

Progress Report 1

1. General information

- Name of organization: Sustainable Agriculture Forum (SAF)
- Project title: Promotion of sustainable agriculture in Lao PDR
- Project number: 326 – 900 - 1004 ZG
- Period under review: April 1st - September 30, 2004
- Methods used for planning, monitoring and evaluation: Participation approaches
 - Collect information from members' Agencies to have ideas, comments and the suggestion
 - Follow up of the post training and workshops to find out the strength and weakness in order to improve the weak points and to promote the strength ones.
 - Meeting with members to evaluate the management of SAF and activities

2. Developmental context

There are not any changes or new developments in the political or economic context of the project occur in the period under review.

3. Implementation of the project/programme

3.1 objectives

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of SAF members and partners in the promotion of sustainable agriculture in Laos. Specific anticipated outputs for the project are included:

1. To provide a forum to coordinate and exchange lessons and experiences between organizations and individuals (SAF members, model farmers and government officials that have interest to promote and/or apply sustainable agriculture).

2. To upgrade the knowledge and ability of Lao development workers on sustainable agriculture and rural development.

3. To promote food production by introduction or promotion of environmentally sound, low cost and participatory approaches and techniques in agriculture, forestry and rural development.

4. To assist and study the field works of member's projects to find out the strength and weakness in order to improve the weak points and to promote the strength points.

5. To coordinate and to exchange lessons and experiences with organization and networks in other countries that are promoting sustainable agriculture.

3.2 Activities and achievement (in period under review)

3.2.1. The planned activities:

F1 Share and exchange lessons and experiences:

aa. Training/exchange workshops

- Training/exchange workshops will be organized 3 times on the topics related to sustainable agriculture and rural development

bb. Promotion of natural agriculture

The promotion of natural agriculture will be provided to farmers, government staffs and interested government organizations in the provinces at least 5 times

F2. Networking

Networking is the heart of SAF to share and exchange lessons and experiences on sustainable agriculture and rural development. Two levels of networks are distinguished:

1. Networking in the country

- Coordinate with member organizations and concerned institutions
- Organize training/workshops with Government Organizations and farmers
- Attend activities of local networks

2. Networking with the region

- Liaison with regional networks and organizations in SEA countries working on sustainable agriculture and rural development.
- SAF staffs and members attend regional workshops/conferences on topics related to sustainable agriculture and feed back to other SAF members.

F3. Information resource center

- Visit member organizations to collect information and assist the field works
- Print out information on sustainable agriculture upon request of interested individuals and organizations.
- Produce visual aids on sustainable agriculture and rural development
- Translate case studies or documents related to sustainable agriculture and rural development

F4. Organizational strengthening

aa. Capacity building of staffs

- Learn English language

bb. Administration

- General office management
- Maintenance motorcycles, computers and air conditioner

3.2.2. The activities implemented

F1 Share and exchange lessons and experiences

aa. Training/Exchange workshops

The training and exchange workshop have been organized 3 times on the following topics:

1. Rice and Fruit tree production
2. Integrated Agriculture System
3. Fish and Frog production

bb. Promotion of Natural Agriculture (organic agriculture)

The promotion of natural agriculture or organic agriculture has been organized for farmers and government staffs in the provinces 6 times.

F2. Networking

Local networks:

SAF staffs have attended the activities organized by local networks:

- Violence against women workshop on 19/5/04
- Gender baseline training from 27-28/5/04
- Meeting with JICA consultant on 27/5/04
- Annual Meeting of Gender Development Group (GDG) on 18/6/04
- Steering Committee Meeting of Small Scale Project Fund of GAA on 14/6/04
- Meeting with Organic Agriculture Project of Helvetas on 19/7/04
- Meeting of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) on 22/7/04
- GDG monthly meeting on 12/8/04
- Meeting of National Agriculture-Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) on 27/8/04
- TOT on Gender training from 20-25/9/04
- Meeting with Lao Community Development Association (LCDA) on 21/9/04
- Steering Committee Meeting of Small Scale Project Fund of GAA on 22/9/04

Regional networks:

SAF staffs, farmers and members attended the activities organized by regional networks:

- SEACON Conference in Malaysia from 2-7/8/04
- Rice Forum and Asian Farmer Association conference in Philippines from 8-19/9/04

