

Summary of Terminal Evaluation

1. Outline of the Project		
Country: Lao People’s Democratic Republic		Project Title: Lao Organic Agriculture Promotion Project (LOAPP)
Issues/Sector: Agricultural Development		Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation Project
Division in Charge: Rural Development Dep.		Total Cost: 199 million Yen
Period of Cooperation	R/D: September 2013 to September 2016 (3 years)	Partner Country’s Implementing Organization: Department of Agriculture (DOA) of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)
		Supporting Organizations in Japan: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
<p>1-1 Background of the Project</p> <p>In Lao PDR, it is described that organic agriculture (OA) has high potential for commercial production because pesticide and chemical fertilizer have not been widely applied in conventional farming. MAF had established the “MAF Minister’s Decision on Organic Agriculture” in collaboration with NGO in 2005 and the “Standard of Organic Agriculture in Lao PDR” had been commenced since 2006.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Standard Division, Department of Agriculture, MAF (STD), in charge of inspection and granting certification on OA had only 4 inspectors out of 9 (in 2004) who were able to execute the inspection role based on the Lao Certification Body (LCB). Such an insufficiency of the personnel took approximately 6 months for the process of inspection and certification on OA.</p> <p>Although the OA certifications were granted to 19 farmers’ groups in Vientiane Capital as of December 2014, many issues such as quality control on farmer’s production, Internal Control System (ICS) of farmers’ group, technical supports provided by government, transportation and logistics, production plan based on the market needs, and collaboration with public sectors were not in the sufficient level.</p> <p>Based on above background, JICA Technical cooperation project “Lao Organic Agriculture Promotion Project (LOAPP)” was formulated in September 2013 as a 3-year-project, aiming at increasing farmers’ income through the establishment of OA certification system as well as strengthening the marketing activities. LOAPP is looking at the system enhancement in promoting OA with three outputs: 1) Setting up a national OA Strategy, 2) Capacity development of Clean Agriculture Development Center (CADC) and 3) Improvement of STD for their inspection techniques and process.</p> <p>In February 2015, the Japanese Mid-Term Consultation Mission Team was dispatched to LOAPP. They pointed out the importance on slotting activities for the further expansion of OA toward farmers’ level together with information collection and future’s plan for the purpose for the promotion of export business.</p> <p>At the final stage of LOAPP’s cooperation with the remained period of half-year, the Terminal Evaluation consists of both Lao and Japanese sides was conducted for the purpose of clarification of</p>		

benefits and contributions through the activities of LOAPP as well as consideration on future's direction lead by Government of Lao after the termination of LOAPP.

1-2 Project Overview

(1) Overall Goal

Structure for promotion of organic agriculture is functional.

(2) Project Purpose

Structure for promotion of organic agriculture is enhanced.

(3) Outputs

- 1) Strategic plan for national organic agriculture development is finalized.
- 2) Clean Agriculture Development Center (CADC)'s capacity for promotion of organic agriculture is improved.
- 3) Standard Division (STD)'s capacity for promotion of organic agriculture is improved.

(4) Inputs (as of end-January 2016)

Japanese Side : Total cost 199 million JPY

Experts/Consultants: 3 Japanese long-term experts, 3 Japanese short-term experts,
10 third-country lecturers (from Malaysia and Thailand)
3 local consultants (OA & market survey, TOT for CADC staff, OA market analysis)

Training : 20 trained in Japan (15 Specific Training under LOAPP, 5 Group Training Course)
13 trained in Thailand

Technical equipment : Approx. 18 million JPY

Operational Cost (Local Operation) : Approx. 32.1 million JPY

Other Cost (Facility renovation & construction) : Approx. 26.4 million JPY

Lao Side :

Counterpart : Total 23 persons

Land and Facilities : Offices (in Vientiane Capital & CADC), meeting rooms, light & water expenses

Local Cost : 919 million Kip

2. Evaluation Team

Members of the Evaluation Team	< Japanese side >	
	Leader	Mr. Masanobu KIYOKA, Senior Advisor, JICA
	Agricultural Policy	Mr. Takashi SEO, JICA Agricultural Policy Advisor, MAF
	Planning Management	Mr. Kazuhiro OTSUKI, Team 1 Special Advisor, Agricultural & Rural Development Group 1, Rural Development Department, JICA
	Evaluation & Analysis	Mr. Akira MATSUMOTO, President, A&M Consultant Co., Ltd.

