



# Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.22

## Clean Agriculture Development Project



Published in March 2022

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

### Recent Topics of project activity

#### 1. Discussion for improving the OA market

On March 3rd, 2022, a discussion for improving the OA (Organic agriculture) market took place with 22 relevant people, including staff from the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office of Vientiane Capital and the District Agriculture and Forestry Office for Saithany District, and the OA committee. The discussion was done based on the survey result conducted at the ITECC (International Trade Exhibition and Convention Centre) OA market in September 2021 by the project<sup>1)</sup>. One of the issues discussed was “allocating a parking area for car/motorbike and improving its management”, which was the most requested item in the questionnaire survey. The car/motorbike is not only that of the visitors but also the truck used for farmer’s products. As a result, it was decided to work on concrete improvement by discussing between the OA committee and the ITECC owner. There was also a discussion of producing and selling new varieties of vegetables and fruit, developing a food and drink trail booth, and engaging in public relations activities for the OA market. During the discussion, the positive stance of the OA Committee, which was previously conservative, was observed.



(Picture)  
At PAFO of  
Vientiane  
Capital

1) Refer to the Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.19 published in October 2021.

#### 2. Understanding of current situation and issues by visiting producers

The status of family income and expenditure in Vientiane Capital and the role of men and women in farm work were asked. The farmers interviewed are Mr. Khane and Ms. Buavanh, who are full-time farmers in Nontae village, and Mr. Outhai and Ms. Fong, who are part-time farmers in Thaxang village. The main selling place for both pairs is the ITECC OA market, which opens on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The similar features and problems of the two pairs are listed below.



(Picture)  
Mr. Khane  
and Ms.  
Buavanh



(Picture)  
Mr. Outhai  
and Ms. Fong

The spouse is responsible for sales at the OA market, and she entirely manages the daily income, expenses, and the amount of savings. She also asks consumers which crops they like and observes which crops other farmers sell. Consequently, the spouse carries out the selection of the following crops and the purchase of seeds. The couples conduct work such as sowing, planting, and harvesting.

On the other hand, they do not record income and expenditure from agriculture and do not know the exact sales amount on

the same day. Because they do not know the exact area (m<sup>2</sup> or ha) of farmland, they cannot calculate the yield of the crops.

It was clarified by the hearing that women play a key role in farm management and that there are problems with bookkeeping and understanding the size of agricultural land. These issues will be improved through the dissemination of the OA Technical manual.

### 3. Holding Joint-PMU meeting

The Project Management Unit (PMU) meeting was held on February 24th (Thursday) in Luang Phabang Province. The meeting was held as a joint-PMU meeting by all four target Provinces. It was the second joint-PMU meeting after January 2021 in the Xayabouly province (refer to the Clean Agriculture Newsletter No.11). The total number of participants was 25, including staff of the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) from 4 target provinces, the Clean Agriculture Standard Center (CASC), and the project.

Each PAFO staff reported the progress of activities in each province since the last joint-PMU meeting. Participants understand that all provinces have done their best to carry out the activities, even though there is a significant impact on COVID-19. Besides, the overall schedule by the end of the project on November 2022, including the terminal evaluation survey and final seminar, was shared among all participants.



(Picture) Group photo of participants

## Voices from OA fields

The opinions of key stakeholders in promoting organic agriculture in the target provinces were presented. In this issue,

we focus on Mr. Phaserth Thipphaneth from Saifong Nua village, Hatsaifong, Vientiane Capital.



(Picture) Mr. Phaserth Thipphaneth in his field

Mr. Phaserth is also Deputy Principal of Junior High School located in the Hat Saifong District. However, 70 % of income comes from selling organic agricultural products. When visiting his field, we can see the purchase records for production materials and cultivation records on the whiteboard.

Although Mr. Phaserth practiced farming using agricultural chemicals and chemical fertilizers, he began organic farming in 2011. The price of vegetables using agricultural chemicals and chemical fertilizers was unstable, and he was concerned about the impact on his health and that of consumers.

Within the 0.6 ha of his agricultural fields, he not only grows vegetables like cucumber, broccoli, and cabbage but also fruits like mango, banana, and papaya. He said that differences exist between the rainy season and the dry season. In the dry season, there is increased production of good quality vegetables. During the rainy season, the price of vegetables increases because of difficulties in the cultivation of vegetables. Taking into account the number of sales and the price, the revenue from sales does not differ between the dry season and the rainy season.

A monthly meeting between the OA members is organized in Saifong Nua village. To avoid overproduction of specific crops, the members adjust their production volume. Sometimes the members visit the OA groups in other villages. He said that “while there is no plan to expand the fields, I continue to choose suitable crops for the season and pay attention to growing time to prevent the outbreak of pests.”

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