

Progress Report 4

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: October 1st 2005 – March 31st, 2006
- Methods used for planning, monitoring and evaluation: Participation approaches
 - Collect information from members' organizations to have ideas, comments and the suggestion
 - Follow up of the post training/ 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 occurred 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 for the period of 1/10//05 – 31/3/06:

F1 Share and exchange lessons and experiences:

aa. Training/exchange workshops

- Training/exchange workshops will be organized 3 times on the following topics:

- The production of mushrooms
- The National Conference on ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)
- The exchange workshop on the community development fund
- The generation income activities

bb. Promotion of organic agriculture

The promotion of organic agriculture will be provided generally to farmers, government staffs and interested government organizations in the provinces at least 6 times and also for farmers in the project's areas of SAF members one time per year for one member's organization upon the request.

cc. Exposure visits for farmers

The exposure visits for farmers and GOs staffs will be organized in March 2006 to share and exchange lessons and experiences on the topic of sustainable agriculture and rural development with farmers of the Northeast of Thailand

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
- Organize training/workshops with Government Organizations
- 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 of the regional networks

F3. Information resource center

- Visit member organizations to collect information
- Print out information on sustainable agriculture upon request of members, interested individuals and organizations.
- Produce visual aids on the impact of chemical products
- Translate document (sustainable agriculture for the upland) from English version into Lao version.

F4. Organizational strengthening

aa. Capacity building of SAF staffs

- Development of English language

bb. Administration

- General office management

- Maintenance of air conditioner, motorcycles and computers

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. Training on mushroom production (28-30/11/05)
2. The National Conference on ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) on (30/11/05)
3. Exchange workshop on generation income activities (8-10/2/06)

bb. Promotion of organic agriculture

The promotion of natural agriculture or organic agriculture has been organized for farmers and government staffs 3 times and follows up of the post training 6 times:

Training:

- Farmers and agricultural extension workers in Phaxay District on 24/2/06
- Farmers of Ban Mone Pek district Xiengkhouang province on 25/2/06
- Farmers and agricultural extension workers in Ban Nongboua and Ban Nadao, VangVieng District on 1/3/06

Follow up of the post training:

- Follow up of the post training in Songkhone District Savannakhet province and in Nongbok District Khammounae province on 11- 23/11/05

- Follow up of the post training in Vangvieng District Vientiane province on 14-18/12/05
- Follow up of the post training in Sangthong District Vientiane capital on 28-30/12/05
- Follow up of the post training in Champasak Agricultural College and Teacher College of Southern provinces on 13-17/2/06
- Follow up of the post training in Kham District, Pek District, Phonsavan High School and Khangkhai Teacher College for the Northern Provinces on 21-25/2/06
- Follow up of the post training and meeting with the staffs of Agriculture and Forestry Extension Center of Pek District on the topic of organic agriculture on 26/2/06
- Follow up of the post training in Vangvieng District Vientiane province on 28/2-4/3/06

cc. Exposure visits for farmers

The exposure visits for farmers and GOs staffs was organized on March 13-18, 2006 to share and exchange lessons and experiences on the topic of sustainable agriculture and rural development with farmers of the Northeast of Thailand:

Topics were discussed and shared are: organic rice and vegetables production, integrated agriculture, agricultural products processing, rice straw mushroom production in the house, food production in small scale area to ensure food security of the household, conservation of soil and water by growing of green manure, cover crops and mulching, cash crops, community market for organic agriculture crops.

F2. Networking

Local networks:

The staffs of SAF have attended the activities organized by local networks:

- Annual meeting of Gender Development Group on 5/4/05
- Steering Committee Meeting of SSPF at GAA on 8/4/05
- Meeting with MCC on 14/1/05
- Meeting with Lao Service Consulting on 12/5/05
- Gender Development Group meeting on 15/6/05
- Meeting with MCC on 17/6/05

