



Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries  
General Directorate of Agriculture



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## PREFACE

Agricultural Extension plays an important role in transferring new technologies and innovations that are resilient to climate change. This extension contribution to solve the problems of natural disasters and others issues to farmers and Agricultural Cooperative to promote productivity, quality of food security, and increase family income. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has introduced the policy of Agricultural Extension in Cambodia in 2015, to provide extension services with Pluralism, such as involving all stakeholders in providing outreach to farmers, these mechanisms support, coordinate, and connect the link between all of Cambodia's agricultural service providers to respond to the needs of producers and market demands.

Agriculture Service Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE) have prepared the "**HR strategy for Extension**" was organized as a workshop, SWOT analysis, risk management, stakeholder analysis, training needs and consulting workshops with agricultural extension technical, specialists and stakeholders from institutions and extension agencies, technical units from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of 25 Municipality/Provinces, Private Sectors and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Agriculture Extension Policy in Cambodia and the Role and Responsibility of Agricultural Extension in Cambodia has also been used as a reference for the design of this strategy.

The strategy is for the people involved in agricultural media, which are providing services specifically to farmers, but also other stakeholders in the agricultural sector as users of technology and information. This strategy responds to human and human resources issues both in the public and private sectors.

The General Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will submit a **Human Resource Strategy for Extension**, which is a basic document for PDAFF officers in Municipality/Provinces, Districts/Khan, NGOs, implementation agencies, and all stakeholders apply for new agricultural techniques transfer, approaches, exchange of experiences, sharing knowledge and bring about increased agricultural production, stabilize the family economy, facilitate farmers to adapt, according to the evolutionary condition of globalization, diversification and adaptation with climate change contributes to effectively supplying agricultural products at the market.

**PhnomPenh Municipality, Date.....Month.....2018**

**General Directorate of Agriculture**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Human Resources Strategy for Extension has been prepared under the Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE) funded partly by a loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Programme goal is to reduce poverty and increase the resilience of poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers in Cambodia.

Agriculture is a leading sector which plays a vital role in the economic growth in Cambodia. It accounts for about 30% of the gross domestic product, and a recent Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries estimate now puts its employment level at almost 50 percent of the population, but importantly 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas and engage in agricultural activities, with women and ethnic minorities among the most vulnerable groups.

The Royal Government of Cambodia's vision is to modernize and intensify Cambodia's agriculture while simultaneously ensuring efficient management of the land, the environment, and other natural resources. The need for new technologies and innovations for modernizing and commercializing agricultural systems is therefore more evident now than ever before. Agricultural extension is the major conduit for knowledge and information sharing, and plays a key role in linking farmers with research and markets.

MAFF is the Ministry responsible for agricultural development as specified in the Policy on Agricultural Extension in Cambodia (May 2015). This policy aims to make knowledge and technology accessible to farming communities, thus increasing productivity. Then in June 2017, MAFF with assistance from the ASPIRE project, produced a paper on Roles and Responsibilities for Agricultural Extension in Cambodia. This document is based on the premise of an agricultural extension [system] that responds to the needs of farmers and has high quality agricultural extension service delivery through a pluralistic agricultural extension system that encompasses public sector as well as private sector service providers such as non-government organisations (NGOs), private businesses, community based organizations and development partners. It will build upon human resources to ensure the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable stakeholders in the agricultural sector to produce efficiently and to compete in a global market.

To drive the changes envisioned to implement the Policy, the Roles and Responsibilities document has calculated the [total] future staffing needs in government agencies being approximately as follows

- 50 personnel at national level
- 320 personnel at provincial level
- 1600 at district and commune level

This is based upon the intended nationwide ratio of one extension practitioner for every 1000 farming households and it is the model which the Human Resources Strategy uses but it does not include private sector practitioners. Recent estimates of staff numbers from MAFF show a shortfall in total being in the order of 1400 persons for which it is proposed that this is filled progressively through till 2030. In terms of qualifications there will need to be "knowledge leaders" with post-graduate qualifications. A total of five PhD level staff to be deployed in DAE and one Masters or PhD qualified person in each Office of Agricultural Extension (in PDAFF). Further it is recommended that the PDAFF staff is qualified in extension processes rather than in a technical discipline. Some of the total new staff needed are already employed but will need

to be relocated But for the greater part of the requirement, recruitment needs to be progressive and will be a major exercise. There is however a pool of potential recruits for DAO – the Extension Advisor position. CEWs currently or previously employed under project budgets already have had training and work experience and with shorter period and highly targeted training could be upgraded to the necessary level of competency and get the recruitment process underway quickly.

This Human Resources Strategy for Extension document is developed to support the implementation of the policy of agricultural extension at the national, provincial, district, and Commune level stakeholders to provide guidance to all stakeholders involved in agricultural extension so that there is a harmonized approach in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation across both public and private sectors.