< Lao side >	
Leader	Mr. Khamtanh THADAVONG, Deputy Director General, Department of Agriculture, MAF
Member	Dr. Phanpradith PHANDALA , Director, Division of Planning and Cooperation, Department of Agriculture, MAF
Member	Mr. Hadsady SISOUVANH, Deputy Director, Administration Division, Department of Agriculture, MAF
Member	Mr. Vongsavanh VONGKAYSONE, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Division, Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF

Period of Evaluation : 21 February 2016 to 5 March 2016

Type of Evaluation : Terminal Evaluation

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Achievements

(1) Outputs

Output 1: Strategic plan for national organic agriculture development is finalized.

[Indicator] JCC member reaches the consensus on the strategic plan in the Project JCC.

The Output 1 has been achieved.

The final draft of Strategic plan for national OA development (OA Strategy) was endorsed by JCC members and approved by Director General of DOA officially which is treated as the approval at Ministry's level. Therefore, the current status is beyond the level of originally-planned. The approved OA Strategy will be disseminated at the next step for the expansion.

Output 2 : CADC's capacity for promotion of organic agriculture is improved.

[Indicator] Number of CADC trainers who are capable of conducting TOT on organic agriculture is increased by 8 persons (currently 4 persons).

The Output 2 has been achieved.

Based on the 5 criteria of Competency Evaluation Sheet (OA Knowledge, OA Technique, Marketing, Management and Teaching Methodology) which was elaborated through series of discussions with CADC, the Japanese Short-Term expert provided technical advices. The result of Competency Evaluation showed the weaknesses in Teaching Methodology, Marketing and Management although the level of OA Knowledge was relatively high. Japanese Long-Term Expert has been following up those weak points through continuous trainings so that the level of competency was brought up at present.

TOT materials (i.e. presentation slides, paper drama, posters) have also been produced among CADC staff and such items were utilized for Trainings for Trainers (TOT) and On-The-Job Training (OJT) held by CADC in order to bring up CADC staff for new OA trainers. The number of trainer who passed the Competency Evaluation originally 4 at the commencement of LOAPP, finally increased into 10 in 2015

Output 3 : STD's capacity for promotion of organic agriculture is improved.

[Indicator 1] Standard Division has policy documents covering at least 70% of the topics required by international norms (i.e. ISO17065) guiding the handling and conduct of the Lao Certification Body (LCB) certification process.

[Indicator 2] Standard Division has policy documents covering at least 70% of the topics required by international norms (i.e. ISO17065) guiding the handling and conduct of the Lao Certification Body (LCB) certification process.

The Output 3 is expected to be almost achieved.

Standard Division had set policy documents covering all the topics (100% coverage) required by international norms (ISO17065) through the advisory given by third-country lecturers and series of discussion in workshops.

The level of inspectors was also gradually being improved through the series of training given by the third-country lectures as well as the intern training organized by the Thailand's accredit organization (Organic Agriculture Certification Thailand : ACT). The result of Competency Evaluation scored that number of inspectors capable enough to execute their inspection role had increased to be 6 persons.

In addition, some inspectors are supposed to be accredited by ACT shortly.

(2) Project Purpose : Structure for promotion of organic agriculture is enhanced.

[Indicator 1] At least 50% of Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)/District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) officers (in-charge of crop) in the target areas pass an understanding test on organic agriculture standard.

[Indicator 2] Period required for organic certification process (after receiving completed application to notification) is no longer than 4 months.

The Project Purpose is expected to be achieved by the end of the Project.

As for the Indicator 1, more than 50% of PAFO/DAFO officers have passed through 2 times of understanding tests on organic agriculture standard.

On the other hand, the Indicator 2 is yet to be achieved since the time consumption for certification process is still 6.4 months, not less than 4 months. However, the Project has clarified the causes of such time-consuming process (i.e. difficulty in arranging Board Meeting under every representative's busy schedule) and the countermeasures (i.e. setting the meeting by monthly with enabling deputy personnel from each section for making decision) will be taken shortly. Thus, it is expected the time consumption will be shorten less than 4 months at the end of the Project.

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance: High

Relevance to the development policies of Government of Lao PDR (GOL) :

In 2006, GOL set "Clean Agriculture" as the one of important national goal. In line with this, "MAF

Agricultural Development Strategy 2011 to 2020” (final draft Sep. 2010) as well as “Strategic Plan for National Agriculture Development 2025, Vision Towards 2030” (3rd draft, Sep 2015) showed that OA can play a crucial role in supporting safe food production for consumers, sustainable production, conservation of natural resources and opportunities to generate income for farmers. OA is deemed to have a significant potential in the Lao PDR.

