 and they expect to be able to fulfill but depends on the weather (depend on rainfall as no irrigation systems close to the rice fields – there is one main canal but not much water)
- Nobody grows cover grass as cows are released to roam immediately after harvest
- Their business plan is to expand contract rice selling and seed production
- Problem is they don't have storage or rice drying platform (they estimate that a store 7 x 15 meters would cost \$7,000 – and they could raise \$4,000 from among their members as 4 of the 5 villages are interested to contribute \$1,000 each)

**Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum (Bay Damram)**

- 4 of the AC members have taken part in AE activities (planting cover crop)
- This can soften up soil and provide compost
- But can only do a little as most people cannot do because cows are released immediately after harvest (can only do on chamkar land or land that is fenced)

**Reang Kesai Chamroeun Phal**

- The AC activities help members by making it easier to sell rice at good price and provide access to fertilizer for rice production; AC has entered into contract with AMRU rice mill to supply 5,700 tons of rice
- Plan to continue buying rice from members for selling
- Produced 10-15 tons of rice seeds (first attempt)
- Sell fertilizer on credit to member – 100-150 tons

**Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong**

- In early years, most of the support was from AVSF (gave many families capital for livestock raising); the capital was returned to AC for revolving to others
- To expand fertilizer credit, AC took loan from RDB of \$5,000 (10.5% interest p.a.)

**Akphiwat Kasikor Ansaong**

- AC has not yet agreed to enter any contract farming to supply rice because the village location is close to Vietnam where they have ready buyers for their rice
- Before, through training received from CEDAC, members used to grow rice using SRI technique from 2007 – 2015 but not now because they do not have enough family labor to continue the techniques as it takes longer time

**Prek Pdao AC**

- Although AC has ongoing activities such as credit, fertilizer and fuel sales, and rice seed production, the AC does not have a business plan (just general annual plan of activities)

**Ponleu Kasikor Kampong Soeng**

This AC differs from others in that it has a stronger focus on member savings. Many “outsiders” (non-members) even deposit money to gain interest from the use of these funds by the AC.

- Before the AC paid out 2.5% interest on savings and charged 3% for loans (so they were only making a small profit); after training on risk management in 2012, this policy has gradually changed so that now they pay only 1.5% interest on savings and charge 2.5% for loans
- But the rates can differ for outsiders – with interest on savings of 1.2% or lower (depending on negotiation) and 3% for loans
- Other activities include selling fertilizer, fuel, gas, eating rice – all these are sold slightly less than other sellers (due to negotiated price with suppliers) so they can still make a profit
- They also produced 4 tons of rice under the SRP (but as only small quantity, they sell locally, not to AMRU rice mill)
- Their future plan is to produce milled rice (use small machine - \$450 – for better quality and lower running cost)

*Meetings and annual assemblies*

The information was similar from most of the ACs. Generally the committee members meet every month and only once a year do all members come together – for the Annual General Assembly (AGA). ACs in BTB reported that PDAFF representatives regularly attend their AGA but in PVG province, the AGA is only attended by representatives of local authorities (commune, district). The AGAs are important for committees to report on activities to members, discuss plans for the coming year, elect new committee members (if terms have expired), and to pay dividends to members. All ACs prepare their annual report in the formats recommended by PDAFF and send them a copy.

*Issues and recommendations*

**Kear Meanchey**

- Main problem faced now is irrigation water; they are confident about markets if they can produce enough
- Lack of storage is a problem (and drying facilities) – hope the AIMS program (of MAFF) may contribute 20% for store
- Request to FAEC: Capacity building of committee (including on record keeping and filing systems); technical training (rice, livestock, vegetables); contribution to storage/drying cost

**Ponleu Thmei Kdei Sangkum (Bay Damram)**

- The main problem faced is drought (lack of irrigation canals) – and there is no program support Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in this area
- But the AC has a CCA action plan such as requesting to PDOWRAM to construct more irrigation canals (but not yet responded)
- Request FAEC to identify trainers to help address weak points from CBA (Capacity Building Assessment)
- Request FAEC to help find support to solve irrigation problems
- Help to find additional markets outside of this province
- FAEC to provide training on climate resilient agriculture techniques to members