F3. Information resource center

- Reprint documents related to sustainable agriculture and rural development
- Translated document of alternative agriculture
- Copied VCD to provide to members and interested individuals and organizations
- SAF produced VCD on integrated agriculture system
- Produce posters of the conservation of wild live to control rats

3.2.3. Expected results

aa. Training/exchange workshops

The expected outputs from the training and exchange workshops:

1. Fruit tree and the use of Bio-Extract (B-E):

After the training/workshop participants are able to:

- Use local resources to produce bio-fertilizer to use in rice and fruit tree production
- Propagate fruit tree to produce seedlings for growing and selling the surplus
- Grow fruit tree in their farm and manage of their fruit tree plantation

2. Integrated agriculture system

After the workshop the participants are able to:

- Understand the definition and the importance of integrated agriculture
- Choose alternative ways that suitable for their agricultural production
- Produce and ensure food security and generate income of the families
- Conserve and sustain the natural resources in their farms especially forage foods

3. The fish and frog production:

After the training/workshop participants are able to:

- Grow fish and frog for family consumption and sell the surplus
- Understand the importance of fish and frog production in term of food security
- Produce fish feed by using local resources (plant and animal plankton)
- Select and grow frogs in different stages (baby, young and adult).

bb. Promotion of Natural Agriculture (organic agriculture)

After the training/workshop participants (farmers, development workers) are able to understand the basic principles of natural agriculture. They can practice and extend easily this kind of agricultural production because the inputs of the production are mostly local resources that they can make them by themselves eg. Bio-extract, bio-compost, soil-compost for fruit tree and plant nursery, compost of rice straw, dried grass and leaves of tree, bio-pesticide, hormone for the fast growing of plants, bio-extract of natural fruit for human health.

The target groups participated in the project through the coordination of SAF (SAF sent invitation letter, e-mail, telephone, and fax to the target groups). In the invitation SAF usually mentioned that the women will be at least 30% of the participants.

Most of farmers are from the remote areas and all groups of ethnicity from 20 to 55 years old. The participants attended the activities of the project are:

Items	Total	Men	Women	Farmers included	GO staff included
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Training /exchange workshops	124	90	34	83	41
Promotion natural agriculture	213	129	84	170	43

3.3 Impact (in period under review)

The effects of the project activities could be observed:

- Training, visit and practice system makes farmers to understand well the lessons learnt from the project's activities
- Farmer to farmer extension is appropriated methodology to promote agricultural production.
- Sustainable agriculture helps farmers to improve the soil structure and its fertility
- Farmers are not dependent on the external inputs (chemical products...)

The activities of the third parties that had an impact on the project are the demonstration places and the field practice for farmers because after training/workshops SAF have organized the field visits for them to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the field works of other farmers and government projects.

There are something changed within the targets that mean men and women have understood their task and role in term of agricultural production as well as in the decision making such as to buy TV, motorcycle... the husband and wife have to discuss and agree together before buying

The target groups view the project work and the results achieved through the low cost of the production, soil structure, the good yield of the crops and finally the healthy foods.

4. Overall assessment and outlook

4.1 The assessment of the progress made by the project

- There are available documents and visual aids on sustainable agriculture currently being used by GOs and farmers
- There are demonstration plots on sustainable agriculture of model farmers in order to be used as the exchange places of lessons and experiences among farmers.
- There are funds available to support SAF activities
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has some programs related to sustainable agriculture:
 - JICA supports the construction of bio-fertilizer factories in main provinces

- FAO supports IPM programs
- Cuba and Vietnam governments support organic and integrated agriculture
- Sustainable agriculture is widely accepted by many farmers and GOs staffs
- Helvetas in cooperation with Department of Agriculture set up the promotion of organic farming and marketing in Lao PDR project.
- Majority of NGOs in Lao PDR promotes and supports sustainable agriculture
- Local and regional networks share and exchange lessons and experiences on sustainable agriculture with SAF

4.2 Planning for the reporting period to come

F1 Share and exchange lessons and experiences:

aa. Training/exchange workshops

- Training/exchange workshops will be organized 3 times on the topics
 - Natural Resources Management (soil, forest and water conservation)
 - Participatory Community Development Planning
 - Agricultural Extension Approaches

bb. Promotion of natural agriculture

The promotion of natural agriculture will be provided to farmers, government staffs and interested government organizations in the provinces at least 6 times

F2. Networking

Networking is the heart of SAF to share and exchange lessons and experiences on sustainable agriculture and rural development. Two levels of networks are distinguished:

1. Networking in the country

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- Liaison with regional networks and organizations in SEA countries working on sustainable agriculture and rural development.
- SAF staffs and members attend regional workshops/conferences organized by regional networks

F3. Information resource center

- Visit member organizations to collect information
- Print out information on sustainable agriculture upon request of interested individuals and organizations.
- Produce visual aids

Organic rice in Xieng khuang Province

Integrated agriculture in agricultural college of Champasak Province

- Translate document Farmer Led Extension

F4. Organizational strengthening

aa. Capacity building of staffs

- English language
- Professional development

bb. Administration

- General office management
- Maintenance of air conditioner, motorcycles and computers

5. Changes within the implementing organization

There are not any changes occurred in SAF in term of the project management team, administrative responsibilities and activities because the activities of SAF are running by 3 full Lao staffs and members under its frameworks.

6. Your final comments and remarks

The support that was given to SAF is very useful and with high efficiency in the promotion of sustainable agriculture because the agricultural production in Lao PDR is predominantly by the subsistence in nature.

The fund was transferred on the appropriated time. SAF and its members appreciate MISEREOR that has policies to support fund for the development works in rural areas to improve the livelihood of rural poor people.

The promotion of sustainable agriculture is an alternative way for small scale and poor farmers to produce healthy foods and ensure the food security of the families.

The results mentioned above are the achievement of SAF in promoting sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agriculture production helps farmers and GOs staffs to ensure food security of the families because in the Lao context the salary of GOs staffs is not enough to cover the expenditure of the basic needs such as food, cloth, medicine... so they have to produce their foods by introducing internal inputs and low cost.

Financial Reporting

1. Structure

The project of SAF is a member's project. The activities of SAF are running by 3 full Lao staffs and members under its frameworks. The responsibility of the SAF Board Committee (SBC) is to supervise and advise the staffs of SAF on the current affairs and strategy.

All expenses of SAF have to be conducted by SAF under the planned activities and expenditure that are authorized and approved by the SAF Board Committee and members

There are two signatures to withdraw money from the bank; the two signatures are the signatures of SAF Coordinator Mr. Khammalounla Lexayavong and Assistant Coordinator Ms. Innakhone Vorachak (financial staff)

A. Income:

a. The expected income of the period under review:

- MISEREOR	20,805.00 US\$
- Local contribution	4,149.00 US\$
The total amount of expected income:	24,954.00 US\$

b. The real income of the period under review:

- MISEREOR	32,263.45 US\$
- Local contribution	5,000.00 US\$
The total amount of real income:	37,263.45 US\$

B. Expenditure:

Major variances between planned and actual expenditure for all main activities of the organization are the planned expenditure is 24,954.00 US\$ and the actual expenditure for all main activities of the organization is 22,748.42 US\$.

The planned overall expenditure for entire organization has been achieved because the disbursement of the budget for the previous period from MISEREOR is higher than the budget requested for the period.

a. The expected expenditure

- Staff costs	11,030.00 US\$
- Recurrent programme expenditure	12,225.00 US\$
- Other recurrent expenditure	1,699.00 US\$
The total amount of expected payments	24,954.00 US\$

b. The real expenditure in the period under review:

- Staff costs	10,704.00 US\$
- Recurrent programme expenditure	10,489.39 US\$
- Other recurrent expenditure	1,555.03 US\$
The total amount of real expenditure:	22,748.42 US\$

C. Financial position at the end of the report period

The financial position at the end of the reporting is remained 14,515.03US\$ and this remained budget will be contributed in the budget of the project for the coming period:

- Total of real income	37,263.45 US\$
- Total of real expenditure	22,748.42 US\$
Total amount of the balance	14,515.03 US\$

2. Start of the project activities

The project activities are implemented since April 1st 2004

3. Budget plan (October 1st 2004 - March 31st 2005)

a. The expected income:

- Balance from the previous disbursement	14,515.03 US\$
- Local contribution	2,335.00 US\$
- MISEREOR	10,464.00 US\$
The total amount of expected income:	27,314.03 US\$

b. The expected expenditure:

- Staff costs	11,890.00 US\$
- Recurrent programme expenditure	12,225.00 US\$
- Other recurrent expenditure	3,199.00 US\$
The total amount of expected payments	27,314.00 US\$

4. Local contribution

The budget contributed by local contribution for the period of April 1st 2004 to September 30th 2004 has been 5,000.00 US\$