Relevance of target groups’ needs :

As the target groups of this Project which includes DOA officers (STD and CADC) and PAFO/DAFO officers of the Vientiane Capital are all important players to promote OA, it is appropriate to strengthen the basis and capacity development of those groups under LOAPP.

In addition, improvement of OA farm in CADC is to go along with the intention of the GOL which promotes clean and value-added agriculture, and also seems to be a good demonstration /display farm as well as basis on the new/appropriate techniques on OA.

Allocation of Counterpart Personnel (C/P) :

An appropriate number of C/P from appropriate sections is assigned to LOAPP with fulfilment in the case of staff’s turning over. In addition, the contribution of Project Manager (current Director of CADC) toward LOAPP is remarkable.

ODA policies of the Government of Japan (GOJ) :

“Country Assistance Policy for Lao PDR (2014)”, prepared by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of GOJ sets the “Agricultural Development and Forest Conservations” as one of the priority areas. “Country Assistance Implementation Plan for Lao PDR (2015)” drawn by JICA in line with the MOFA policy placed the Project in the “Program for Agricultural and Rural Development and Strengthening the Administration of Agriculture and Fisheries” in the focused area of “Agricultural Development and Forest Conservation”. LOAPP has been formulated in line with such ODA policies of GOJ as the one of strategy to increase the earnings of farmers who constitutes the majority of the nation’s poor.

(2) Effectiveness: High

As the activities of the Project have been implemented as planned, it is expected that the Project is likely to achieve the outputs. Thus, the Project Purpose is seemed achievable at the end of the Project. In order to promote OA in the Lao PDR, the approaches for the institutional enhancement such as, the capacity-building for CADC and STD, the formation of certification process in STD, as well as the middle/long-range perspective activities and responsibilities clearly described in OA Strategy are all essential. The Project has played an important role and made significant contribution in this respect.

(3) Efficiency: Relatively High

Most of the activities were implemented as planned although some of the indicators were yet to be achieved as mentioned above. Therefore, the productivity of the Project referring to the input is seemed almost appropriate.

Some good results in this Project regarding to efficient point of view include the proper selection of the third country experts and engagement of local consultants. From the aspect of the cost-effectiveness, those inputs are judged more efficient than the recruitment of resource personnel

from Japan even though there were some difficulties in adjusting their trip schedule.

In view of promoting OA further in Laos, it is highly expected that more human and financial resources from Lao side would be secured.

(4) Impacts: Moderate

1) Overall Goal : Structure for promotion of organic agriculture is functional.

[Indicator 1] More than 40 times of CADC trainings on OA for PAFO/DAFO technicians/farmer's groups/etc. are conducted after the project termination.

[Indicator 2] Number of cases that STD conducts organic inspection and certification to organic farmers groups trained by CADC and PAFO/DAFO is increased by 4 times (currently 2 cases increased to 8 cases).

As for the Indicator 1, the number of the trainings on OA (for PAFO/DAFO technicians and farmer's groups) held by CADC during the last three years counted: 32 times (in 2013), 13 times (in 2014) and 16 times (in 2015) respectively. Based on such status and trend, it is not seemed possible to attain the target level ("more than 40 times of CADC trainings"). At the time on commencement of the Project in 2013, the number of training was "32 times", therefore it was expected such increasing trend of training, however, the target number included other trainings supported by other donors. After 2013, the trend did not go beyond the level of 2013 since the donor-supported trainings were decreased. In order to monitor the CADC's capacity in conducting trainings, it is more appropriate to look at the pure number of training held by CADC excluding donors' support, similar to 2014 and 2015. Therefore, the Team proposed to reset the target into "20 times" according to the status in 2014 and 2015.

As for the Indicator 2, the number of cases which STD newly inspected/certified during the last three years counted: 3 cases (in 2013), 2 cases (in 2014) and 2 cases (in 2015), while the total cases including renewal counted: 18 cases (in 2013), 12 cases (in 2014) and 11 cases (in 2015). Such status shows that number of OA trainings which CADC/PAFO/DAFO conducted may not have direct coincidence with the increase of new case in OA application and certification. It is therefore appropriate to look at the total number of cases (new and renewal cases) in order to grasp the real trend of OA inspection/certification rather than focusing only upon new cases. Based on such idea, the Team proposed to reset the objective of the indicator into "Cases including not only new application but also renewal of certification" and its target level to be "increased by 10% year by year".

