******Note for Vegetable Technical Working Group’s Visit**

Project: RECOVER

Date: 13-15 June 2022​

Partners: FNN, DPA, DCA, VSO

Location: Kampong Chhnang and Battambang provinces

**The purpose of the TWGs is two-fold:**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. To document differences in approaches between partners within the four work areas; **Horticulture,** Poultry, TVET and Migration. These differences might be explained by context, in which case they need to be explained, or they might in other cases need to be aligned, taking the best approach across the partners and adopting it throughout the consortium.
2. To promote learning by sharing approaches to challenging situations, innovating new approaches or learning from other organisations and projects.
 |

**Participants:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No | Name | Organization | Position | Phone Number |
| 1 | Kuy Sophal | DPA | Program Coordinator | 012632362 |
| 2 | Phan Sopheap  | FNN | Executive Director  | N/A |
| 3 | May Ly | FNN | Project Manager | 012835636 |
| 4 | Mouk Mao | VSO | Project Manger | 012554511 |
| 5 | Kenneth Wood | DCA | Consortium Coordinator  | 092 325 357 |
| 6 | Eang Sovannara | DCA | M&E Officer | 012 423 195 |
| 7 | Samreth Vanndorn | DCA | Market and Private Sector Engagement Officer | 077 222 080 |
| 8 | Horn Kimhong | DCA | Program Coordinator | 092 939 890 |

It is suggested that the TWG for horticulture approach the current practices taken by the three partners; DPA, FNN and VSO which are visited during the TWG field trip within the following areas:

* Production: techniques, quality, variety,
* Infrastructure – specifications, quality, price, appropriateness for producers’ needs
* Farmer trainers – demo farm quality, training, usage by farmers, access
* AC practices – collaboration, bulking, storage, inclusion, support, businesses, financial management
* Project level – scalability, replicability, sustainability, innovation, learning and evidence

**Area of reflections:**

**General observation:**

|  |
| --- |
| **Production:*** Despite challenging over the years due to Covid, target farmers getting income from horticulture and realized it as a source of income
* Some selective small holder farmers realised the work from horticulture created opportunity for employment for members
* Besides having problems with unstable market, target farmers also face technical issues *even though the* project has provided a lot of technical capacity building to farmers [an effective capacity is needed to be addressed and figured out way to improve on its current technical topic].
* The current value chain’s accessibility is limited for a long distancing of supply. In this regard the project should consider keeping shorter value chain instead.
* The collection points are built- but utilization of the centres seems not working. The main reason of ineffective use is related to lack of vegetable product [ the project team must be carefully check and working with AC/GPs to improved the use at collection center]
* Farmers who were visited said they were part of a cooperative and they have little option when prices of product drop due to there’s inadequate market demand [they have no power of bargaining the price of the product]
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **AC practices/ Approach*** **VSO**: working with AC, given all authority to AC to form PGs- the selection farmers were followed the criteria which set by AC’s committee
* At the project level. VSO is revolving fund through AC’s management (by now 50 members) with a mount of 227 $ per household. The revolving fund will be pay back two times for a completion [50% for each time]
* **FNN**: all related works in the project are oriented to project’s staff. Project staff works directly with AC and Union to implement the activities at field. In relation of Net house, FNN has its definition for net house (28 net houses) as demon farm.
* **DPA**: selected target household who are considered Horticulture is a main source of income and the selected households are oriented about the purpose of the project
* DPA has given decision to created committee to set the selection criteria – one of the criteria, returnee migrant is also included. The group principle was created by them and local authorities were involved in the recruitment process. Noted that all principles and criteria are not under AC.

**Learning**: to strengthen a good supply to market for the contract farming AC, the project should apply collective approach, related to net house should be provided or granted to a closer community in the same area which enable local buyer easy to collect to market |

|  |
| --- |
| **Farmer trainers/Technical support*** **VSO** is working through Farmer Trainer and expects to create five **Farmer Trainers.** VSO has already recruited them yet let them to support the project. In Battambang, VSO has contracted with ACCU and AIM project to support the selected farmers [ACCU play their role in providing technical support to 50 HHs while AIM focuses on Market- all farmers are integrated in the required system]. **VSO** expects 50% of 50 target households receiving GAP certification through ACCU
* **DPA**: using in house/internal expertise and staff who has experience in vegetable production [staff has a manual to capacities the farmers]. **DPA** has working with technical contractor and KOC- the related issue was communicated with them. **DPA** eyes on the key farmer for a long-term facilitation [ farmer trainer is now started and has shared to other farmers]
* **FNN:** ToT or farmer trainer, most of them had previous experiences which previously received by other FNN’ project and new Trainer are also built in other areas [All are refreshed]. Farmer trainers provide training specifically on main problem of the farm as they have just a day of training. As the same DPA, **FNN** joined hand with KOC to provide training on Organic and KOC working with farmer trainers

 **In observation*** So far, Trainings were provided a lot and theory was shared by one speaker. In the way to improve the quality of capacity building, the key speakers should be two- one focused on theory and another one focused on real practice. NGOs noted that, Farmer trainer still lack skills to strengthen farmers on the related new technical issues- each NGO should have an expert or connected resources on horticulture to back up and support farmer trainer’s capacity gaps.
* \*\*Common training manual should be developed to apply for the project. CHIAN, IDE have developed [other sources], the project should learn from those related topics which is applicable and set a clear role and assign a key responsible person to facilities and translate into the context of the project.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **Technical issues*** Farmer has limited capacity- the ability to identify the issue related to vegetable disease is inadequate
* Technical guidelines for using net house are still not practical- most of net house are ignored and - farmer prefers to grow outside the net house

**Comment for improvement:** * Partners have to provide a better regular coaching and the coaching should be made by a skilled person to support the farmers in an effective way.
* Using net house including techniques [inside and out] and selection of vegetable types should be more strengthen and improved by expertise
 |
| **Scalability*** Farmers are hesitated to scale up- farmers have no strong evidence/trust to motivate them to scale up or replicate. **It is questionable!**
* In general observation, most of collection points are still not working- Partner must consider the use of collection centre on how it is accessible to closer market

**Comment for improvement:** * It seems that farmer has no confidence- there should be a good study on the net house effectiveness or cost efficiency.
* The project has to shorten the supply chain- if possible, the vegetable products can be supplied to the nearest market.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| Market linkage * In general, marketing linkage to market are good- but concerning on unstable of price and lack of supply. Gasolines increasing is observed as a bad impact of vegetable price.
 |
| Transparency and inclusiveness* VSO: PGs are selected by AC (AC decides based on commitment, interest and real existing practices) not mainly focus on ID poor.
* FNN: Staff working with staff to recruit farmers to provide Net house that follow the criteria including unflooded area, farmer has own land, commitment, ID poor household is also included.
* DPA: selected target household who are considered Horticulture is a main source of income and the selected households are oriented about the purpose of the project.
 |
| Grant support * VSO is using revolving fund approach- AC has authority to decide without interest.
* DPA provides material with a condition to payback when each farmer get benefit- the payment is decided by each AC committee.
* FNN provides material with contribution but no condition to payback.
 |

***The exchange idea among project management is fruitful***