**Reang Kесеi Chamroeun Phal**

- Main problem faced is drought (have irrigation canals but no water in the dry season)
- No fixed format for recording income and expenditure (PDAFF give one format but FAEC another); this makes it confusing for the committee
- Not enough funds to buy rice from members (owe the members for long time waiting for company to pay for the rice) – this pushes members to sell to middle men instead of AC which can leave the AC short of rice to fulfill contracts with rice mill
- Don't have equipment for land leveling (if field not level, it means rice ripens at different times and affects the quality of the rice); request machine for land leveling for members to produce rice and rice seeds
- Request FAEC to help find access for additional funds (loans)
- Help to decide on one standard finance format and train committee on this (use on computer)
- Build rice drying furnace and store to stock rice
- Safety measure for bringing money from bank (paid by rice mill who bought rice) to the members (can be transporting over 763 million Riels at a time which is a security risk)
- More capacity building and study tours for committee members who have not yet attended

**Samaki Kasikor Ta Aong**

- Rice store is now too small as they use for fertilizer storage (need to expand size)
- Competition from private sellers means they cannot make much profit from selling fertilizer (private companies also offer fertilizer on credit – but interest paid to AC stays in community)
- Pig prices now low due to recent outbreak of African Flu
- Climate change has now impacted a lot: such as higher temperature, irregular rainfall, more fog at different times of year, and more frequent and violent storms and lightening – but most important now during climate change is water management
- Request good quality rice seeds that have high yield (and meet market requirements)
- FCFD to provide more technical agriculture training
- Need water pumps to use irrigation water (new main canals constructed but there are not yet any secondary or tertiary canals)
- Help find better markets for selling rice (now middle men buy and sell to Vietnam)

**Prek Pdao AC**

- It is difficult to replace Vietnam seeds with Pkar Rumdoul or Sen Kraob as they know that if they plant Vietnam rice, (middle-men) buyers will buy
- Members don't always buy inputs from the AC (prices similar to other outlets) – even though AC collected their needs and ordered what they wanted
- AC has plan to produce larger quantities of high quality rice seeds and gradually change from producing Vietnam rice and selling to Vietnam – but need guaranteed market for their rice
- Request support for transplanting machine for rice seed production – as difficult to find labor
- Need technical training for all members and committee on all aspects of agriculture
- Committee also needs more training on management, record keeping and financial management

**Ponleu Kasikor Kampong Soeng**

- Request technical training on sustainable agriculture (rice, chickens, vegetables, and mushroom growing)

### 3. Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

It has been planned to interview 8 SHGs in Kampong Thom but 2 of the villages had 2 SHGs each (Sampong and Bos S Beng) and all organized to meet the MTR team; so the total number of groups interviewed was 10 as shown in the table below:

**Table 3.1 – Name and location of SHGs interviewed**

SN	Name of SHG	District	Commune	Village
1	Samaki Phum Pramat Dei	Stung Sen	Srayov	Pramat Dei
2	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Santuk	Prasat	Sampong
3	Sampong Rik Reay	Santuk	Prasat	Sampong
4	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Santuk	Prasat	Chambak Chrum
5	Reang Kang Tbong Mean Rith	Santuk	Tang Krasang	Reang Kang Tbong
6	Krom Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Baray	Andong Pou	Damrei Slap
7	Bos S Beng Mean Rith	Baray	Chralong	Bos S Beng
8	Bos S Beng Mean Chey	Baray	Chralong	Bos S Beng
9	Krom Sansom Phum Tnout Chum	Baray	Tnout Chum	Tnout Chum Ti Mouy
10	Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Baray	Tnout Chum	Prey Kraol

