

THE CIVIL SOCIETY FUND

DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

EMPOWERING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN ODDAR MEANCHEY (ACSO)

IMPLEMENTED BY

Rural Economic and Agricultural Development Agent (READA)
Community Based Integrated Development Organization (CIDO)
Rural Community and Environmental Development Organisation (RCEDO)
Khmer Buddhist Association (KBA)

UNDER THE OVERALL GUIDANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF

Agricultural Development Denmark Asia (ADDA)

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

ADDA	Agricultural Development Denmark Asia
ACSO	Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Oddar Meanchey
AC	Agriculture Cooperative
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDHS	Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey
CDP	Community Development Project
CHHRA	Cambodian Health and Human Right Alliances
CIDO	Community Based Integrated Development Organization
CIP	Commune Investment Plan
CISOM	Empowerment of Civil Societies in Oddar Meanchey
CP	Commune Professional
CPC	CISOM Project Coordinator
CSA	CISOM Senior Advisor
CSES	Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CISU	Civil Society in Development
COCIS	Cooperative and Civil Society Development
DANGO	Network of Non-Governmental Organization in Oddar Meanchey
DANIDA	Danish Foreign Aid
DC	District Coordinator
DF	District Facilitator
DEU	Delegation of European Union
D&D	Decentralisation and De-concentration
DFID	Department for International Development
DPAC	Department for Promotion of Agricultural Cooperative
DKK	Danish Kroner
EASY	Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Siem Reap
EU	European Union
FFS	Farmer Field School
FLD	Farmer Livelihood Development
FOA	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HH	Household
INFOSE	Innovative Approaches to Food Insecurity for Urban and Peri-Urban Poor in Siem Reap Province.
IO	International Organisation
IWEP	Integrated Women Empowerment Project
KBA	Khmer Buddhist Association
LEAP	Livelihood Enhancement and Association of The Poor in Siem Reap
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCDD	National Committee of Sub-National Democratic Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPDD	National Program for Democratic Development
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NZAID	New Zealand Aid
ODM	Oddar Meanchey Province
PC	Project Coordinator
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PDA	Provincial Department of Agriculture
PDWA	Provincial Department of Women's Affairs
PACU	Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union
PVDP	Participatory Village Development Plan
PL	Project Leader
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RCEDO	Rural Community and Environmental Development Organisation
READA	Rural Economic and Agricultural Development Agent
SA	Senior Advisor
SCDP	Small Community Development Project
SAFFPHA	Sustainable Actions to Fight Poverty, Hunger and Malnutrition Village Extension Worker
SHG	Self Help Group
SNDD	Sub-National Democratic Development
ToT	Training of Trainer

1. Relevance of the intervention

Objective of the intervention.

Overall Development Objective: Poor people in rural areas of Oddar Meanchey have increased livelihood, because strong civil society organisations have developed in their local communities.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) deliver appropriate cooperative member services improving income of the target group and represent the poor farming community in policy dialogs at all levels. The overall organisation of CSOs reflect growing capacities and expectations of farmers/members concomitant to the evolution of appropriate legal frameworks e.g. aggregated Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) form an Agricultural Cooperative Union (ACU) in Oddar Meanchey.

The Action: (i) is building on, (ii) strongly supports and (iii) consolidates previous project interventions of ADDA and Local NGOs in Oddar Meanchey and Siem Reap provinces. The partnership have organised rural poor into democratic civil society organisations. Totally 100 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 9 Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) were formed during previous and on-going projects in Oddar Meanchey province. These basic civil society organisations have significantly improved livelihood of the target group and they have gradually gained capacity to advocate on behalf of the poor community - especially at local level.

Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society in Oddar Meanchey (ACSO) is designed to develop a Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union (PACU) in Oddar Meanchey (ODM) and to build capacity of the PACU in order to support further development of member ACs as well as to represent poor farmers/members in policy dialogs. Furthermore, existing ACs are upgraded to fulfil their mission in a more professional manner e.g. further develop business activities operated by ACs and SHGs, secure accountability and transparency of their organisations, deliver appropriate services to SHGs/members and to influence decision making regarding rural development. The PACU and ACs build organisational capacity to undertake responsibility for their members and SHGs, which significantly will improve long-term sustainability of previous interventions.

