



Agroecology and  
Safe Food System  
Transitions



# LESSONS LEARNT FROM SMALL GRANT ACTIVITIES, KEY RESULTS AND SOME REFLECTIONS

## ALiSEA Small Grants

National General Assembly  
November 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

A project funded by

In partnership  
with  
RÉPUBLIQUE  
FRANÇAISE  
*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*



Co-funded by  
the European Union



FONDS FRANÇAIS POUR  
L'ENVIRONNEMENT MONDIAL



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

# ALiSEA Small Grants: Overall Objective

Strengthen **ALiSEA** members and partners on three major topics to support Agroecology Transition in the Sub-Mekong Region.

**ALiSEA GRANT FACILITY**

Are you engaged in agroecological initiative?

The **Competitive grant** scheme opportunity in **May 2022** in **Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand** **Open now!**

**THREE SMALL GRANT FACILITY TOPICS:**

- 1) Assess the impact and effect of public policy supporting agroecology and food systems
- 2) Test and support agroecological innovations (technical, organizational and institutional)
- 3) Evaluation of the performances, impacts of agricultural and food system and enabling conditions towards agroecology transitions

**WHO MAY APPLY?**  
Consortium of organizations involved in agroecology with ALiSEA members as team leader

**Deadline Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022**

**ALiSEA**  
Agro-ecology Learning alliance in South East Asia

**2023 ALiSEA GRANT FACILITY**

**03 TOPICS ON:** *Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand*

The **Competitive grant** scheme opportunity in **August 2023** **Open now!**

**WHO MAY APPLY?**  
A consortium of organizations involved in agroecology with ALiSEA members as team leader

**Link field experience in Agroecology and Food Systems to Public Policy framework**

**Support and improve market access for Agroecology Products**

**Empower and strengthen the involvement of Youth in Agroecology initiatives**

**APPLY NOW**  
Before **16 Oct 2023**

# Small Grants: Key Figures in Vietnam

**Diversity of selection committee members** : DPA, UNI4COOP, Action Aid , CIRAD, GRET, CARES, CASRAD, SAEDA, CISDOMA, IRD, NOMAFSI and Scientific Secretariat of the Advisory Committee.

**16** Projects proposals received in Vietnam

**5** Grants awarded Team leaders of consortium :  
3 Research institutes, 2 NGOs.

**1 Small grant Guidelines developed**

**18** Knowledge Products created (expected 10 in total, 2/grantee)

**146 ha**

**3994 people** **2278 women**



Budget: €15–20k per grant; €96k total Vietnam  
Sources of funding : ASSET project (AFD/EU)





# 5 Grants awarded in 2022-2023



## Call 2022: 3 grants



Eco-weed control: a participatory experiment on PGS and organic vegetable farms.

Strengthening community capacity in monitoring pesticides use and promoting Agroecology- for a Non-Toxic Environment.

Supporting the transition towards more diversified farming system by developing experimental cultivation of native medicinal herbs and edible vegetables on upland farming areas.

## Call 2023: 2 grants



Thai Viet Coffee cooperative



Coffee Waste Solutions: Integrating Sustainable Models for Wastewater and By-Product Management into Local Environmental Policy.

Expanding Market for Regenerative Vegetables through Improved Production and Distribution.

## Achievements and Results

- Trained rural female farmers and leaders in **CPAM tool and biodiversity monitoring**, raising awareness among the community and stakeholders in **monitoring pesticide use**; implement communication campaigns and advocate for environmental and health protection to promote agroecology.
- **Practicing ecological agriculture** in 5 household models
- Total Beneficiaries: **3278 people** (students, teachers, farmers, local authorities) included **2000 women**.
- Knowledge Management: **1 report** and **1 research brief** on the use & impact of pesticides, **1 story-telling** on a pioneering female farmer and **2 videos** on best practice and storytelling of a **pioneering female farmer**.

**Challenge:** Small scale and model

**Lessons learned:** Mobilize community and stakeholder participation to achieve success, with particular emphasis on **the key role of women farmers**.



**CONTEXT**

Pesticides are significantly impacting farmers and agricultural workers worldwide. A survey on pesticide use in India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Laos, conducted by Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PAN AP), revealed that the majority of pesticides used in agriculture are either highly hazardous or banned in one or more countries globally. The survey further indicated that the proportion of highly hazardous pesticides used in Vietnam is as high as 60% (PAN International, 2022).