The majority of these groups (8 of the 10 SHGs) were only formed in 2019 by Mlup Baitong (MB); the other two had been formed in earlier years by MODE but had liquidated all their capital each year so their saving status does not differ much from the newer groups. But the members of one of the older groups (Damrei Slap) are much more active savers so their fund has increased faster than others. The table below summarizes the data on membership and fund accumulated to date:

**Table 3.2 – Membership and accumulated funds of SHGs**

SN	Name of SHG	Formed	Nr. memb	# females	Rate of saving	Estimated current fund	Credit rate
1	Samaki Phum Pramat Dei	Mar-19	14	11	5,000 Riels/share/mth	1,920,000	3.0%
2	Sampong Rik Chamroeun	Apr-19	34	32	10,000 Riels/month	4,420,000	3.0%
3	Sampong Rik Reay	Apr-19	60	42	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,728,500	3.0%
4	Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung	Jun-19	37	37	10,000 riels/share/mth	6,000,000	2.5%
5	Reang Kang Tbong Mean Rith	Jun-19	17	8	10,000 riels/share/mth	2,670,000	2.0%
6	Krom Sansom Phum Damrei Slap	Jun-17	64	59	Varied (up to members)	20,500,000	2.5%
7	Bos S Beng Mean Rith	Feb-19	15	14	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,000,000	3.0%
8	Bos S Beng Mean Chey	Feb-19	17	16	10,000 riels/share/mth	4,000,000	3.0%
9	Krom Sansom Phum Tnout Chum	Dec-15	21	19	10,000 riels/share/mth	7,860,400	3.0%
10	Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol	Apr-19	24	22	10,000 riels/share/mth	3,000,000	3.0%

As can be seen from the above table, the vast majority of SHG members are female (86%). Most of the SHGs have set an interest rate for members to borrow at 3% per month; only three groups have set a lower rate (and these also charge 3% if non-members borrow from their fund). All members appear satisfied with this rate of interest; although it is higher than alternative sources of credit, it is easy to obtain and the interest comes back to the group. Some group members noted that while 3% seems high, private money lenders often charge them from 5% to 10% interest per month. All the newer groups received top-up capital from MB of \$200 each; of the older groups, Tnout Chum had previously received 400,000 Riels from MODE but Damrei Slap did not receive any top-up capital from either MODE or MB.

#### Structure and meetings of SHG

The structure of these SHGs was generally similar, with one leader, one deputy leader and one treasurer (or cashier); only Damrei Slap SHG differed, with 4 committee members. The majority of leaders are female. All groups showed a similar printed book of rules and regulations (typed up by MB). But most of the members (including committee members) could not remember what information was contained in the book. Even the committee members admitted that they never took time to read and they don't read out to members at meetings. All groups meet once a month to deposit monthly savings. Generally all members attend the meeting but for the bigger groups (e.g. Damrei Slap) many members send their savings with other members. None of the groups keep attendance records for monthly meetings or write up any minutes of the meetings. Of all the SHGs interviewed, only Damrei Slap maintains individual passbooks.

#### Capacity building

MB has provided training to all groups on record keeping and provided them with the record books they need to record savings and loans. MB has provided additional coaching to them during their first few monthly meetings on how to complete all records so committee members now feel confident to do this.

Some members of most groups have received agriculture technical training and those who attended training received material or funding support to implement these agriculture activities (some vegetable growing, others chicken raising). These activities are still very new so not much result to report yet. But the SHGs in Bos Sbang said they have practiced making natural pesticides as per the training and they can see how this can be useful to them to control pests.

The SHG in Damrei Slap reported that they have had meetings recently with "agriculture" (they were not sure if from MB, FAEC or PDAFF) to disseminate to them about the benefit of transforming their group into an AC. They had made an application a few months ago which was approved by the commune council but the district office did not approve the application because there were no Rules & Regulations attached.

None of the groups have yet received any training on climate change mitigation nor have they developed any mitigation measures.