Policy dialogs and advocacy is planned in a phased manner to ensure proper identification of priorities among the poor and to ensure democratic representation and impact. This implies: (i) facilitate interactions between villagers, authorities and other stakeholders (ii) promote positive changes in rural communities according to priorities of the poor (iii) discuss overall context and build advocacy capacity of larger civil society organisations as well as partner organisations - even up to national level; (iv) to promote influence on agricultural and rural development.

The Theory of Change can be outlined as follows:

IF

- The LNGO partners and ACs establish a well-functioning Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union, representing and facilitating further AC cooperative development
- Existing 9 ACs build efficient internal leadership, strong organisations with a broad and democratic membership base
- ACs operate improved cooperative businesses, securing accountability, increasing their self-reliance and the income of their members
- PACU, ACs, and Self Help Groups (SHGs) deliver appropriate services to members (Input supply, marketing/contract farming, credit lines, agricultural and business training)
- Committees and members of the LNGOs, PACU and ACs strengthen knowledge on agricultural and rural development policies as well as governance frameworks, and actively use this knowledge in their direct dialog with relevant authorities to address the needs of the farmers

THEN

- Farmers improve access to (i) credit facilities at better terms, (ii) lower input prices and (iii) better market for their production

- ACs and member farmers produce bigger volumes of products for sale, adapt the quality of products to match market demand, by which members of the cooperatives as well as ACs increase earnings and sustainability
- Farmers producing more products of better quality will increase their nutritional intake, which subsequently reduce poverty and hunger
- Stakeholders in the vegetable, rice, cash crop value chains have established a forum allowing them to solve bottlenecks, which may negatively affect any links within the chain
- Local NGOs, ACs and PACU – representing voices of the poor - positively influence local and national decision making on rural development
- Farmers – especially women - are empowered to participate as economic actors, reducing inequality & increase their earnings, which positively affect living standards of households.

Key assumptions for change

Three main assumptions are made: 1) Authorities tolerate the “soft advocacy approach”, where dialog is favoured against confrontation. Dialogs on sensible issues e.g. land rights, human rights continues at local level - during public forums and Community Investment Planning (CIP), 2) Elected PACU and AC committees manage planning and execution of CSO activities independently from governmental direct interference, and 3) Leaders of SHG’s, ACs and the PACU are motivated and committed to overcome challenges and pursue goals of their CSOs.

Relevant aspects of the context in which the intervention is to take place

Poverty rate of Cambodia has dropped from more than 50% in 2004 to about 14% in 2016 due to rapid economic growth during last decade. However, Cambodia’s economic success is largely an urban phenomenon. Rural poverty has declined at a much slower rate and remains a major concern. 90 percent of the poor and those who have just risen above the poverty line live in rural areas, like Oddar Meanchey province in north-western Cambodia.

ODM province is one of the three poorest in the country, but security and accessibility has improved over the last two decades. A large numbers of previously landless families from more populated provinces of Cambodia are attracted by ODM in their search for land to farm. Families setting up in ODM are more vulnerable to food insecurity than the older residents in ODM.

Most people in ODM make their earnings from cultivation of rice, cash crops and small-scale production of vegetables and small livestock (e.g. hens). A high proportion of rural poor does not even earn USD 2 a day, which means that they live below the poverty line, and struggle every day to provide an income for their families.

Agriculture and market

Agricultural production is challenged by costly and poorly regulated farm inputs. Case studies found that ineffective regulation has resulted in low entry barriers, which lead to the distribution of poor quality agricultural inputs, e.g. up to 10 % of fertilisers were counterfeit. Future actions must focus on removing constraints on agricultural input supply. Farmers in ODM express a need for high quality seed, those widely available from the market are of poor quality and the supply is inconsistent. Another key deficiency in agricultural product markets is uneven distribution of market information resulting from widespread informal trade. In the absence of formal sources of market information and trade frameworks, brokers, who are able to exploit information asymmetries to the detriment of small and/or individual farmers, determine prices and terms informally.

