

Building an inclusive and sustainable agricultural sector in Cambodia

As part of a larger European Union effort to support Cambodian agriculture, this programme focussed on harmonising fisheries and livestock policy and law, improving product quality, and building capacity across the sector



Mr Andre Ban
NIRAS Cambodia representative
T: +85523 216 672
abn@niras.com

Nearly 70% of the population of Cambodia is engaged in agriculture, relying upon livestock and fishing both for income and as basic sources of protein. Food security is a major issue for the country, with some of the highest malnutrition rates in Asia. In order to strengthen the sector, the European Union (EU) prioritised support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) through its programme "Promotion of Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in the Agricultural Sector: Fisheries and Livestock". Running from May 2014 to June 2019, the project represented an EU investment of €21 million, NIRAS was responsible for providing technical assistance (TA).

Providing greater access to fishery export markets

Cambodians eat more freshwater fish per capita than any other country in the world. Support to Fisheries was therefore a relevant second key component of the programme. The programme prioritised fisheries management, aquaculture development, value chain improvement and capacity building.

~ 70%

of Cambodians rely on the agriculture sector for income and food

Providing sector wide support to agriculture

Under the programme, three components were designed to work together in a complementary way to support the agricultural sector as a whole. The first related to SPS (sector policy support), where NIRAS worked to ensure best practices by leaders in government and the private sector to effectively manage, monitor, and plan for improvements to the agricultural sector as a whole.

In order to accomplish the goals of the first, the TA team provided extensive training to government staff and support to systems development both within the MAFF headquarters and at the local level. This encouraged better planning and monitoring, while more transparent information about farm product prices was made available to farmers and traders. TA helped draft a human resources management and development policy and to introduce a management information system for HR. More than 3,000 staff received training and capacity building in MAFF level and among the trading population.

NIRAS provided both long-term and short-term experts to help MAFF improve sector policy and legislation by, among other things, helping communities in demarcating fish conservation zones and improving the organisational capacity of local stakeholders. In aquaculture, NIRAS support to research and training to farmers helped develop domesticate new species for fish farming and to disseminate practices more broadly. In the second half of the programme, NIRAS TA provided intensive support to improving Cambodia's marine fisheries management. TA drafted a revised fisheries law, a Cambodia National Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Marine Fishing and a National Plan of Control and Inspection. As a result of these measures and improved management within the Fisheries Administration, the EU "red flag" on Cambodia's marine fisheries exports to the EU was lifted.

Donor

European Union

Client

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Kingdom of Cambodia

Location

Cambodia

Contract value

€3,850,000

TA value

€3,768,000

Duration

May 2014-June 2019



Helping livestock farmers meet demand through improved efficiency of production

The final key component was related to livestock, an important income-generating activity for millions of farmers. At the national level Niras helped the the General Directorate of Livestock to improve hygiene in slaughterhouses, strengthen laws on disease control and improve planning and management. Support to decentralized levels was provided through training of Village animal health workers (VAHWs) on vaccinations and treatment of animal diseases, and the operation of a large number of demonstrations in animal breeding and husbandry.

50%

average increase in income generated from livestock

Encouraging the emergence of strong civil society partners in the agriculture sector

Cross-cutting elements are an embedded part of all EU development projects, and this programme was no exception. The programme financed the production of a gender policy and plan and a child development policy. Training in planning, management and financial control also supported the implementation of three major government reform programmes: Public Financial Management Reforms, Decentralisation and Deconcentration Reforms and Public Administration Reform.

A central feature of efforts to support to the emergence of strong civil society partners in the agriculture sector was a grant scheme for NGOs. NIRAS TA supported MAFF to manage procedures for requesting and evaluating proposals and then overseeing implementation of five major grants worth between EUR 500,000 and EUR 1 million each. The grants enabled NGOs to support communities in basic improvements to fisheries and livestock management.



30%

decrease in households experiencing food shortages through the year