Credit activities

As noted in Table III.3.2 above, interest rates for credit taken from group funds ranged from 2% to 3% per month. The duration of loans varied per group, ranging from only 3 months (e.g. Pramat Dei and Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol) to one year (Tnout Chum Ti Mouy). Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung and Reang Kang Tblong do not put any limit on the duration of loans. For Damrei Slap, duration is also flexible but all loans have to be repaid by mid-June each year so the fund can be liquidated to distribute to members (during liquidation, from the 2.4% interest earned on loans, the committee receive 0.5% in compensation for their work)

Generally loans are taken out for agriculture purpose but the groups do not limit the purpose of the loans; members can borrow to solve other problems like health or education expenses.

Other activities

One model farmer in Pramat Dei village (a member of the SHG) was supported with equipment to expand his chicken hatchery business. He used to do this business before MB supported him but he had an old machine that was not very efficient. MB provided him with additional training on chicken raising and a small grant of \$200 for a new hatching machine (plus some netting to fence in his breeding chickens). Before he had only 40 chickens laying eggs; now this has increased to 110 chickens. He can sell the small chicks after (hatching and feeding for 20 days) at a rate of 4,000 Riels per chick. From this business he can make a profit of between 700,000 to 800,000 Riels per month. As he gets more experience with the new machine, he expects this profit will increase and there are many people who want to buy his chicks. But he is not sure yet about his role as Model Farmer as he has not received any training about how to disseminate to (or train) other farmers; now only some people come to see and ask questions.



*Old machine used before MB support (no automatic temperature gauge)*

*New machine from MB for hatching chickens with automatic temperature gauge (if temperature fluctuates, it adjusts automatically so farmer does not need to monitor all the time)*

*Chicks feeding under lamp after removal from hatching machine*



An evaporation cooling system (for vegetable storage between harvesting and selling) was installed in Pramat Dei village (see *picture inset*). This was only recently installed so they have not yet used it. But the SHG is very interested to see how it will work when the hot season comes around early next year.



Some SHG members were supported with grants to expand their income generation activities (IGA). Another SHG member who got IGA grant for expansion of grocery shop in Sampong Rik Chamroen SHG; she received a grant of xxx for her grocery shop and makes a profit of 900,000 Riels per month (as she has many goods in store and also sells cakes and fuel). MB also provided one member (deputy leader) of Reang Kang Tbong SHG with \$100 for tailoring business (but she has not been able to earn much recently as she is taking care of elderly relative) – but there is good potential for income (especially repairs to clothing) in the village.

Reang Kang Tbong SHG reported that MB had also disseminated in the village about rubbish collection. They have since promoted better collection of rubbish but the problem is that there is no designated dumpsite so they have to burn the rubbish after collection. SHG members noted that it is not only at the village level that there is no dumpsite; even the commune and district level don't have one.

#### Obstacles encountered

As most groups are still new, they did not yet face any problems except that, as would be expected at this stage, funds are not yet sufficient to meet their needs. One group in Sampong village noted that marketing of agriculture produce is difficult (especially vegetables) so members should focus on chicken raising as the buyers come to the village and give very good price (over 16,000 Riels per kg).

A problem raised by Tnout Chum SHG is that the leader and deputy leader are now very old so they need to identify younger members to take on this role. So far, they have not found those willing to be group leaders.

#### Impact

As groups very new, they have not yet received any significant impact from their membership of the group. But many members noted that the loans from the SHGs (even though small) have already enabled them to invest in income generation activities (like chicken raising, grocery shops) that they hope will yield improved income in the near future. One of the most important things is that the interest they pay on loans stays in the village to revolve among their members.

#### Future plans and suggestions

All groups indicated that they plan to continue saving in the future no matter whether MB continues to support them or not. But the way in which they will continue differs; some groups plan to liquidate the fund every year (returning all capital and interest to members) whereas other groups plan only to distribute profits made from loans as dividends to members. While some groups mentioned specifically about a percentage of profits to support the work of the committee members, none of the groups mentioned any other apportionment of profits (e.g. what percentage retained as reserve or training fund).