Since 2015, the Research Center for Gender, Family, and Environment in Development (CGFED) has collaborated with the Hai Hau District Women's Union and pioneering female farmers to regularly implement **Community-Based Pesticide Action Monitoring (CPAM)** in Hai Hau District, Nam Dinh Province, Viet Nam. The aim of the survey is to document the use and impacts of hazardous pesticides among farmers.

Year	Number of Farmers	Number of Pesticide Vendors
2015	300 farmers and 10 pesticide vendors	
2018	300 farmers and 10 pesticide vendors	
2019	300 farmers and 100 students in Primary and Secondary Schools	
2022	300 farmers and 100 students in Secondary Schools	

In 2024, CPAM continued to be implemented with the participation of **201 farmers** (106 women and 95 men) in Hai Xuan commune and Hai Cuong commune (which have now been merged into Hai Xuan commune). The current population of Hai Xuan commune is 23,263 people.

<https://files.panap.net/resources/files/Survey-use-and-impacts-of-pesticides.pdf>



**BACKGROUND**

Ms. Doan Thi Phuong is a passionate pioneer on the journey of "returning to nature." She boldly abandoned harmful chemicals, persistently seeking and applying sustainable farming methods. Beyond transforming her own practices, she has shared her passion with the community, inspiring trust in a safe and nature-friendly agriculture. Her resilience has become a powerful source of inspiration for farmers striving to cultivate their land in a more sustainable way.

Ms. Doan Thi Phuong was born in 1965 in Hai Phu commune, Hai Hau district, Nam Dinh province, in a family of 12 children. She is the eighth child in the family. Her parents, both revolutionaries and government officials, ensured that despite financial difficulties, none of their children were deprived of education. Coming from a farming background, she became familiar with rice cultivation and agricultural work from an early age.

Ms. Phuong studied until the seventh grade. At the age of 21, she got married through an arranged match, as was customary at the time. They have two children and currently live on the land inherited from her in-laws in Hamlet 6, Hai Xuan commune (formerly Hai Cuong), with their two young grandchildren.

The majority of Hai Xuan's residents engage in agriculture, primarily rice and vegetable farming. Ms. Phuong's family cultivates approximately 660 square meters of land, growing seasonal crops such as beans, cucumbers, pumpkins, winter squash, and cabbage, along with some fruit trees. Additionally, she raises chickens to supplement her family's livelihood.

# Small Grant Sharing results: NOMAFSI

## Achievements and Results

o Piloted wastewater by-product treatment models in coffee processing, proving technical feasibility, environmental benefits, and potential for reuse in agriculture.

o Total Beneficiaries: **175 farmers** included **72 women**

o Knowledge Management: **2 technical briefs** (1 on processing coffee husk & 1 on treating wastewater from coffee cherry) **2 videos** and **1 policy brief** are under development.



**ADVANTAGES/EXPECTED RESULTS**

- Reduces environmental pollution by utilizing agricultural by-products.
- Improves soil structure, making it loose, well-aerated, and well-drained.
- Supplies key nutrients (K, N, P, and trace minerals) to enhance plant growth and productivity.
- Lowers input costs by reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Supports sustainable agriculture by reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a circular, green, and clean farming model.

**OUR FARMER'S EXPERIENCE**

Mr. Tong Van Lien, Director of Thai Viet Cooperative

"Previously, I did not know how to compost coffee husks. Traditionally, once the husks dried, I would either apply them directly to the fields or discard them—both practices negatively impacted the environment. In 2024 with the support and guidance of the Northwest Agricultural and Forestry Research and Development Center on composting techniques, I applied the method of turning coffee husks into organic fertilizer. I found it very effective: the plants grew greener, stronger, and healthier. This organic fertilizer can be used for all types of crops, especially orange trees, which require intensive nutrient management. Notably, composting coffee husks eliminates waste, reduces environmental impact, and helps cut down on input fertilizer costs."