Poor organization within the farming community is a vast problem, which is interlinked to poverty and opportunities of further development. Better organisation and higher capacity of the poor farming community e.g. SHGs, ACs, and PACU improving market linkage, better credit terms for poor people, cheaper and better quality input supply is addressed by this proposal. ACs and PACU are seen as a real opportunity to switch from homebased production to commercial farming. Working with the poorest farmers, however, requires a higher focus on day-to-day needs and debt repayment; which is quite easily managed at SHG level. Expansion of businesses and loans using

ACs and PACU services, require additional financial recording capacity, in short - it requires improved skills, planning and execution capacity as well as organisational accountability.

Specific project context

Over the last 12 years, ADDA and partners have supported poor communities in Siem Reap and have developed a comprehensive and scalable approach improving livelihoods, reducing poverty and hunger, developing social networks, addressing prioritised needs of rural poor using a right based approach to increase representation of the poor in policy dialogs. 155 SHGs and 12 ACs, a Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union have been established in Siem Reap contributing significantly to poverty reduction of direct beneficiaries and empowering communities to achieve a constructive policy dialog and better public services at local, provincial and national level.

The same approach is in principle implemented by “new” LNGO partners: CIDO, RCEDO and KBA in ODM under the overall guidance of READA – since 2013. Significant results and impact are achieved within a comparatively short period compared to Siem Reap interventions, e.g. ADDA and LNGO partners used AC experience from SR to rapidly capacitate groups and ACs. (Comparatively well-functioning ACs achieved after 1-2 years compared to others after similar time).

Significant positive changes are reached by CISOM interventions in the project target area according to internal impact assessment and final evaluation of the CISOM II projects in May 2018. However, some challenges remains and target CSOs and communities request longer-term support. *“While cooperatives have developed business plans and increased their personal interaction with private and government stakeholders, they need additional support to reach their long-term business goals, in particular with improving financial management, increasing the success of commercial farmers, and better integration with opportune market sales”*, (Davies & Bunheng, 2018).

Civil society organisations and political conditions

An independent and more influential civil society obtained favourable conditions in 2005 – at least in principle. By that time, the Cambodian government adopted the strategic framework on decentralisation and de-concentration reform (D&D), with the goal to create a governance system at the sub-national level based on the principles of strengthening local democracy, promoting community development, and reducing poverty. The first three years implementation program (IP3) 2011–13 of the government represented the road towards promoting good governance by implementing its policy of Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) and the newly created Sub-National Administration (SNA) called for management systems and capacity to implement council decisions to implement the political reform. It was – and remains – a challenge to involve poor people within the districts, communes and villages. Citizen participation is mandated in the law and the decree issued by the government; however, practical implementation is rather slow.

Cambodia conducts periodic elections at subnational and national level. In two different staggered ballots, voters elect commune councillors and members of the National Assembly (the second legislative chamber) every five years. Last elections of commune councillors were conducted in June 2017 and the election for the National Assembly was in July 2018. The last electoral period coincided with new legal restrictions, Supreme Court repression against opposition, and increased distrust towards CSOs, especially those addressing human and land rights (Mooney, L. and Baydas, L. 2018). It is not easy to convince stakeholders and beneficiaries to undertake an advocacy approach, because progress may be slow, time consuming and advocacy goals are often misunderstood - initial perception by duty bearers often include suspicion that the opposition may be involved. However, ACs and PACUs benefit from a clear legal framework and are able to undertake a soft advocacy approach.

Legal framework and status regarding Agricultural Cooperatives and AC Unions

Cambodia's National Assembly adopted a law on farmers' cooperatives in May 2013 supporting government policies in bolstering the agricultural sector, with an initial focus on rice value-chains.

Agricultural cooperatives may (i) improve farmers market position (ii) increase access to financial support, e.g. access advantageous loans and better credit terms, (iii) increase scale of operations and (iv) offer technical guidance from the Provincial Departments of Agriculture (PDA) on legal and operational issues related to a cooperative/union and disputes. For instance, 7 out of 9 ACs developed during CISOM II received loan from a Japanese Micro Finance Institute “Idemitsu Saison micro-finance” - without collaterals - at the amount of USD 32,500.

