



**Summary of Discussion of
The First Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture
(The 1st LICA) Meeting
5th to 6th May 2016
Vientiane, Lao PDR**

INTRODUCTION

1. The First Lao Initiative Conservation Agriculture (the 1st LICA) Meeting was held on 5th to 6th May 2016, at the Mercure Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR. The 1stLICA Meeting was attended by 6 delegates from 5 ASEAN member states: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore; ASEAN Secretariat, and domestic senior officials/guest from relevant departments, ministries, and international organizations. The list of delegates appears as **ANNEX 1**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: OPENING SESSION

2. The 1st LICA Meeting was opened by H.E. Dr. Bounkhouang Khambounheuang, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. He conveyed his warm welcome to all participants from ASEAN member states for their presence in the 1st LICA Meeting. He provided a brief development of the Agriculture Development Strategy setting the framework for a national strategy to 2025 and vision to 2030 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and also emphasized on two formulated priorities: (1) to ensure national food security through clean, safe, and sustainable agriculture and, (2) to build an agricultural production system highly contributing to the nation economy in line with its objectives of industrialization and modernization. He also highlighted the background of the Conservation Agriculture (CA) development in Lao PDR which has been promoted as a possible means of achieving the agrarian transition. He expressed his confidence that the First Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture Meeting could build up a platform for all participants from ASEAN member countries to exchange view and experiences on agriculture and also hoped that the meeting would be able to develop a common and concrete cooperation program to develop Conservation Agriculture and Ecology in ASEAN. At the end of his speech, he expressed his thanks

to all ASEAN delegates and guests for the active participation and contribution to this important event. The full text of the Opening Speech appears as **ANNEX 2**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The meeting considered and adopted the agenda, which appears as **ANNEX 3**.

AGENDA ITEM 3: BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

4. The meeting was held in plenary.

AGENDA ITEM 4: BACKGROUND PRESENTATION ON CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE/ AGROECOLOGY

5. The 1st LICA Meeting was chaired by Mr. Xaypladeth Choulamany, General Director of the Planning and Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry Ministry. He overviewed that the Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture had been endorsed in the SOM-AMAF and the 34th AMAF Meeting in Vientiane, Lao PDR since 2012. Then, in August 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, the Special SOM 36th AMAF suggested that Lao PDR should continue the initiative and urged AMS to actively participate in the 1st LICA Meeting. Therefore, Lao PDR organized the 1st LICA Meeting.

The objectives, and expected outcomes of the meeting were:

1. To discuss on common understanding of conservation agriculture (CA) and agroecology (AE),
2. To discuss on constraints faced to develop sustainable agriculture,
3. To find out mechanism to facilitate exchanges of result and experiences between members and propose mechanisms of cooperation,
4. To build and envision a broad coalition of stakeholders involved in the promotion of agroecology,
5. To build an ASEAN policy framework to boost agroecology and CA practices.

The expected outcomes were:

1. Agreement on agroecological approaches including CA as convincing and evidence-based alternatives to support ecologically intensify existing traditional or conventional farming systems,

2. A collective identification and ranking of the critical issues that should be addressed by ASEAN members related to agroecology,
3. Design of a cooperation framework in order to reinforce Agroecology and CA visibility and identify members relevant activities (mapping),
4. Planning of ASEAN members to actions and programmes to establish a taskforce on agroecology supporting i) promotion and dissemination of Agroecology and Conservation Agriculture and ii) agricultural development policy.

6. The Full text of the meeting concept note appears as **ANNEX 4**.

AGENDA ITEM 5: ASEAN POLICIES PRESENTATION

7. The Meeting noted the presentation on ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry and Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture from ASEAN Secretariat which appears as **ANNEX 5**. The presentation emphasized on Vision of ASEAN Cooperation in Food, Agriculture and Forestry towards 2025 which has seven identified strategic thrusts. Among those strategic thrusts, he highly mentioned to two strategic thrusts: 1). *Enhance quantity and quality of production with sustainable, 'green' technologies, resource management systems, and minimise pre- and post-harvest losses and waste and 2). Increase resilience to climate change, natural disasters and other shocks* which related to the CA/AE.