**RECOMMENDATIONS**



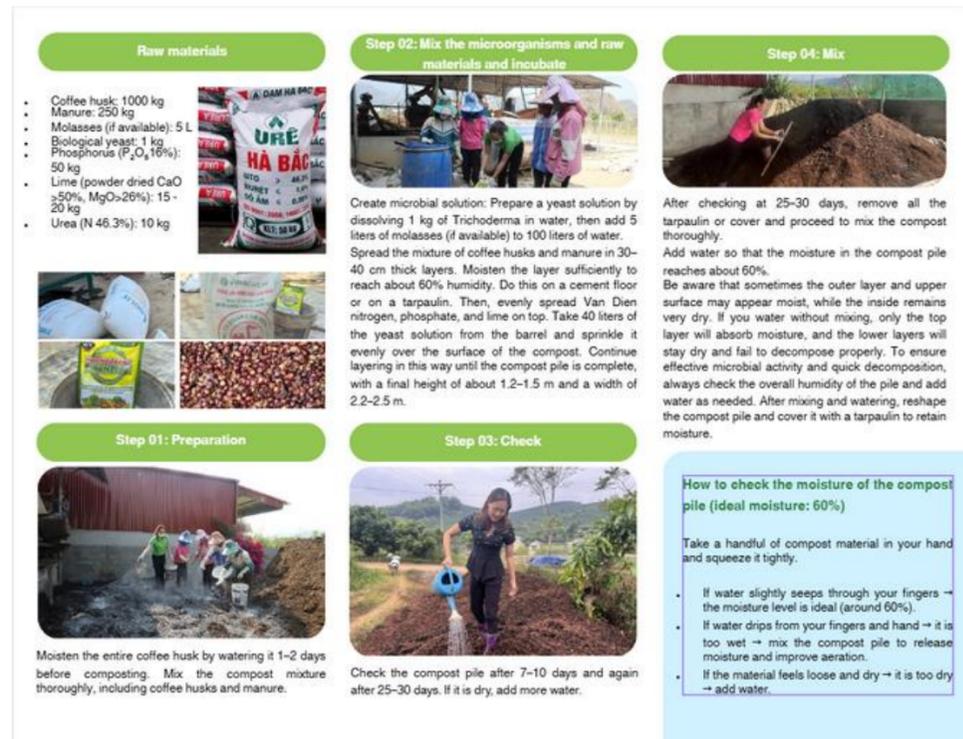
To ensure proper composting, it is best to build a composting tank with a roof (as shown above), located at least 100 meters from the main production and processing area.

- The floor should be cemented, sloped toward the manure water tank.
- Include surrounding grooves to channel water into the wastewater tank.
- A roof protects the compost from sun and rain, preventing it from drying out or losing nutrients due to direct rainfall.

**ALISEA Team**  
Regional coordinator: Lucie Reynaud  
National Secretary in Vietnam: Nguyen Thi Trung

**Agroecological system:**

Date	Main activities	Climate	Soil type	Temperature
February 2024	Composting coffee husks into organic fertilizer	Sub-tropical with a seasonally dry climate	>1000mm/year	18-25°C



**Raw materials**

- Coffee husk: 1000 kg
- Manure: 250 kg
- Molasses (if available): 5 L
- Biological yeast: 1 kg
- Phosphorus (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> 16%): 50 kg
- Lime (powder dried CaO ≥50%, MgO≥26%): 15-20 kg
- Urea (N 46.3%): 10 kg

**Step 01: Preparation**

Moisten the entire coffee husk by watering it 1-2 days before composting. Mix the compost mixture thoroughly, including coffee husks and manure.

**Step 02: Mix the microorganisms and raw materials and incubate**

Create microbial solution: Prepare a yeast solution by dissolving 1 kg of Trichoderma in water, then add 5 liters of molasses (if available) to 100 liters of water. Spread the mixture of coffee husks and manure in 30-40 cm thick layers. Moisten the layer sufficiently to reach about 60% humidity. Do this on a cement floor or on a tarpaulin. Then, evenly spread Van Dien nitrogen, phosphate, and lime on top. Take 40 liters of the yeast solution from the barrel and sprinkle it evenly over the surface of the compost. Continue layering in this way until the compost pile is complete, with a final height of about 1.2-1.5 m and a width of 2.2-2.5 m.

**Step 03: Check**

Check the compost pile after 7-10 days and again after 25-30 days. If it is dry, add more water.