As above mentioned, it is hardly able to measure the progress of the Project appropriately under the current indicators. However, with the modifications of these 2 indicators as the Team proposed, it is deemed that Overall Goal will be attained.

2) Knock-on Effect

New sales channel in Vientiane Capital (Opening permanent shop, "Organic Home") :

The permanent shop, which is scheduled to open in April 2016, is expected to play important roles as: a permanent shop for farmers to sell their OA products, a place to deliver information on OA toward citizens, and a bridge to promote access between producers and consumers.

Rising OA farmers' awareness in management :

The basic trainings to the OA farmer's groups, such as shop management and accounting, were provided by the Project. The farmer's groups become more conscious about their farm management and marketing.

Enhanced utilization of CADC demonstration farm :

Through setting up/renovation of facilities in CADC and also providing trainings for the officers, it expanded experimental cultivation and applied new techniques in the demonstration farm. Furthermore, the CADC is now becoming a good learning center of OA for young agricultural students who are expected to be future's key players for OA promotion in Laos.

Negative effect :

There is no particular negative effect.

However, a wider scope of view will be needed for the further expansion of the benefit of OA not ending up with reinforcement of institutional system at government level but also stepping more toward farmers' level as well as customer's level (including consumer, private sector and tourist, etc.)

(5) Sustainability: Expected to be relatively high

Policy aspect :

Priority of the clean agriculture including OA is quite high in the agriculture development strategy plan to 2025, and also GOL is expected to take actions for the further improvement of OA within the framework of OA strategy established by LOAPP.

Institutional aspect :

Based on strong policy of GOL to promote OA, there is the clear department structure such as STD and CADC within DOA/MAF. Those department and centers have mandate to provide quality service according to the needs of farmer's groups and enterprises who apply for the certification of OA as well as technical guidance and OA training.

Technical aspect :

The C/Ps of LOAPP have gained knowledge and practical skills on OA. Thus, it is expected that such trained C/Ps shall undertake their duties in their offices and transfer outputs of the Project as trainers to other staffs including PAFO/DAFO.

Financial aspect :

In accordance with the importance of OA and official endorsement of OA strategy, MAF has a plan to secure financial resources for OA. On the other hand, the Project was sometime constrained by the budget allocation by GOL. Such as delay of financial allocation is a nation-wide issue to take heed in carrying out a project.

In view of sustainable field activities, the Team appreciates that CADC manages their revenue such as sales of OA products, as a temporary fund until the allocation of official budget, for the daily operation, maintenance of farmland and facilities as well as conducting trainings.

3-3 Factors that Promoted Realization of Effects

(1) Factors Concerning to Planning

Initially, LOAPP had been focusing mainly upon the government's institutional strengthening. At the stage of Mid-Term Consultation, Japanese Mission Team suggested the Project to look further into farmers' needs. In response, LOAPP decided to provide the other supports such as the establishment of permanent OA shop, "Organic Home", for the farmers to learn market activities. Such approaches corresponding to farmers' needs promoted positive knock-on effect of the Project.

(2) Factors Concerning to the Implementation Process

The C/Ps took strong commitment specially in the following points:

- 1) Delay of some activities such as formation of OA strategy and improving CADC's demonstration farm were reeled up for the completion within the timeframe. (Contribution factor for effectiveness)
- 2) Establishment of "Strategy team" was initiated by STD so that OA strategy was completed successfully. (Contribution factor for sustainability)
- 3) OA experiments and variety of trainings on CADC's demonstration farm were conducted under the ownership of staff members. (Contribution factor for sustainability)

3-4 Factors that Inhibited Realization of Effects

(1) Factors Concerning to Planning

Due to the fact that the promotion of OA was not always reflecting to the increase of new cases of OA application/certification, the impact of the Project was not clearly shown in the indicator of Overall Goal. The revision of the indicator as suggested by the Team will provide clearer information for grasping the status of OA application/certification.

(2) Factors Concerning to the Implementation Process

- 1) OA staffs' turning over in CADC gave negative effect to the capacity building of OA trainers' team. However, it was recovered through senior staff's internal mini-trainings for bringing up young staff as well as sufficient occasions of OJT for preserving the trainers' team work.
- 2) High-ranking officers' heavy schedule was the obstacle in arranging the Certification Committee Meeting that prolonged the time consumption of OA certification process. As the countermeasure, new rule for the meeting is set and will be taken shortly. Under the new rule, it enables other officers to attend the Meeting as the substitute attorney for decision-makers so that burden in arranging the Meeting would be mitigated.

