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SRI-LMB

REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Novotel Sukhumvit, Bangkok, 01-02 November 2018

Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Lower Mekong River Basin (SRI-LMB)

Concept Note

1. Introduction

Out of 65 million population living in the Lower Mekong Basin region, 60 million reside in the rainfed areas in the lower part of the basin, i.e., in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam and directly rely on the agriculture for their food and livelihoods. Rice is the most important crop in this region. With several challenges faced like drought and uncertainty in rainfall are considered hazard in this region. Due to water shortages in the dry season, agricultural productivity is low and smallholder farmers in this region are the most likely victims of climate change and extreme weather events.



Producing food more from available land, water and human resources and conserving natural resources is one of the key approaches for agriculture research and development that has emerged as a key idea for shaping agricultural growth and ensuring food security, especially for the rural poor.

2. SRI-LMB: an AIT-led and EU-funded regional project addressing the food security involving smallholder farmers

SRI-LMB was formulated in 2012 and is being implemented in rainfed areas of the four lower Mekong River Basin countries: **Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand**. It involves smallholder rice farmers (including women and landless), researchers, extension personnel, and development professionals along with staff of government ministries (<http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia/>).





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The project is led by the Asian Center of Innovation for Sustainable Agriculture Intensification (**ACISAI**), Asian Institute of Technology (**AIT**), Thailand in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (**FAO**), **Oxfam America**, **SRI-Rice** Cornell University in USA, the **University of Queensland** in Australia together with key ministries.

3. SRI-LMB objectives

The main objective of the project is to focus on farmer participation by educating farmers about **System of Rice Intensification (SRI)** practices and building strong farmer’s network at community level. In contrast with the traditional method of rice cultivation, SRI techniques require less water, seed, manure and labour and promises higher yield returns. Some major activities include exchanging ideas on new or alternative agro-ecological farming techniques, developing low cost location-specific technologies with profitable harvesting and increasing economic opportunities with better market needs for rainfed farmers. Documenting the results and sharing them with the immediate farming community and communities at large through an inclusive participatory process from local to national and regional level represents the core modus operandi of the project. Evidence-based policy options for a better set of policies has been generated through a participatory consultation process working closely with all relevant stakeholders, including policy-makers in the country.

4. SRI-LMB achievements

With the support of ministries and governmental agencies in all 4 project countries, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, the project functions well in building capacity and confidence among farmers. More than **15,000** farmers participated directly in the farmer-led field trials located in 33 districts of **11 provinces** of the four LMB countries. The number of farmer-participatory experiments conducted under this EU-funded project was more than **1,500: 121 at 60 sites in 2014, 465 at >173 sites** in 2015, and then **1,134 at >582 sites** in 2016-17.

The results showed that in comparison with the pre-project baseline performance, SRI practices helped to improve livelihoods across the LMB region by increasing rice yield by **52%**, farmers’ net economic return per hectare by **70%**, labour use efficiency by **64%**, water productivity by **59%**, and fertilizer use efficiency by **75%**. The total energy input required for farming operations decreased by **34%**, along with significant reductions in per-hectare greenhouse gas emission, respectively by **14%** with irrigated rice production and by **17%** with rainfed cropping. Hand-to-hand research was conducted to ‘visualize’ the SRI adaptation response by farmers, and policy





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analysis was done within the context of economics and public-private environment for small-scale agriculture development in the Mekong region.

5. SRI-LMB organizing the final regional workshop

SRI-LMB wishes to share the outcomes and lessons learnt from field during its five years of implementation with the regional audience by organizing a regional workshop at Novotel Sukumvit, Bangkok, from **01-02 November 2018**.

6. Purpose of the workshop is to:

Share the results on SRI's:

- Contributions to food security and household incomes
- Impacts of market participation
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Building momentum for economic and environmental improvements in the region

Identify the opportunities for:

- Acceleration of smallholder agriculture development and climate-smart practices;
- scaling up and scaling out the learning and accelerate the momentum for economic, social and environmental improvements in the region

7. The workshop will be organized in two parts:

- **Learning Exchange Session** (Sharing key results from the project; exchange lessons learned from similar efforts regionally and/or internationally on food security, climate change adaptation mitigation; climate-smart practices, sustainable rice production.
- **Planning session** (planning for scaling up and scaling out the learning and accelerate the momentum for economic, social and environmental improvements in the region

8. Target participants:

- Representative farmers, provincial coordinators, national coordinators and members of the national implementing consortia from the four project countries
- Regional project partners (FAO, Oxfam, SRI-Rice, Cornell University, USA, and University of Queensland, Australia) and implementing ministries from the four countries
- Representative of the EU Delegation to Thailand
- Representative of the SRP (?); Lotus Food; Olam International, Mars (?);
- Representative of the ASEAN Food Security, Mekong Institute, SRI-MAS, etc.
- Representative of the SRI communities (one form each country)
- Local, national and regional NGOs and organizations working on the similar mandate areas





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9. The workshop outputs and outcomes are:

- SRI-LMB project knowledge, experiences shared and discussed among project partners and relevant stakeholders,
- Project evaluation mission findings/recommendations shared and discussed
- Awareness raised on good agro-ecological climate smart practices and the enabling framework for smallholder agriculture development in Asia
- Strategies and ways forward discussed and agreed for further improvement of learning and for the sustainability of the learned practices in the Mekong region
- Awareness raised about the project among regional organizations, media and public in general.

10. Organizing and Funding

The Workshop will be organized by the ACISAI Center of AIT. The ACISAI will cover all the costs associated with the Workshop.

More information on SRI-LMB is available at:

 <http://www.sri-lmb.ait.asia/>

 <https://www.facebook.com/sri.lmb>

 <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5P9MFLsKIbshwMDY918XXw>

 <https://www.slideshare.net/srilmb>

 <http://www.scoop.it/t/sri-lm>