- Meeting with JVC on 24/6/05
- Exchange workshop on organic vegetable organized by PROFIL on 28/6/05
- Stakeholder consultation workshop on organic rice organized by PROFIL on 8/7/05
- Meeting with Village Focus International on 3/8/05
- Steering Committee Meeting of SSPF at GAA on 5/8/05
- Gender Development Group meeting on 9/8/05
- Meeting with SIAF CUSO project on 25/8/05
- Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Biomass organized by STEA on 12-13/9/05
- Meeting at MCC 13/10/05 on VCD production
- World March 17/10/05
- Meeting with DED 20/10/05
- Meeting with FAO 21/10/05
- Steering Committee Meeting of SSPF at GAA 28/10/05
- Meeting with Donor from Switzerland on 25/10/05
- Rural Development Tour of CUSO 6-11/11/06
- Meeting with MCC 21/11/05 on the update of VCD production
- Meeting with STEA on 22-23/11/05
- Visits project's field of SSPF on 23/11/05
- Exchange Workshop on organic agriculture of Rural Women Project on 24/11/05
- Mic-Mac meeting at CIDSE on 9/12/05
- International workshop women and community's empowerment at National Cultural Hall Vientiane Capital on 7/12/06
- Steering Committee Meeting of SSPF at GAA on 8/2/06
- Study trip in Thailand organized by Gender Development Group on the topic of violence against women on 27/2-3/3/06

- Meeting and field visit Phonsoung Project with Forum Syd from Cambodia on 21/2/06

Regional networks:

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

- Regional Conference on AFTA in a Changing Regional and Global economy: Impact of prospects in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on 3-5/10/05

F3. Information resource center

- Reprint and distribute documents related to sustainable agriculture to members and interested individuals and organizations
- Copied and provided VCD on sustainable agriculture to members and interested individuals and organizations
- Data collection on the impact of the use of chemical products (pesticide)
 - Taking VDO on organic Mushroom in Nongbok District Khammuane province on 20-23/11/05
 - Meeting with Districts staffs on data collection on the impact of chemical: Phonsoung Integrated Rural Development Project Phonhong District and 5 Districts of Vientiane Capital (Nasaythong, Hadsayfong, Xaythany, Saysetha and Sisatanak.) on 8-10/3/06

F4. Organizational strengthening

aa. Capacity building of SAF staffs

- In the period under review the staff of SAF did not attend the English course

bb. Administration

- General office management
- Regularly keep maintenance of air conditioner, motorcycles and computers

3.2.3. Expected results

aa. Training/exchange workshops

The expected outputs from the training and exchange workshops:

1. The production of mushrooms

After the training/workshop participants are able to:

- Grow mushroom for consumption and sell the surplus
- Grow the mushroom spores for their own production
- Use of rice straw and sawdust to grow mushroom and use the residues from mushroom production to fertilize their rice fields

2. The National Conference on ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA)

After the workshop the participants are able to understand:

- The situation of Laos to be the member of ASEAN, AFTA and WTO
- The general impact of AFTA and WTO to economy of Laos especially the small scale farmers
- The strategies and policies of the Lao Government to promote the commodities from the agricultural products in order to export to the ASEAN members countries (AFTA) and to WTO

3. The generation income activities

After the training/workshop participants are able to:

Identify what activities that are appropriated to apply in their places in order to produce foods for the family consumption and generate the income of the family

bb. Promotion of 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 the local resources that they can find in their places such as the ingredients to make 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, juice of local fruit for human health.

cc. Exposure visits for farmers

After the exposure visits farmers and GOs staffs will apply and promote the lessons learnt from the exposure visits to other farmers in their communities such as the use of local resources in the agricultural production, the different ways of the soil and water conservation, the intensive food security production in small scale area for family consumption.

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 attended at least 30% of the participants.

Most of farmers are from the remote areas and all groups of ethnicity from 17 to 62 years old. The participants attended the project activities are:

Items	Total	Men	Women	Farmers included	GO staff included
aa. Training /exchange workshops	65	48	17	41	12
bb. Promotion natural agriculture	124	32	92	98	26
cc. Exposure visits for farmers	15	10	5	11	4
Total number of participants	204	90	114	150	42

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 plots for the field study of participants because in the end of the activities SAF has organized the field visits for them in order to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the field works of the 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 when they buy big things such 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 their production, the soil structure, the yield of their crops and finally the healthy foods for producers and consumers.

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 staffs 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 them.
- 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
 - Department of Agriculture in cooperation with Helvetas of Switzerland set up a project (the promotion of organic farming and marketing)
- Sustainable agriculture is widely accepted by many farmers, monoculture crops producers and as well as the concerned organizations
- Majority of the NGOs working in Laos promotes and supports sustainable agriculture
- Local and regional networks share and exchange lessons and experiences on sustainable agriculture with SAF and SAF members

4.2 Planning for the reporting period to come (1/4/06 – 30/9/06)

F1 Share and exchange lessons and experiences:

aa. Training/exchange workshops

- Training/exchange workshops will be organized 3 times on the following topics:
 - Training on the village development fund
 - Training on the livestock production (cattle and buffalo , animal feed stuffs...)