3-5 Conclusion

The activities of the Project have mostly been implemented well. Although some indicator shows delay in progress, it is seemed that the Project Purpose will be achieved at the end of its cooperation period since the countermeasures will be taken shortly. Thus, it is concluded that the Project will be terminated in September 2016 as originally stipulated in the R/D.

3-6 Recommendations

(1) Future course of actions

All necessary activities after the Terminal Evaluation were summarized in the table. Specially, the activities which should be treated after the termination of the Project are shown below:

- Output 1 Initiate to implement the activities along with OA Strategy
Follow up progress of the OA Strategy/Road map and monitor the activities
Improve/revise the OA Strategy
- Output 2 Develop TOT curriculum and training materials by CADC (advanced level)
Strengthen the TOT activities of CADC to PAFO/DAFO staff to develop OA trainers
Establish OA markets in target provinces
- Output 3 Discuss the means to delegate the inspection activities to PAFO in the Provinces
Get equivalency of LCB with some international norms
Continue training for officers to be entitled as inspectors for foreign certification system

(2) Revision of PDM and P/O

The Team recommends the contents of PDM shall be revised with the following findings and considerations.

1) Clarification of activities

The Project has supported several facilities such as warehouse, packinghouse, greenhouse, and Organic Home (permanent OA market), which should be indicated in PDM for the clarification of the necessities of those facilities established. Therefore, two activities should be appeared under Output 2 as shown below.

2-2) Set up/renovate necessary facilities in CADC for training and demonstration (warehouse, packinghouse, greenhouse, etc.)
2-10) Support farmers' groups / farmers for marketing activities (permanent OA market, etc.)

2) Modification of Indicators for Overall Goal

Two indicators for Overall Goal are considered too ambitious and inappropriate. It is recommended therefore to make following modifications for both indicators.

Indicator 1:

Present	More than 40 times of CADC trainings on OA for PAFO/DAFO technicians/farmer's groups/etc. are conducted after the project termination.
Revised	More than 20 times of farmer's training on OA by CADC and PAFO/DAFO are conducted annually after the project termination.

Indicator 2:

Present	Number of cases that Standard Division conducts organic inspection and certification to organic farmers groups trained by CADC and PAFO/DAFO is increased by 4 times (currently 2 cases increased to 8 cases).
Revised	Number of cases* that Standard Division conducts organic inspection and certification to organic farmers groups increased by 10% year by year. (* Cases including not only new application but also renewal of certification)

(3) Supports for Organic Home

While the Organic Home will be managed by the Vientiane Organic Agriculture Production Group (VOAPG), constant supports by PAFO are crucial for further continuation and sound management. The supports provided by Japanese side should be limited only to technical advice and practical training. Once the building and facilities have been completed, operational cost shall be taken by VOAPG.

In view of promoting OA and people's awareness, the Team proposes that MAF provides VOAPG with trainings for ICS, inspection/certification, promotion activity, and so on.

(4) Interaction among stakeholders

Through interviews and meetings, the Team found the gap among voices of stakeholders. For instance, farmers are expecting CADC/PAFO to provide them technical advices, while CADC/PAFO are recognizing that farmers send no request. In order to grasp the potential and changing needs of farmer's, DOA/CADC and PAFO/DAFO, as service providers, are expected to clarify what can be provided for farmer's groups/ farmers and to disseminate such information widely. Frequent occasions for making interactive communication with farmer's group/ farmers are needed.

3-7 Lessons Learnt

(1) Framework of Project

"Technical Cooperation Project" cannot be always formulated at the planning stage with sufficient information from key informants including farmers. Therefore, in the process of project implementation, the project should consider the measures to address the real needs of farmers. For example, a project as well as LOAPP aiming at strengthening promotion method or institutional system should require continual awareness onto farmers as ultimate beneficiaries to see if such project's approaches are really corresponding to farmers' need which is an income growth through technical improvement in farming.

(2) Utilization of Resource person and training center in the region

Utilization of resources from neighboring countries or local personnel is worthwhile because of similarity in culture, language and surrounding situation. In addition, the procedure of assignment is not relatively time consuming in comparison with the assignment of the expert from Japan.

In addition, time consumption for the assignment takes shorter time rather than the personnel assigned from Japan. Moreover, there are several training centers for practicing OA in Thailand where foreign trainees can be accepted. Because of the similarity in language, their training style and topics as well as cost-effectiveness, sending trainees to Thailand may be quite beneficial for Lao personnel, especially for farmer's level.