The Strategy is built upon three pillars namely

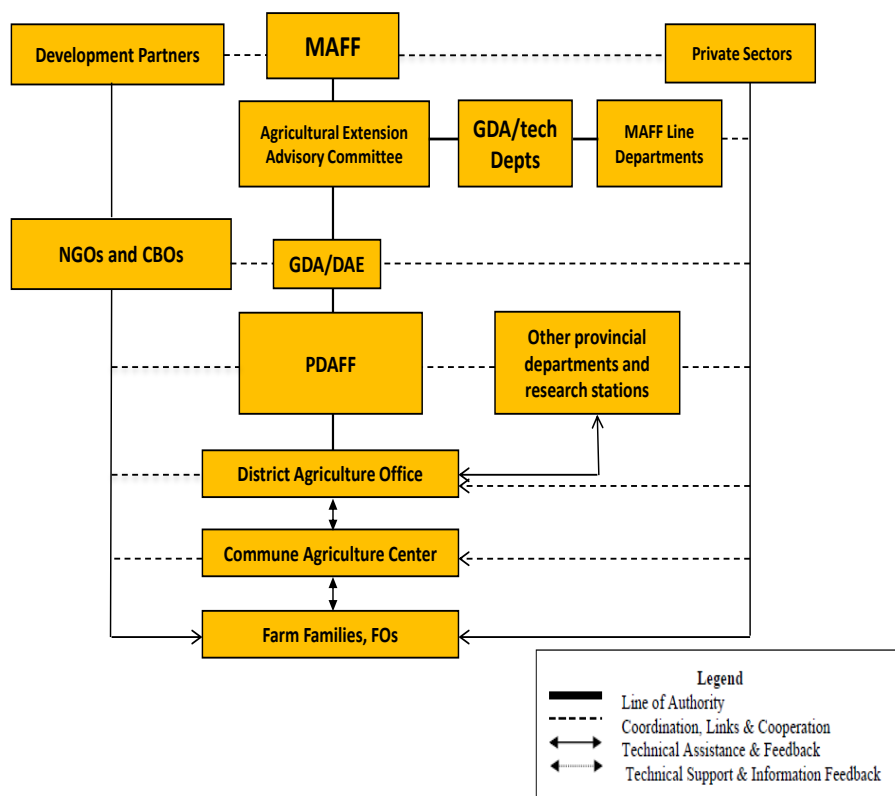
- ❖ Organisation and institutions
- ❖ Human resource development and
- ❖ Human resource management

And to this is added a discussion which relates directly to the pluralistic nature of agricultural extension which is the role of the private sector [agri-business, NGOs, CBOs etc] in the agricultural extension process. This discussion is in terms of their human resources and the nature of the interaction of the human resources between government and non-government sectors in agricultural extension activities.

The Strategy concludes with a section on a proposed plan and structure for implementation of the strategy. A pilot phase under the financing of ASPIRE project is proposed although the bigger picture is a nationally applicable strategy not just one tied to a Development Partner project.

The model for a pluralistic extension system which informs the approach taken in the Strategy is produced below.

## Extension Service Provision and Organization in Cambodia



The Strategy in summary proposes that a series of competencies should be drawn up for each and every position in the agricultural extension system. Staff is recruited at an appropriate level of education and their competency status assessed. They will then undertake professional development based on an individual plan that is designed to raise their competency level so that they become more specialized in areas that are appropriate to their personal role. It is presented across three pillars.

### 1. Organisation and institutions

The recommendation is that service delivery should be made by extension practitioners with the least distance between their base and the client farmers in particular for the public sector extension system as location of private sector practitioners is determined by their particular situation. Whilst extension services would ideally come through the Commune Extension Workers their deployment is limited to project activities funded by development partners. Nationwide coverage by CEWs under government funding is not feasible in the foreseeable future. It is a moot point as to whether the delivery of extension comes through the CEW but to do so requires significant investment of funds that may not be justified. However delivering competence building activities to CEWs can be done through e-Learning as courses have been set up and the costs can be borne by the employing DP project.

The grassroots deliverer of extension messages is therefore the District Agricultural Office staff member. It is proposed that each DAO have a staff of at least seven (or more) in line with the 1:1000 ratio with subject specialists consistent with the dominant agricultural production systems in the area. Their role is to support CEWs where they are deployed and to undertake

extension activities with farmers i.e. in technology transfer and in providing *ad hoc* advice as required by clients.

The Provincial Office for Agricultural Extension has its major responsibility in planning, coordination and evaluation of extension activities in the province as well as organizing/providing training to District and Commune staff, but the staff seldom would be directly engaged in the transfer of technology to farmers. The Provincial office is also proposed as the focal point for coordination of the public and private sectors in the provision of extension services. A small staff of about seven people is proposed with a focus on expertise in cross-cutting issues such as marketing, gender, farm business etc.