The Ministry of Agriculture has registered/established 857 agricultural cooperatives throughout Cambodia in 2016, with an average capital of USD 11,486 per AC. 38 ACs are registered in ODM province with 4,118 members. Total capital late 2017 was 410,642 USD, which is equivalent to a capital of app. USD 10,806 per AC. AC capacity is generally low. Local authorities – including PDA in ODM and SR – acknowledge that ACs established by ADDA/LNGO partners are comparatively strong; however, longer-term NGO support to build an AC union and to further capacitate ACs is highly recommended by local authorities.

The law on ACs from 2013 provides an opportunity for ACs to form a union at national, regional or local level following the bill (Prakas) issued by MAFF. It is seen an opportunity for agricultural cooperatives with similar economic activities, or with economic relationship to mobilize production capacity, production means, and to expand services delivery to the agricultural sector. This opportunity to develop aggregated AC structures is considered an important step forward.

PDA is deeply engaged in the development of ACs in Oddar Menchey. PDA is urging ADDA and partners to develop AC capacities and pay special attention to the capacity of their committees, because well-functioning farmer cooperatives have great potential to improve livelihood of poor farmers in a sustainable manner.

Starting point regarding women’s, men’s, girl’s and boy’s needs, roles and interests

Key issues constraining women in agriculture are less access to capital, less access and control over resources, as well as less access to land. (Lina, H. 2012). These constraints limit the opportunities for women’s agriculture and it hinders them in engaging in new methods and techniques that require capital and secure access to land. Women represent the majority of beneficiaries in the project and hold key roles in farmer’s organisations, SHGs and ACs. They benefit from greater technical skills, social skills and financial capacity, and take the lead regarding decision-making about sale of agricultural products¹.

Impact assessment (Sinang, Y. and Kimleng, O. 2015 & 2018) revealed that, more women have become active leaders; they play a very important role domestically; several have built leadership capacity and are actively involved in their local communities representing and speaking out on behalf of women. This show to the public, that women will actively use their abilities e.g. actively advocate during local meetings, manage group savings and loans as well as support other villagers when women get the opportunity to learn and to work within their community. The impact assessment further revealed that:

- An increase in women’s leadership and presence on decision making committees, increased ability of women to apply sound conflict resolution skills at a family level
- Domestic violence reduced in the project target area
- Respondents reported that both wife & husband took responsibility for agricultural activities
- “Wives” are main money keepers of earnings from selling of vegetables, eggs and poultry.

Strengthening organisational expressions in civil society that promote compliance with rights and equal access to resources and participation.

Implementing LNGOs and ACs (and subsequently PACU) build further capacity on legal and human rights, organisational capacity and improve their ability to advocate on behalf of their target beneficiaries.

¹ Impact Assessment, June 2018: “72% of women make the decision regarding sale of agricultural products”.

All civil society organisations operate according to democratic principles – open and voluntary membership - good governance and transparency; they successfully undertake social and commercial activities. SHG members prioritise their needs and they become empowered to influence local political priorities, especially during public forums and Community Investment Planning (CIP) processes. ACs and especially aggregated structures of basic civil society organisations, e.g. the PACU and LNGOs will represent farmers in policy dialogs at provincial and higher level to lobby and advocate for rights and prioritised needs of the target group at provincial and national levels.

The ACSO project is a fine opportunity for the ACs and the PACU to fulfil their visions and missions for further development within their communities. By implementing the project, they will be able to strengthen strategic services, build organisational capacity and improve their ability to advocate on behalf of their members and target beneficiaries. This allows ACs to gain an even better reputation and higher appreciation from people, authorities and other concerned stakeholders. This also applies for LNGOs who will be able to acquire in depth experiencing on further development of ACs and PACU having a leading role in organisational capacity building and transfer of knowledge. It is foreseen that the project will build significant capacity and add value to each AC and the PACU within the partnership. ACs and the PACU will advocate on behalf of their members, support SHGs and their ability to bring about change in their local area of operation and network with like-minded organisations, e.g. the Provincial Union of Agricultural Cooperatives in Siem Reap. Consequently, ACSO will strengthen organisational capacity thus contributing to create even stronger civil society organisations in Oddar Meanchey.

