

Terminal Evaluation

Asia

1. Outline of the Project

Country:

Laos

Project title:

The Agricultural and Rural Development Project in Vientiane Province in The Lao People's Democratic Republic Phase II

Issue/Sector:

Agriculture

Cooperation scheme:

Project-type Technical Cooperation

Division in charge:

Agricultural Technical Cooperation Division, Agricultural Development Cooperation Department

Total cost:

786 million yen

Period of Cooperation

1 November 1997 - 31 October 2002

Partner Country's Implementing Organization:

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Provincial Agricultural and Forestry Service Office (PAFSO), Vientiane Province,

Supporting Organization in Japan:

iseries of Japan (MAFF), Japan Green Resources Corporation (JGRC)

Related Cooperation:

Community Empowerment Program; "Community lasted environmental health improvement project"
Project-type Technical Cooperation; "The Agricultural and Rural Development Project in Vientiane Province in The Lao People's Democratic Republic Phase I"

1-1 Background of the Project

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, agricultural development plays an important role in its development policy. However, the management capability of the staff of the agriculture sector was low, so it was necessary to improve the capability of governmental staff as well as to organize a system that enables farmers to proactively join and lead the agricultural development.

For that purpose, the government of Laos requested Project-type Technical Cooperation to the government of Japan aiming at improving the abilities of the staff through implementing comprehensive agricultural and rural development based on the agreement of farmers at rural villages.

Upon the request, prior to implementing full-scale cooperation, the government of Japan introduced a preparatory project as the first phase to collect information over a period of two years which started on November 1, 1995. Based on the survey results of the current situation and needs of the sites, and introduction of the Project Cycle Management method, the government of Japan carried out the project of agricultural and rural development in five target villages.

1-2 Project Overview

In order to establish the methodology for comprehensive agricultural and rural development in Laos, the project implemented cooperation activities such as the development of methodology on sustainable agricultural and rural development in five model villages, improvement of agricultural and rural village infrastructure and fostering the farmers' organization.

(1) Overall Goal

The agricultural and rural development is promoted in Vientiane Province.

(2) Project Purpose

The methodology and technique for participatory and sustainable agricultural and rural development is established in five villages in Vientiane Province.

(3) Outputs

- 1) The methodology of planning, implementation and evaluation on agricultural and rural development is improved.
- 2) Appropriate technology for improving agricultural infrastructure is established.
- 3) Regionally appropriate techniques for agricultural production of rice and other crops, livestock and fish culture is established.
- 4) The rural living environment is improved.
- 5) The methodology of organizing and managing the farmer's group is strengthened.
- 6) Technical capabilities of farmers, village leaders and government staff concerned are improved.

(4) Inputs

Japanese side:

Long-term Experts	13	Equipment	49 million yen
Short-term Experts	21	Local Cost	152 million yen
Trainees received	16		

Laos Side:

Counterparts	22	Equipment	4 million kip
Land and Facilities		Local Cost	243 million kip (3 million yen)

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team

Team Leader: Kazuo NAKAGAWA, Managing Director, Agricultural Development Cooperation Department, JICA

Agricultural and Rural Development: Kazuo SHIMAZAKI, Deputy Director, Overseas Land Improvement Cooperation Office, Design Division, Rural Infrastructure Department, Rural Development Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Planning Evaluation: Yasuto TAKEUCHI, Deputy Director, Agricultural Technical Cooperation Division, Agricultural Development Cooperation Department, JICA

Evaluation Analysis: Tsuyoshi ITO, IC Net

Period of Evaluation 10 July 2002 - 25 July 2002

Type of Evaluation:

Terminal Evaluation

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

The Fifth Social Economic Development Plan (2001 - 2005) includes the measures for food security, promotion of cash crop production and poverty alleviation. The Agricultural Development Strategic Vision (1999) announced the enhancement of the rural financial system and participatory development of agricultural infrastructure. Therefore, the project has had consistency with the higher level policy of Laos. From a beneficiary point of view to the needs, the project took the participatory approach to organize the framework which reflected the choice of villagers to public administration through the people's participation from the planning stage to evaluation stages.