AGENDA ITEM 6: OVERVIEW OF AGROECOLOGY

8. The Meeting noted the presentation Agroecology Approaches for Rural Development from Agriculture Research for Development (CIRAD) which appears as **ANNEX 6**. The presentation focused on clarification of agroecological practices and agroecology approaches. The Meeting noted that CA is a practice under agroecological approaches and it has been implementing in South America, United States, Australia, a little in South Africa. CA has been implemented successfully in big farms and mechanical farms. However, agri-business is only feeding 10% of the population and much of the food comes from smallholder farmers. Therefore, it is necessary to bring these technologies/practices to small-scale farmers.

9. The Meeting noted that the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR had issued a Degree to Promote Agroecology/Conservation Agriculture. CA has been successfully implemented in the demonstration plots level. However, this approach has not been expanded as expected and planned because of various reasons. From the technical points of view, the techniques are well accessed. The adoption of this technique should go back to the social dimension, on the farmers/people. The problem is due to the lack of mechanism and implementation, such as investment and extension workers. Therefore, the meeting aims to share ideas on how to implement and scale-up this approach/method to the whole country.

AGENDA ITEM 7: COUNTRY PRESENTATION OF ASEAN MEMBERS ON CA/AE

10. The Meeting noted the country presentation of Lao PDR on The Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture for ASEAN Country Members which appears as **ANNEX 7**. The presentation highlighted on Conservation Agriculture principles and CA implementation in Lao PDR.

11. The Meeting noted the country presentation of Cambodia on Conservation Agriculture in Cambodia which appears as **ANNEX 8**. The presentation focused on Cambodia agrarian systems and research and development on CA farming systems. The Meeting noted that although CA gives a better benefit, CA is low adopted due to the labor scarcity, few extension workers and a low financial support.

12. The Meeting noted the country presentation of Malaysia on Conservation Agriculture in Malaysia which appears as **ANNEX 9**. The presentation emphasized on main issues on Land degradation, CA in Malaysia (present practices), and priority for sustainable management. The meeting noted that the CA in Malaysia is widely practiced in oil palm and rubber plantations and partially practiced in other crops areas. These plantations have a very strong association, a group of farmer cooperative, and as well as private sectors. The Meeting also noted that My Good Agriculture Practice (MyGAP) is used as a tool, and CA is a part of the main certification process. The CA is incorporated in the MyGAP. CA in Malaysia has been added on to the value chain which is different from Lao PDR that CA has been focused on the production side.

**The meeting broke for lunch at 12:10 hrs.*

13. The Meeting noted the country presentation of Myanmar on Conservation Agriculture Technology in Myanmar which appears as **ANNEX 10**. The presentation highlighted on methodology for CA and application of CA modeling in Myanmar.

14. The Meeting noted the country presentation of Singapore on Singapore Country Paper which appears as **ANNEX 11**. The presentation focused on farming practices. The Meeting noted that Land use for crops in Singapore is less than 1% (120 ha for vegetables) which produces a small proportion of its agri-food (leafy vegetables). Good Agriculture Practice is applied in vegetable farming. Event Singapore is lack of agriculture land area, but it has a strong idea supporting on CA technique.

AGENDA ITEM 8: PRESENTATION OF AGROECOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES

15. The Meeting noted the presentation of Conservation Agriculture Network for South-East Asia (CANSEA) on Doing Together what can't be done alone which appears as **ANNEX 12**. The presentation focused on the background of CANSEA network, working areas in ASEAN member states and its strategies. The Meeting noted that CANSEA is a network consisting of research institutions from seven countries. The presentation of CANSEA was to inform the ASEAN to recognize its existence in which it exists in four ASEAN member states: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. CANSEA could provide the database on researches implementing in its targeted areas.

16. The Meeting noted the presentation of Eco-Friendly Intensification and Climate resilient Agriculture Systems Project (EFICAS) on Landscape approach to CA and Agroecology: Experience of the EFICAS project in Northern Laos which appears as in **ANNEX 13**. The presentation emphasized on the agrarian transition in the uplands of Lao PDR and Designing eco-friendly landscapes. The Meeting noted that main challenge on using landscape approaches is to change farmers' perspectives in order to encourage farmers involved in landscape planning.

17. The Meeting noted the presentation of Food and Agriculture Organization on Sustainable Intensification of Rice Production (SIRP): Ecosystem-based Agriculture which appears as **ANNEX 14**. The presentation highlighted on the implementation of farmer field school on SIRP in Lao PDR. The Meeting noted that the context of this experiential learning approach from farmer field school is well tested. An important

aspect to success is to have government district technicians to work with farmers rather than having to work individually farmers by farmers.