The contribution of the intervention towards bringing about lasting improvements for poor, marginalised and vulnerable target groups.

ACSO represents a chance to: (i) Strengthen LNGOs, ACs and their links to SHGs (comprising 80% women), (ii) Develop larger cooperative business activities and improve income of poor people, (iii) Further involve SHG and AC members as well as fellow villagers in commune planning processes (Community investment Programs (CIPs)), Commune Forums and Community Development Projects (CDPs), (iv) Advocate at local levels and (v) establish a Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union entering into policy dialogs at provincial and national levels in close collaboration with LNGOs.

ACSO is building on previous projects interventions of ADDA and READA in SR and ODM. It consolidates and strengthen their sustainability, build further capacity of SHGs, ACs and READA, as well as LNGOs. This include in-depth experience on the development of democratic and commercial viable ACs and PACUs in Cambodia who – in turn - will be able to address prioritised needs and rights of their members.

Democratic processes and proper representation of the poor are employed internally in the ACs, PACUs, and SHGs. ACs and SHGs involve representatives from the entire village to discuss “dreams”, action plans and achieved results, not only during the project lifespan, but also in the future. SHGs invite and involve fellow villagers when developing Community Development Plans (CDPs) to discuss most needed interventions and the design of joint plans of operation in their local community. These initiatives are highly requested, because poverty is up to app. 17% in rural communities. ACs organise meetings for members to discuss opportunities, challenges, plans and results. Such processes has created - and will continue to create - experience and a solid ballast for involvement and representation of rural poor in future democratic organisations and processes.

2. The intervention is an extension of previous intervention with partners

ACSO build on interventions and outputs of the interventions: “Empowerment of Civil Society in Oddar Meanchay (CISOM) phase I & II, which have been operative in ODM since January 2013.

ASCO pursue new objectives, and take a different strategic approach

The Action build organisational capacity of 9 young ACs to significantly improve accountability, effectiveness and sustainability. Furthermore, a Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union (PACU)

is established in ODM to support member ACs. The PACU is an entirely new CSO structure established in ODM. Networking between aggregated PACU in ODM with the Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union in Siem Reap is planned during the project period – and very strong cooperation on service delivery, capacity building and common policy dialogs is expected in a longer-term perspective.

The cooperation thus far has achieved satisfactory results

Total gross income of families has increased from 797 USD per year in 2012-2013, to 1792 USD per year in 2017/2018, which is equivalent to an increase of 17.5% per year (52% increase in the two years of CISOM II). Income and food security has improved through production diversification, higher production quality and quantity of vegetables as well as cash crops, hens and eggs, ability to sell surplus production; community development projects e.g. rice banks and ponds. Farmers reach out for assistance from duty bearers and they are highly motivated to overcome challenges.

The project has significantly contributed to reduce poverty of the target beneficiaries. The number of ID poor² 1 and 2 has reduced from 87% to 27% during the project lifespan (table 1).

Table 1: Family income status 2013, 2015 and 2018 (Sinang and Kimleng, May 2018)

Family income status [%]	2013	2015	2018
	Baseline CISOM I	Impact ass. CISOM I	Impact ass. CISOM II
ID poor 1	41	21	9
ID poor 2	46	21	18
No ID	13	58	23
Medium	0	0	50

Integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture e.g. improved utilisation of natural fertilizer, and practical use of sustainable techniques has significantly improved during CISOM I & 2.

High level of cooperation with authorities, including commune, district, provincial and national level (including national links with training curriculum); high involvement of the PDA as they see cooperative structure is also beneficial to their regular commitments. PDA have improved capacity of their staff, participating in CISOM training. PDA improved capacity to mobilize rural population for e.g. vaccination programs and respond to outbreaks of disease, insects etc., because LNGOs and established CSOs (SHGs and ACs) easily identified those who qualified for assistance.