**Step 04: Mix**

After checking at 25-30 days, remove all the tarpaulin or cover and proceed to mix the compost thoroughly. Add water so that the moisture in the compost pile reaches about 60%. Be aware that sometimes the outer layer and upper surface may appear moist, while the inside remains very dry. If you water without mixing, only the top layer will absorb moisture, and the lower layers will stay dry and fail to decompose properly. To ensure effective microbial activity and quick decomposition, always check the overall humidity of the pile and add water as needed. After mixing and watering, reshape the compost pile and cover it with a tarpaulin to retain moisture.

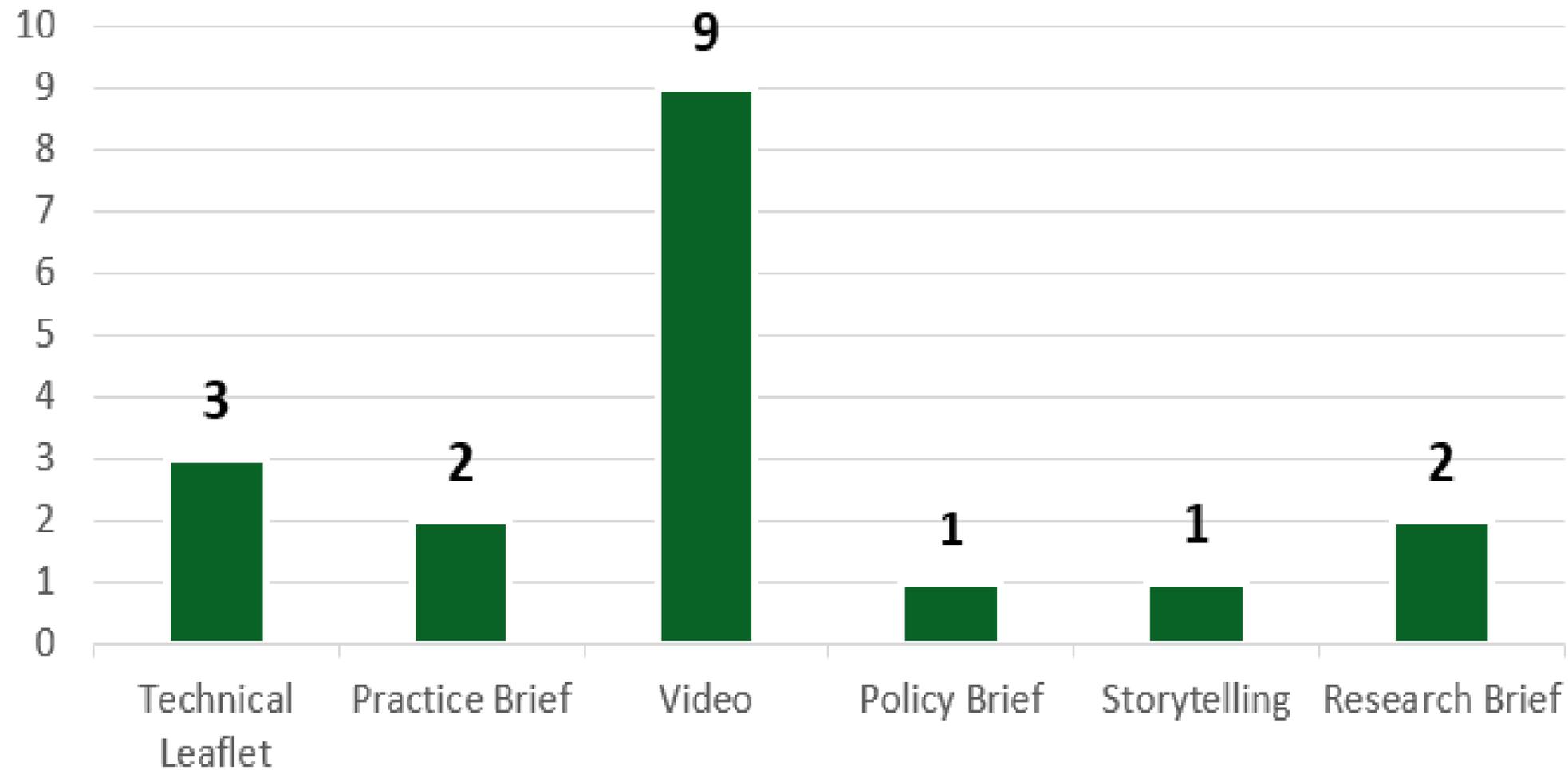
**How to check the moisture of the compost pile (ideal moisture: 60%)**

Take a handful of compost material in your hand and squeeze it tightly.

