



APICI

Strengthening agroecology stakeholders in Cambodia

In Cambodia, agriculture employs 50% of the working population and accounts for 22,2% of GDP. Yet, food and nutrition security in the country is far from being a reality: Cambodia depends largely on imported agricultural products, which create competition for local produce, and malnutrition is persisting. 32% of children under the age of 5 have stunted growth, 10% suffer from emaciation and 24% are underweight.

In Siem Reap, the country's main tourism region, farmers are struggling to meet growing demand from consumers for safe, healthy products all year round. What's more, the covid-19 period, with its repeated border closures, has had a particularly disruptive effect on local sectors and markets, and increased food insecurity.

In this context, the general aim of the Apici project is to improve and secure the living conditions of family farmers through agroecological practices in Siem Reap province, Cambodia. Since 2010, it has been working in the following areas:

- > **training farmers in agroecology** in order to increase, diversify and improve the quality of production, and to encourage the dissemination of techniques through a farmers' network;
- > **ensuring the quality of agricultural products and structuring local value chains** to improve market access and enhance the value of local products;
- > **promoting and strengthening social and professional organisations** in rural areas, in order to ensure long-term support services for farms.

Prospects

The project, conducted since 2010 by GRET and Cambodian NGO CIRD, with support from the Hauts-de-Seine Departmental Council in France, enabled structuring of a producers' network and made it possible to implement a value chain for marketing of local quality products (see boxed text to the right).

The challenge now is to **ensure that producers' organisations can function autonomously**, in particular their capacity to deliver training to farmers on agroecological techniques, thanks to a network of pilot farmers. An innovative method to promote agroecology was initiated: **the production of video tutorials**, made by farmers and posted on social media (some videos have been watched more than 2 million times).

As consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of safe, quality food, the project also aims to **raise awareness among stakeholders in the value chain on food security and to link its agricultural activities with basic knowledge of nutrition**.

In addition, the local authorities in Siem Reap have become aware of the importance of developing a provincial food system to feed the population. The action has therefore evolved since the end of 2022 to support provincial stakeholders in co-constructing and implementing a plan to develop an inclusive, sustainable and healthy food system at provincial level.

Project objectives

Since 2010, it has been working in the following areas:

- Promote agro-ecological intensification and diversification of agricultural production.
- Strengthen producer organizations and local agricultural value chains to secure production and improve market access.
- Support provincial stakeholders in the design and implementation of a development plan for efficient, safe and sustainable territorial food systems.

Results achieved

- 140 villages in 4 districts.
- 35 vegetable and chicken producer groups supported.
- 3 cooperatives created and 7 existing supported, totalling 2,200 members.
- 1 market dedicated to local produce, set up in Siem Reap town.
- 420 family ponds built.
- 2,300 villagers trained in good nutritional practices.
- 36 savings and credit groups created, totalling 2,650 members and capital of over US\$1 million.
- 65 journalists made aware of healthy and sustainable food and farming systems.
- Around a hundred video tutorials produced by farmers.
- Start of the consultation process for the co-construction and implementation of a provincial

Project actions

Developing agroecological techniques

- > Strengthening of farmers' agroecological capacities (rice growing, vegetable growing, livestock production, water resource management).
- > Support for producers to invest in agricultural inputs and equipment.

Improving nutrition

- > Raising farmers' awareness on the basics of nutrition and food diversification.
- > Organisation of awareness-raising days for consumers on healthy, diversified agroecological products.

Structuring a local quality produce value chain

- > Strengthening the capacities of vegetable growers' and livestock producers' groups for marketing and promotion of products.
- > Implementation of a participative guarantee system certifying the quality of agricultural products.
- > Organisation of an annual agricultural trade show.
- > Supporting investment for the Siem Reap producers' market.
- > Strengthening the capacities of management committees in savings groups and cooperatives, and support for their legalisation.
- > Training and support for agricultural cooperatives.



Weekly market selling healthy local produce in the city of Siem Reap

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Family farms develop a more sustainable, resilient and autonomous agricultural model via agroecology.
- Farmers share their know-how and experiences with peers through videos and social media.
- Producers and consumers are aware of health and nutrition issues and of food diversification.
- Consumers in Siem Reap have access to quality local produce marketed by producers' groups and certified by a participative quality guarantee system.
- New agricultural cooperatives' coordination, management and communication capacities are strengthened.
- Savings groups and cooperatives are legally recognised and autonomous.



Micro-irrigation and mulching in an agroecological farm to conserve water resources



Farmers make a video with a smartphone to share their agroecology knowledge



A family pond used for vegetable production in the dry season

AVERAGE ANNUAL BUDGET : 420 000 EUROS

MAIN FINANCIAL PARTNER:

CO-FUNDING SINCE THE START OF THE PROJECT



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Present in Cambodia since 1988, GRET is an international development NGO that has been working in the field and at political level to fight poverty and inequalities for more than 40 years.

Cambodia