18. The Meeting noted that from all country presentations and other presentation. A common understanding on Conservation Agriculture/Agroecology had been clarified. The second day of the meeting would be presented the summary of the first-day discussion and continuously proceeded on the discussion in order to develop a road map for a further cooperation.

**The meeting ended at 16:00 hrs.*

**The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry hosted a welcome dinner from 19:00 to 20:30 hrs.*

OPENING SESSION OF THE MEETING DAY 2, Friday 6th May 2016

19. The Meeting was briefly summarized by the Chairman on the first-day meeting presents and discussions to all participants. The main pressure on agroecology is from the natural resources and lack of trainings/skills.

AGENDA ITEM 9: ASEAN COUNTRIES OVERVIEW SYNTHESIS

20. The Meeting noted the Countries Overview Summary based on presentations and discussions by Dr. Frank Enjalric as a CANSEA resource person. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 15**. The meeting noted that in the first slide the main constraints identified are only general constraints of CA/AE facing at the moment, particularly conventional agriculture. The next slide is on agroecology approaches. The Meeting agreed that agroforestry is a part of agroecology. The Meeting also noted that AE consists of various approaches, such as CA. CA means the use of normal tools, such

as seeder. GAP is also defined as AE since it relates to organic agriculture/GAP. All of CA, Agroforestry, Organic Agriculture, and GAP approaches are parts of AE.

21. The Meeting discussed and agreed that Sustainable Rice Intensification (SRI), Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and Good practices are promoted as agroecology approaches.

22. The Meeting noted that all of the main key ideas presented were compiled together into a nutshell. The Meeting agreed that most of the AMS have implemented adapted policy to agriculture base on agroecology development, mainly GAP and organic are promoted. The Meeting also noted that CA is formalized in Lao PDR and Cambodia.

23. The Meeting noted that AE practice is also adapted for perennial crop systems and cash crop systems in Malaysia due to the context of the environment.

AGENDA ITEM 10: THE WAY FORWARD

24. The Meeting noted the presentation on the Way Forward from Dr. Frank Enjalric as a resource person. The presentation appears as **ANNEX 16**. The presentation highlighted on suggestions made to address issues presented by AMS.

25. The Meeting noted that the way forward should not be limited to only one country or the South East Asian region, but it should be on a larger global scale in order to take it onto large scale farming systems. The Meeting agreed that five ASEAN member states take note that Agroecology practices are implemented.

27. The meeting refined the activities of the way forward and it was agreed that:

- Lao PDR suggested to facilitate the coordination on AE/CA by establishing coordination unit,
- Lao PDR will share outcomes of the 1st LICA meeting with ASEAN-AMAF sector al working groups,
- To set up a technical focal point (task force) in each of the AMS,
- Lao PDR will coordinate on cover crop seeds and material vegetal availability,

- To get involved on AE linked to Climate Change adaptation initiative,
- Lao PDR will present the findings of the first meeting to the different working groups involved in climate change,
- To set up a training network to allow members' technical staffs to be trained on AE/CA,
- Lao PDR will elaborate ToR for focal point aimed to different subjects by forms of training,
- To propose stock taking study for current activities and principles of practices implemented among AMS (baseline study/assessment, mapping, stocktaking),
- After the discussion with the relevant working groups, then the proposal will be submitted to the next SOM-AMAF meeting.

28. The Meeting noted that the summary of discussion on the way forward needs to be presented to the SOM-AMAF. However, before it will be presented to the SOM-AMAF, there is a need to have this information discussed, presented, and informed by ASEAN member states, including those AMS who are not currently presenting at this meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 11: OTHER MATTERS

29. There are no other matters discussed.

AGENDA ITEM 12: SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF THE 1ST LICA MEETING

30. The Meeting noted the Lao secretariat will also circulate the Summary of Discussion (SOD) to all AMS for the final comments. Once, the SOD is agreed by all AMS, it will be submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat to share with other AMS and other working groups. The Meeting also noted that the next venue of the meeting is around May or June in 2017.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

31. Delegations from ASEAN member states from Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore and the ASEAN Secretariat expressed their appreciation to the Government of Lao PDR for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangement made for the Meeting.

32. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cooperation and cordiality.

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