- If water slightly seeps through your fingers → the moisture level is ideal (around 60%).
- If water drips from your fingers and hand → it is too wet → mix the compost pile to release moisture and improve aeration.
- If the material feels loose and dry → it is too dry → add water.

# Overview of all Knowledge Products per format

**Total : 18**



# Lesson learned

- **RECURRENT QUESTION** : grants budget versus number of members benefiting
- **Why small grants are important?**
  - a. Engaging further youths groups to continue Agriculture (knowledge, skills, and scaled)
  - b. Agro-Ecosystems Resiliency (against highly vulnerable Climatic impacts) as lately visible in the Northern & Central regions due to storms and floods;
  - c. Agro-Ecosystems and services (transitioning from farms to landscapes) still insufficient pilots and not-yet assessed and performed at-scaled.
  - d. Supporting Extension Services, Farmers Unions and Producers Cooperatives, Entrepreneurs, private sectors whilst strengthening these partnerships and with the new administration and authorities on AE (given their knowledge gaps).

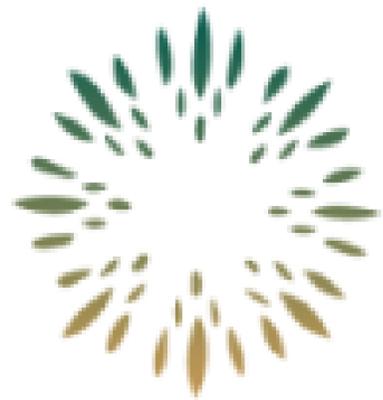
## Lesson learned

- **How to increase skills for more national organizations** (given they are limited in experiences and English) ?
  - Providing direct supports to proposals writing, support skills in project implementations and monitoring,
  - Translate guidelines and templates in national languages;
  - Increase supports to Human Resources (better equipped-skills to M&E Agroecological practices and tracking areas for Database/Knowledge Management);
- **Discrepancy** between procedures requirements and grant size budget

## Small Grants Facility is a very useful mechanism to

1. Provide **direct fundings to local organizations** and a variety of actors to test innovations and expanding AE transitioning programs
1. Engage members to **document their practical work & results** & lessons learned to generate **knowledge-by-practice, using these field-evidences for better inform public policies;**
1. **Foster partnership** between ALiSEA & non members to interact, mutual learning and outreaching transitioning practices, lessons and beneficiaries;

- Seeking for funding to launch new calls in 2026 – 2027
- Collaboration with Agroecology Fund : Nomination Process for submitting a Small Grant Proposal to AE Fund



**AGROECOLOGY  
FUND**

- ALiSEA network is **eligible to nominate members organizations**
- **Members Organizations allowed to submit a full proposal directly to AEF.**
- **Final funding decisions are made solely by the AEF, without any involvement from the ALiSEA team.**



Agroecology and  
Safe Food System  
Transitions

LEARN MORE | ស្វែងយល់បន្ថែម | ឱ្យដឹងបន្ថែម | TÌM HIỂU THÊM

# THANK YOU !



Agroecology and Safe Food System Transitions in Southeast Asia (ASSET)

វិវឌ្ឍនាការកសិកម្មធម្មជាតិ និងប្រព័ន្ធស្បៀងអាហារសុវត្ថិភាព

ການប្រែប្រួលប្រព័ន្ធស្បៀងអាហារសុវត្ថិភាព និងគុណភាពអាហារូបត្ថម្ភ

Chuyển đổi Nông nghiệp sinh thái và Hệ thống Thực phẩm An toàn



# Current Organizational Challenges for the Small Grant Facility program in Vietnam

## Submission & Implementation

- Grantees faced gaps in project management and implementation, due to a disconnection between proposal writers and implementing teams;

## Monitoring & Support

- Reliance on online monitoring with limited field visits;

## Finance & Admin Management

- Delays in obtaining local permits (above 1 year)

## External Factors

- Delays were mainly caused by seasonal disruptions, natural disasters, grantee illnesses, and simultaneous management of multiple grants.