Apart from Damrei Slap AC who is actively pursuing steps to become an AC, other SHGs felt it is a bit too early for them to think about this yet as they are only running as SHG for less than one year. But one SHG (Thnot Chum) has an idea for the group to run a money changing service in the future (e.g. like True Money) as this could be a good way to invest savings to earn more income for the group members.

As the suggestions and requests per group varied according to their context, these are listed below per group interviewed:

#### Pramat Dei, Srayov:

- More hose pipes for all members for irrigation
- More drilled wells (old wells are rusted)
- Mixed vegetable seeds
- Training and materials for straw mushroom production
- Chicken for all members to raise
- Help with dry season rice (now have to pay \$110 per hectare for water)

#### Sampong Rik Chamroen, Prasat. Santuk

- MB to provide more capacity building to committee to make them strong enough to run group in future by themselves

- Training on chicken raising (and distribute fund to buy chicken stock and housing)
- Need more capital in the short term as takes time to build up funds
- Especially need capital during time to produce dry season rice – costs about \$2,000 per hectare for seeds, land preparation, water etc; yield can be around 4 tons per hectare so profitable but need starting capital

Sampong Rik Reay, Prasat, Santuk

- Request to provide refresher training record keeping for committee members
- Train on fish, chicken, and vegetable growing to all members

Chambak Chrum Rung Roeung, Prasat, Santuk

- Request to provide refresher training record keeping for committee
- Train on animal raising (chicken and cow)

Reang Kang Tbong Mean Rith

- More training from MB (any kind to improve capacity)
- MB to form more groups in this village
- Improve sanitation in the village (rubbish disposal is big problem)

Damrei Slap, Andoung Pou

- PDAFF to help them with training on AC formation
- MB to help add additional capital to meet needs
- Support them to develop R&R
- More training on group management/record keeping
- Need more agriculture technical training
- Members lack capital for pig raising – need a lot of money to feed pigs

Bos Sbaeng, Chralong

- Request training and support for mushroom growing
- More agriculture technical training in general

Tnout Chum Ti Muoy

- Request to provide refresher training record keeping for committee members
- Train on chicken raising techniques for younger members
- Vegetable crops support for all members.

Samaki Rik Chamroeun Prey Kraol

- Training on chicken raising – as well as cash for inputs (materials, stock, feed, etc.)
- Vegetable seeds (mixture of types)
- Additional capital for revolving fund
- Very important: improved wells (as old wells are very rusty and make red rings on plates, toilet bowls etc.)

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01

Vulnerable target groups have improved their living conditions in a sustainable way and defend their rights



Cambodian people, especially vulnerable groups, have access to high quality of Comprehensive Non-Communicable Diseases services (diabetes, hypertension and mental health) through promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Family farmers improve their economic security and contribute to reach better food sovereignty

Family farmers increase their revenues through informal and formal, individual and collective income generating activities

Family farmers improve agriculture productivity through the development of climate change resilience /agro ecological agriculture practices

Federations, farmers' organizations and local NGO deliver quality services in an efficient way to all members, and allow equal participation of each member.

Agricultural cooperatives achieve substantial economy of scale to benefit more farmers in an inclusive way and reach financial sustainability

Family farmers have access to water, quality seeds, small equipment, informal and formal market, technical support and micro-credit (self-help groups)

Family farmers and farmers' organizations improve their solidarity and social cohesion

Local NGO have necessary competences and strategy to ensure their sustainability

Federations deliver access to finance for agricultural cooperatives collective commercial activities

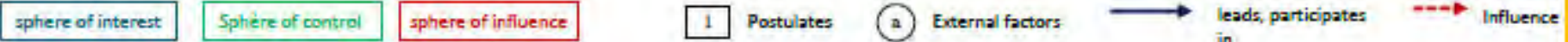
Federations and farmers organizations improve internal governance, promoting the inclusion of women and youth in their management boards, gaining in strength, autonomy, competencies, representativeness, and legitimacy.