- Exchange workshop on the Poverty's Reduction

bb. Promotion of organic agriculture

- The promotion of organic agriculture will be provided generally to farmers, government staffs and interested government organizations in the provinces at least 6 times and also for farmers in the project's areas of SAF members one time per year for one member's organization upon the request.

- Workshop on organic agriculture with farmers and GOs staffs of Khoun District

- Training on SA concept for staffs and students of Khangkhai Teacher College, Pek District

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

- Organize training/workshops with Government Organizations

- 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 organized by regional networks

F3. Information resource center

- Continue to collect information of the chemical use in the project areas of SAF members and the places where farmers grow vegetables to feed the Markets of Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province
- Copy VCD and documents on sustainable agriculture to provide to members, interested organizations and individuals to promote and/or apply sustainable agriculture.
- Translate document (sustainable agriculture) from English version into Lao version.

F4. Organizational strengthening

aa. Capacity building of SAF employees

- Development's skill of the District's Agricultural Extension Workers in the field of agricultural products processing

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 target groups of SAF appreciated MISEREOR that provides fund for SAF to promote sustainable agriculture because most of the Lao farmers are small farmers and the agricultural production in Laos is predominantly by the subsistence in nature.

The fund wasn't transferred on the appropriated time because of the communication's problems (e-mail) so for the period to come SAF would like to ask a help from you to send us the mails through e-mail and post office. SAF and its members highly appreciate MISEREOR that has policies to assist 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 the GOs staffs is not enough to cover the expenditure of their basic needs such as lodging, food, cloth, medicine... so they have to produce their foods by introducing of low cost and internal inputs in their small scale production

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:

- Balance from the previous disbursement	36,115,999 kip
- MISEREOR	286,536,208 kip
- Local contribution	37,135,001 kip

The total amount of expected income: 359,787,208 kip

b. The real income of the period under review:

- Balance from the previous disbursement	36,115,999 kip
- MISEREOR	265,672,743 kip
- Difference of the currency exchange rate	-817,596 kip
- Local contribution	38,374,850 kip
The total amount of real income:	339,345,996 kip

B. Expenditure:

Major variances between planned and actual expenditure for all main activities of the organization are the planned expenditure is 359,787,208 kip and the actual expenditure for all main activities of the organization is 282,814,829 kip

The planned overall expenditure for entire organization has not been achieved because the disbursement of the budget for the previous period from MISEREOR is quite late (e-mail problem) and there are not the expenditure for the development of staffs of SAF and the budget from the reserve was not used neither

a. The expected expenditure

- Staff costs	135,975,560 kip
- Recurrent programme expenditure	165,221,700 kip
- Other recurrent expenditure	31,459,948 kip
- Reserve	27,130,000 kip
The total amount of expected payments	359,787,208 kip

b. The real expenditure in the period under review:

- Staff costs	127,262,190 kip
- Recurrent programme expenditure	126,474,740 kip
- Other recurrent expenditure	29,077,899 kip
- Reserve	000 kip
The total amount of real expenditure:	282,814,829 kip

C. Financial position at the end of the report period

The financial position at the end of the reporting is remained 56,531,167 kip and this remained budget will be contributed in the budget of the project for the coming period:

- Total of real income	339,345,996 kip
- Total of real expenditure	282,814,829 kip
Total amount of the balance:	56,531,167 kip

2. Start of the project activities

The project activities are implemented since April 1st 2004

3. Budget plan (April 1st 2006 – September 30th 2006)

a. The expected income:

- Balance from the previous disbursement	56,531,167 kip
- Local contribution	48,644,516 kip
- MISEREOR	189,123,887 kip
The total amount of expected income:	294,299,570 kip

b. The expected expenditure:

- Staff costs	128,144,440 kip
- Recurrent programme expenditure	125,929,725 kip
- Other recurrent expenditure	23,692,300 kip
- Reserved budget	16,533,105 kip
The total amount of expected payments	294,299,570 kip

4. Local contribution

The budget contributed by local contribution for the period of April 1st 2006 to September 30th 2006 has been 48,644,516 kip