The Strategy proposes some changes in the Department of Agricultural Extension which is the National level agency leading the sector. Its mandate should broadly be to support, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the activities of all agricultural extension service providers and recognize the roles of concerned stakeholders relative to extension services delivery. The proposal is for a staff of approximately 45 staff including a pool of administrative support staff that will be rotationally allocated to gain experience in all aspects of the agency work. The "Offices" have some realignment to number just five but without any reduction in coverage of responsibilities.

## **2. Human resource management**

Human resource management essentially deals with the functions of what some organizations call "Personnel Department". This section in the Strategy recognizes that various management systems are in place but it does not evaluate them. The changes suggested are made to enhance management of staff in order to provide more effective extension services.

The discussion includes issues of recruitment procedures, nurture and retention of staff, remuneration, staff assessment, operation of a staff database and occupational health and safety in the workplace. The latter issue is of particular relevance to agricultural extension practitioners as they regularly meet farmers who are using unsafe practices in using equipment and in the handling of chemicals. It is proposed that safety in using machinery and in the handling and application of chemicals needs to be included in all discussions with farmers and in all print and audio-visual media with a special section should be placed on the website. This topic should also be one for discussion with the private sector extension practitioners in particular with those who are the sellers of the chemicals.

## **3. Human resource development**

Human resource development is the key element of this strategy and it is based upon competencies. In this Strategy competency refers to the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that allow extension workers to effectively perform their tasks as expected by their clients i.e. doing it both efficiently and effectively. A competency thus is a characteristic of an employee that (a) contributes to successful job performance and (b) achievement of organizational results.

This Strategy covers two main areas – entry level and in – service learning to acquire the necessary competencies for an effective, efficient and pluralistic extension system. The proposal is that Competency descriptions should be prepared for all jobs in extension and be used in selection, in assessment of staff and in determining training needs.

The Strategy recognizes effectively three categories of extension practitioners – Worker, Advisor and Specialist – and whilst these are used in describing the staff in the public sector the

meaning of the terms can be applied to the private sector. Workers and Advisors are those people who provide services to the clients whilst Specialists tend to be the people who support the other two groups.

Entry level competencies will largely be determined by formal education qualifications supplemented by additional courses to cover deficiencies. In the case of CEW (and VEW) such courses must be completed within a specified time after engagement. For the other two categories which require a degree level qualification such courses will also be required but probably not the complete package.

"How do we enable life-long learning?" The career development or in-service training is recommended to be a program tailored to each individual and is built upon a modular approach and is also attached to a registration and accreditation procedure. It is recommended that all extension practitioners study the basic modules so that the approach to extension is similar across all providers although the depth of such modules existing level of knowledge. Subsequent courses should be elective to add to/improve the level of competency. Several ANNEXES to the Strategy provide detailed overviews of how a modular course might be implemented, the sources being other ASPIRE international consultants DAE has the responsibility to review the course contents and develop a course which meets the needs of present and future extension practitioners. They need to work with the agricultural education institutes who will deliver the courses to ensure commonality of objective and essential course details. Then course delivery must be under the management of DAE although not necessarily the actual presentation which should be contracted out.

#### **4. Private Sector Integration**

The overall objective for agricultural extension is to have a pluralistic system. Today there are multiple categories of players but there is no real evidence of integration and coordination. The challenge is how to bring that about to forge a truly pluralistic system. The Strategy proposes that coordination and integration of the private sector extension service providers with the government sector be based around four activities:

- Registration
- Accreditation
- Provincial colloquium
- Sharing of training opportunities between sectors

Registration is recommended so that a database can be created of all people providing extension services. It should use the Extension Practitioners Survey to create the beginnings of the database. Having a database will facilitate cross sector coordination and cooperation especially with NGOs who tend to work in isolation from government. It will also facilitate the Public Private Partnerships to be undertaken under ASPIRE funding. Clients (farmers) can always seek help from those who do have the means to access and contact details should be made available to them.

Accreditation is the second step and adds "substance" to the database. Accreditation will also give a more professional cachet to extension practitioners and separate the better operators from the more ordinary who just do their job. Accreditation will be gained and maintained by undertaking courses to build competencies and/or by participating in other types of professional development such as participating in conferences, writing papers etc. Farmers and other extension system clients will be able to directly (or with help) identify accredited

practitioners, their areas of expertise and location so that they might be avail themselves of services.

The Provincial Colloquium is the forum at which public and private sector meet. It is informal but has structure to ensure effective outcomes. But it is not a mechanism for government to control the private sector rather to share across a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Other experts have proposed more “legalistic” forum but the HR Strategy has opted for this model at least as a first step to ascertain the willingness of the private sector to participate in such a meeting.