Federations engage together on national platforms and inter-professions addressing macro-level constraints and specific sectoral topics (inclusive irrigation...) with the government and the private sector

Authorities engage in the transitional process toward sustainable development

Families and Civil Society Organizations recognize and value the role of the women and young people in the development of the rural sector

Operational research, studies, exchanges and knowledge diffusion between rural actors are reinforced in order to stimulate building, diffusion and sustainability of innovations



03



01

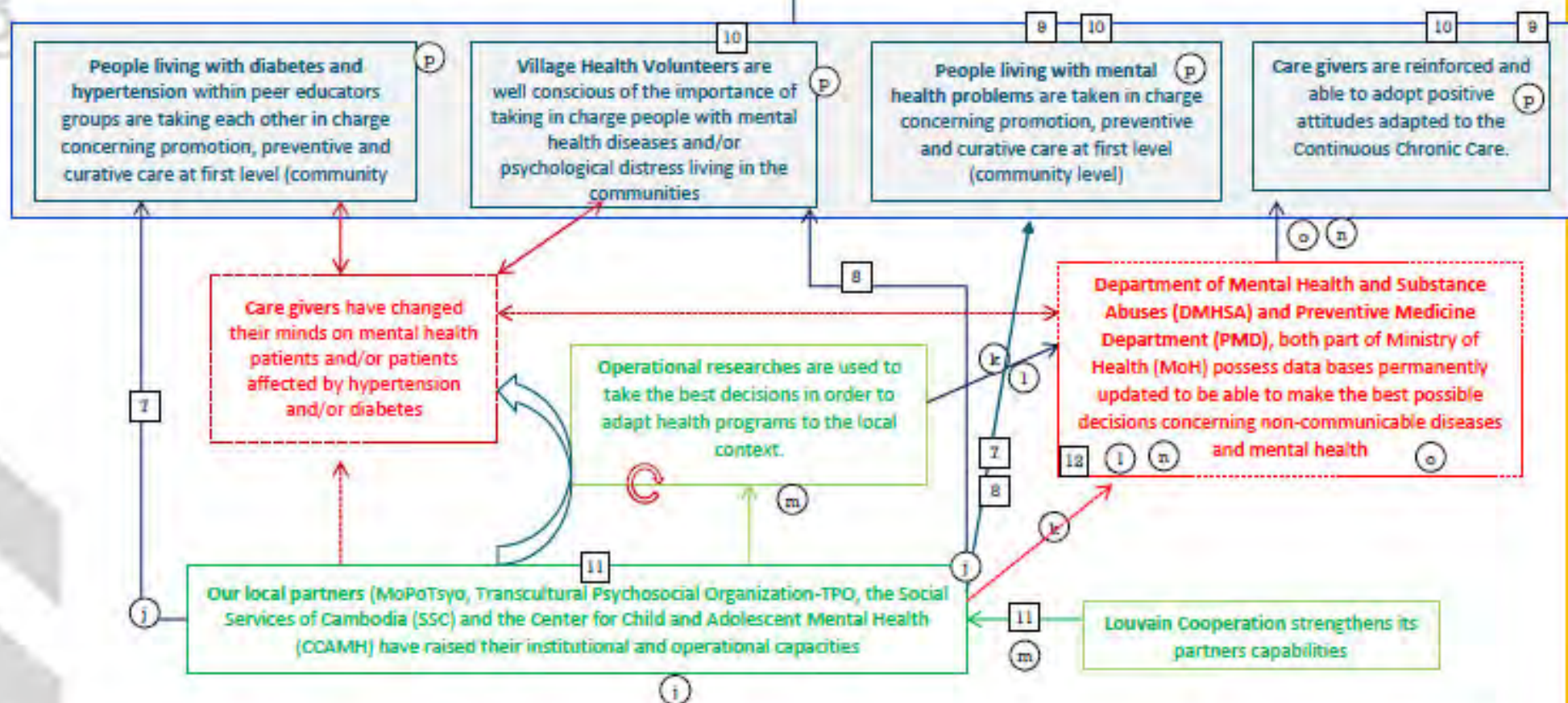
Vulnerable target groups have improved their living conditions in a sustainable way and defend their rights

