



# Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.15

## Clean Agriculture Development Project

Published in June 2021

This is a technical cooperation project over five years (2017-2022) funded by JICA, targeting four Pilot Provinces (Vientiane Capital, Luang Prabang, Sayabouly, and Xieng Khouang). It aims at promoting clean agriculture, namely Organic Agriculture and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), based on market needs in the Pilot Provinces.

### Project activities update

#### 1. Lockdown of Vientiane Capital and its response

Although COVID-19 has been spread worldwide, no major infection was seen in Lao PDR. The number of the cumulative infected persons of COVID-19 in Lao PDR was just 60 as of April 20. However, the number of the infected persons has been increased rapidly nationwide. The number of the cumulative infected persons became 2,053 as of June 20. Under these situations, the lockdown of Vientiane Capital has been instructed by Lao government. Although it was planned from April 22 to May 5, the extension instruction was given 4 times. The period of the lockdown has been extended to July 4 so far.

Staff from Clean Agriculture Standard Center (CASC), Japanese expert, and the Project staff went to business trip in Xieng Khouang and Luang Phabang in April. They rounded up the schedule and went back to Vientiane Capital on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. After that, Japanese experts and the Project staff worked at home based on the instruction of the Lao government and JICA Laos office.



(picture) Atmosphere of Vientiane capital of June 14 where the regulations were gradually relaxed and revived.

Although it was planned for two Japanese short-term experts to be dispatched and work in Lao PDR from April, the activity plan of the short-term experts had to be changed drastically due to the effect of the lockdown. During the lockdown period, the Project had to implement the activities with a big destruction including the activities of the short-term experts. For examples, limited

number of the staff visited OA market and collected the related information. Besides, the series of the on-line meeting for sharing information among relevant parties by using Zoom and Skype were organized.

#### 2. Introduction of short-term expert (1) and implementing on-line training



Dr. Nitta

I am Naoto Nitta, a short-term expert on soil management. Although this is my 5<sup>th</sup> assignment in Lao PDR, I had to continually face unusual situation. Two (2) weeks of the quarantine time was needed after arriving Laos. And then, the lockdown was instructed

by Lao government and its period was extended many times. Originally, it was planned to visit target villages and observe the soil condition in the farm land and the surrounding areas first. And then, the proposals to improve the soil management, especially compost making are planned to formulate. However, I could not go out. Under these situations, the on-line training was conducted instead.

In the training, I talked over the monitor to 13 participants from 4 provinces. 3 Japanese staff supported as co-host and 1 Lao staff supported as interpreter.



(Picture) Atmosphere of On-line training

The training was started in the morning of June 2<sup>nd</sup>. At first, I said “Sabai-di” chiefly for attracting the participants. Because it was difficult to observe the facial expressions of the participants in online, the contents were narrowed down and many questions were asked for promoting two-

way communication. Besides, frequent breaks were taken. By asking the question if you know the compost, I understand the compost for the Laotian means cow dung bokashi-fertilizer. And then, I tried to explain for them to understand many times that “the compost in Japan is different from that in Laos. It is as humus compost for improving soil”. The number of the participants in 1<sup>st</sup> day was 14 and that in 2<sup>nd</sup> days increased to 23. The training was successfully conducted.

### 3. Introduction of short-term expert (2) and current situation and the impression of OA market



Mr. Sendo

I am Shohei Sendo as a short-term expert of the Project. I have implemented the activities for supporting to formulate the production planning of OA vegetables and make new deal for OA products between the

OA groups and the distributors by collaborating with counter-parts and OA groups.

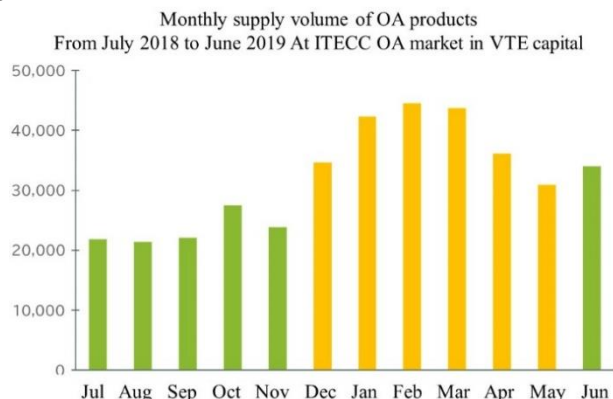
ITECC (International Trade Exhibition and Convention Center) OA market is the biggest OA market in Vientiane Capital. It was observed many kinds of OA products such as vegetables for eating leaf, fruits, and roots and fruits were sold in many places in May just before rainy season. However, the number of the agricultural products that can be produced and sold is limited in rainy season due to the hot and rainy weather. The issue became clear through the interview from OA groups and the distributors. Therefore, it is needed to formulate the production planning for improving farmers’ profitability and responding market needs in rainy season.



(Picture) Atmosphere for collecting information at OA market

The supply volume of the OA vegetables in rainy season is about 22,000 kg / month that is about half of the peak of the dry season (about 45,000 kg / month) (referring upper-right figure).

For solving the issue, it was planned to conduct training on production planning of OA vegetable for OA groups and to organize workshop for promoting production and sales of OA products by providing the opportunity for sharing business ideas of the distributors to OA committee and OA groups in Vientiane capital for the rest of the assignment period.



### 4. Introduction of HP and Facebook of the project

The project has disseminated information through Homepage (HP) and Facebook. There are English and Japanese version of HP. The back number of the newsletter is available for Lao, English, and Japanese. The links of HP are as follows;

English:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/project/english/laos/026/index.html>

Japanese:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/project/laos/026/index.html>

As the Facebook page was just set up in 2021, the number of the post is still limited. However, it is planned to post frequently mainly video. The link is as follow; <https://www.facebook.com/jicaCADP>  
The relevant parties such as CASC, Sayabuly PAFO, OA groups of Vientiane Capital, Xieng Khuang, and Luang Phabang have disseminated information through own Facebook page. The Project will collaborate with those relevant parties for disseminate information for promoting Clean Agriculture in Lao PDR.



(Picture) Top page of the project Facebook