And finally it is well recognized that there are many training courses being conducted around agricultural production technology and extension processes. But the courses are very often a “closed shop” for no good reason and could be opened up to a wider audience. The proposal is that all (except the most confidential) training activities be posted on the DAE website with invitations extended to all interested extension practitioners to join the benefits of which include being able to attend courses that the employer may not conduct and to further develop a network of extension practitioners..

Since ASPIRE is the funding source for writing this Strategy it is proposed that a number of activities be undertaken through a Five year period from 2018 in a pilot modality. Concept Notes are provided for each Activity along with additional ANNEXES:

- ❖ Action Plan
- ❖ Indicative Budget
- ❖ Monitoring Matrix
- ❖ Risk Management Matrix

This will allow implementation of the strategy to move forward whilst also allowing for reflection and modification before full implementation.

The Strategy is supported by a number of ANNEXES (apart from those related to the pilot project) and includes (a) a model of competencies (b) e-Learning course for CEWs (c) outline of modules for building capacity/competence (d) Training of Trainers course outline and (e) roles and responsibilities for DAE.



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## ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ASPIRE</b>	Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension
<b>CEW</b>	Commune Extension Worker
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organization
<b>CC</b>	Commune Council
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation
<b>DAO</b>	District Agricultural Office
<b>DAE</b>	Department of Agricultural Extension
<b>DPHRD</b>	Department of Personnel and Human Resource Development
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organisation
<b>GDA</b>	General Directorate of Agriculture
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>HRM &amp; HRD</b>	Human Resource Management & Human Resource Development
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>ITC</b>	Information Technology and Communication
<b>KCNCA</b>	Kompong Cham National College of Agriculture
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>MAFF</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries
<b>NCDDS</b>	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-government Organisation
<b>PADEE</b>	Project for Agricultural Development and Economic Empowerment
<b>PAEC</b>	Policy for Agriculture Extension in Cambodia
<b>PAEPSG</b>	Provincial Agricultural Practitioner Sector Group
<b>PDAFF</b>	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries
<b>PLNCA</b>	Prek Leap National College of Agriculture
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership
<b>RGC</b>	Royal Government of Cambodia
<b>RUA</b>	Royal University of Agriculture
<b>SNEC</b>	Supreme National Economic Council
<b>SWOT</b>	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats [analysis]
<b>TSSD</b>	Tonle Sap Poverty Reduction and Smallholder Development Project
<b>VEW</b>	Village Extension Worker
<b>VLA</b>	Village Livestock Agent (or Worker)

## **1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND**

### **1.1. Agriculture Services Program for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE)**

*It is under financial support from ASPIRE project that this Human Resource Strategy for Extension is being developed.*

The Royal Government of Cambodia has received funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to implement the Agriculture Services Program for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE). The goal of ASPIRE is to reduce poverty and to increase the resilience of poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The primary objective is that by 2021 an enhanced Cambodian model of agricultural extension services is demonstrated as effective for assisting a diversity of smallholder farmers to contribute to broad-based economic growth through profitable and resilient farm businesses.

ASPIRE will identify innovative extension models and methodologies that will contribute to the development of improved extension systems that can be delivered to Cambodian farmers by Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) staff (and other partners) through the ASPIRE project. The opportunity to build partnerships with multiple extension providers will be explored and other practical considerations such as quality assurance systems for extension delivery and core adviser skills and competencies will be identified, piloted and evaluated.

### **1.2. Agriculture in Cambodia**

Agriculture is a leading sector which plays a vital role in the economic growth in Cambodia. It accounts for about 30% of the gross domestic product, and a recent MAFF estimate puts the employment level in the sector at almost 50 percent of the population. But importantly 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas and engage in agricultural activities, with women and ethnic minorities among the most vulnerable groups. About 60 percent of agricultural production is still for family subsistence, Sustainable development and commercialization of agriculture are fundamental to poverty reduction, and are closely linked to the rural-urban development nexus.

The Royal Government of Cambodia's (RGC) vision is to modernize and intensify Cambodia's agriculture while simultaneously ensuring efficient management of the land, the environment, and other natural resources. Cambodia's development strategy (The Rectangular Strategy Phase III, 2014–2018) gives enhancement of the agriculture sector as the first priority, along with further rehabilitation and construction of physical infrastructure, private sector development and employment generation, and capacity building and human resources development.

The approach to agricultural growth has three closely linked components: productivity enhancement, diversification, and value chain development, all within the related themes of poverty reduction, food security and environmental sustainability. There is a three-pronged focus to transforming the agriculture sector in general, from subsistence-based to commercial agriculture, including productivity enhancement, diversification,