02

Cambodian people, especially vulnerable groups, have access to high quality of Comprehensive Non-Communicable Diseases services (diabetes, hypertension and mental health) through promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Family farmers improve their economic security and contribute to reach better food sovereignty

03



sphere of interest

Sphere of control

sphere of influence

1 Postulates

a External factors

→ leads, participates in

- - -&gt; Influence

## Postulates

## External factors



Food Sovereignty and Economic Security	
1	Collective structures are an effective mean to improve the productivity and competitiveness of small-scale farmers and micro-enterprises, the added-value and the quality of the products and services delivered
2	The Federations, provincial and national representation of small-scale farmers, are essential to increase rural population participation in local governance, improve service delivery, speed-up agri-business development, overcome scale problem, exercise influence on macro policy issues, serving pro-poor development
3	Reinforcing small scale sustainable agriculture will build the resilience to recurrent natural disasters
4	The increase in productivity generated by sustainable agriculture practices, and the provision of additional value with no or fewer costs of production contributes to increased incomes which is sustainable
5	Linkages between farmer-to-farmer networks and Cambodian and Belgian universities enable the use of research results for the advantage of farming households' development
6	Improving nutrition pass through targeting smallholder farmers, women and poor households, by enhancing diversification of farm production and improving income for insecure households
Health	
7	The "peers-educators" intervention strategy has proved its capability to modify the attitudes of the peers when these are sensitized by people suffering the same problems
8	"Destigmatization" of mental health patients within the population quickly has for consequence a dramatic increase of care demand, often expressed firstly by women (80 %), secondly by men and finally by families
9	In fragile countries, the local decentralized health systems are often the most efficient way to provide basic health care for very poor populations.
10	The typology of 3 circles (bio – psycho- societal) is a simple, clear, powerful and today recognized model by the scientific community (WHO) to make understandable the key concepts of mental health for the stakeholders
11	The mental part of Health was too often forgotten and requires today a particular attention until it is completely part of primary health care.
12	When governmental authorities will have good sanitary databases concerning non communicable diseases (NCD), they will be more able to choose the good strategies to fight against these diseases in the Cambodian context.

Food Sovereignty and Economic Security	
a	+ Cambodian small-scale farmers have recently initiated on their own farmer organisations in order to overcome their scale problems. In recent years, FO-Feds collaborated together to complement part of their services to promote members
b	+ Farmers' organizations have experience and capacities in developing profitable activities and services with their members
c	+ Tackling on-farm irrigation development is a priority of MAFF, willing to build the resilience of small-scale farmers to recurrent natural disasters
d	+ Internet/Facebook is in 2015 the second most important channel for Cambodians to access information, and continuing to gain market share yearly
e	+ CSOs have acquired good capacities specialized in specific technical expertise
f	- Most of Cambodian CSOs are not being governed by a board; with limited involvement from population and are donor driven
g	- Agriculture contributes 33% in GDP and employs 58% of total population but only 7% of the total loan is served in this sector
h	- Most of governmental initiatives target big enterprises development, with no formal consultation of population
i	- Cambodian society is fragmented and reproduce social and economic inequalities
Health	
j	+ Willingness and engagement of all partners of Louvain Coopération
k	+ Civil society organizations (our local partners) are authorized by the government and play a significant role in the rebuilding of Cambodia's health system
l	+ Scaling up successful health programs at national scale is possible
m	+ Expertise of Louvain Coopération in mental health and strong support from UCL
n	- In Cambodia Health sector is largely unregulated and public structures aren't efficient
o	- Cambodian health services are mainly financed through faith-based organisations and private donations (and not by state budget)
p	- Acute poverty of rural inhabitants