(2) Effectiveness

Due to the project, the local administration side have come to understand the needs of people through the process from establishing a development plan and activity plan to the implementation and evaluation by Village Development Committee (VDC). As a result, appropriate techniques (irrigation, rice farming, cultivation of cash crop and improvement of living environment) have taken ground at the village level, and the staff of the agricultural section of the provincial government and personnel in villages were fostered. Thus, participatory planning, implementation and evaluation methods were implemented within the cooperation period as planned. However, the measures taken by the Lao side remained insufficient in order to foster human resource at the district level and extend the effects of the project to untargeted areas. However, the participatory agricultural development methods were penetrated at the village level, and the manual will be completed by the termination of the project. Therefore, the effectiveness of the project is deemed to be high.

(3) Efficiency

Although there were some shortages and delays of personnel and budgetary allocation on the Lao side, the inputs from the Japanese side were implemented as planned, and the procured equipment and facilities in the project have been utilized. Therefore it is considered that the project was implemented efficiently.

(4) Impact

Improved techniques were extended to the villages other than the target villages of the project as well. For instance, technical retransfer among farmers were promoted in the target villages and through this process the production technologies of rice and mushrooms were spread to neighboring villages.

(5) Sustainability

As for the institutional sustainability, it has been officially decided that the project office will be reorganized as the provincial rural development center which will offer technical services for local farmers as well as trainings for district extension staff in the province. As for the technical sustainability, the VDC autonomously began to function at each stage of planning, implementing and evaluating stage. VDC has considered organizing manuals for development. The provincial government has become capable of giving advice to the VDC appropriately within the know-how obtained through the project activities but did not have enough capacity to formulate a regional development plan which covers all relevant sectors.

As for financial sustainability, the Village Development Fund (VDF) has continued to function, but the support system by the provincial government was not sufficient. Together with the improvement of capability mentioned above, the financial sustainability became an issue to be solved in the future.

Judging from the above factors, the activities and effects will be continued at a village level, however, it is necessary to strengthen the function of provincial administration to secure the sustainability of the project.

3-2 Factors that promoted realization of effects

(1) Factors Concerning the Planning

N/A.

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

Throughout the project, provincial staff visited the target villages and they planned, implemented and evaluated the project activities together with the villagers. This promoted the realization of the effects of the project and secured the sustainability of activities at the village level.

3-3 Factors that impeded realization of effects

(1) Factors Concerning the Planning

As the Lao project manager of implementation served the position of the official at the province level, it was difficult to provide feed-back of the project outputs to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at a national level. Therefore, it was difficult to systematically and organizationally disseminate the achievement of the project nationwide.

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

N/A

3-4 Conclusion

There remained some measures that the Laos side should take for the sustainability of its effort. However, the methodology and techniques were established at the village level, therefore the project purpose was accomplished.

3-5 Recommendations

(1) Enhancement of the project management capacity for Vietiane Province

For the VDC to function with sustainability in the future, it is necessary that the provincial government authorizes the support activities initiated by the project as its mandate. In addition, the provincial government has to be able to formulate a comprehensive development plan while strengthening the collaboration with the involved sections.

(2) Development of human resources at District level

To improve the instruction and monitoring capability for the VDC's activities in the future, it is favorable to implement training to the district extension staff utilizing the know-how that the provincial staff obtained through the project activities.

(3) Setting-up the Permanent Coordinating Committee (PCC)

To continue the outputs of the project, it is necessary to reorganize existing Joint Steering Committee which is scheduled to dissolve after the project duration, into Permanent Coordinating Committee(PCC). PCC will give recommendation for the project's continuous activities. It is desirable for the project to hold PCC meeting at least once before the termination of the project.

(4) Dissemination of the project outputs to the neighboring provinces

It is favorable to take necessary measures to share and disseminate the outputs of the project systematically with the initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for the accomplishment of the overall goal.

3-6 Lessons Learned

It is important to assign Project Director(PD) apart from the assignment of the Project Manager who has responsibilities for the managerial and technical matters at project site, in order to disseminate the developed outputs of the project.

3-7 Follow-up Situation

N/A.