High level of AC advancement is reached within short time, using AC organisational knowledge from Siem Reap AC, giving the ability to rapidly build reliable and clear CSO structures. Groups form necessary social and economic platforms in the community, allowing practical action.

Stakeholders (including Commune Councils) see clear differences in communities with ACs and those that do not engage in development progress, community stability and community activeness, and see it as a tool to reduce debt (and as a consequence, be less tempted to carry out illegal activities to cover debts); communes work more effectively with ACs (Davies & Bunheng 2018).

Civil society organizations – especially Self-Help Groups, local NGOs and ACs have developed significant capacity to represent the poor people during policy dialogs and the CSOs are representing priorities of the poor. The number of prioritised needs of the poor submitted during CIP processes has doubled since 2013/14. CSOs have secured impact at local level and regional level, which is strongly indicated by the fact that the communes integrate a high – and ever increasing - number of priorities into the investment plans and realised (See details in annex 1). 10 cases of land conflict were raised and settled affecting over 1900 people; more than 26 000 people involved in prioritizing issues for CIP during CISOM II (Davies & Bunheng 2018).

² ID Poor 1 and 2 are the lowest of the poor categories comprising households without land or less than 0,5 hectares per family, no other assets, low education and largely living on hand-to-mouth existence on a day-by-day basis

Advocacy skills spread beyond the group to a household level, where conflict resolution skills is utilized. Group members discuss and agree on approach / solution / agreed terms prior to starting up outside requests / negotiations. Where groups do not have full capacity to solve problems, they still have the methodology and strategy to refer cases to sources with capacity to intervene.

Local authorities note that ADDA/LNGO established cooperatives are stronger than other cooperatives in the area due to intensive on-the-ground support, and Community Professionals have been invited to external cooperatives to train on e.g. bookkeeping and financial management.

Experiences from the cooperation so far have fed into the design of the new intervention.

ACs in ODM are rather well functioning; however, the CSO structures have been established and operative for less than 2 years. Further capacity building - including adaptation and transfer of knowledge from well-functioning ACs and the agricultural cooperative union in Siem Reap to ODM is planned, which will significantly improve effectiveness and sustainability of CSO in ODM.

The advocacy road map developed by the strong NGO partnership and the “soft advocacy approach” used is considered both effective and appropriate and it fits very well with the new government policy to conduct public forums. It is necessary during ACSO to make sure – and follow up - that government policy will also materialize in better priorities at local as well as provincial level. Consequently, ACSO will strengthen monitoring and nudging activities to secure implementation of prioritised needs of the poor - case by case - locally, and at higher level.

The project include stronger monitoring in order to improve advocacy impact, integration of advocacy as a formal organization strategy, further engagement of partners to link directly to provincial levels of government, strategic alliances with advocacy-minded NGOs, and stronger training to staff and communities in law and land rights. Strong support is anticipated from PDA regarding PACU development, extensive use of links to large donors/private companies, and advocacy to attract medium/large scale water projects in ODM I is planned.

ACSO is designed to gain momentum from the strong emphasis on development and empowerment of ACs, which is seen fundamental to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development by the Ministry of Agriculture in Cambodia. However, advocacy by Agricultural Cooperatives is not fully effective before group strength and trust is developed - which takes time.

“Comparing CISOM I and CISOM II, and the potential of ACSO, stakeholder feel the most difficult parts (building a strong foundation and structure) are completed with the next step of growth and expansion anticipated to be easier by comparison” (Davies and Bunheng, 2018)

Refined strategy - catalyst potential, advocacy and long-term sustainability improved

The ACSO strategy is refined to (i) develop PACU and ACs into stronger civil society organisations (ii) improve business activities and income of poor people, (ii) involve SHG and AC members and fellow villagers in Community Development Projects (CDPs), (iii) actively take part in the community planning process and (iv) advocate at local and provincial level. ACSO further build LNGO capacity and in-depth experience on development of democratic and commercially viable ACs as well as a PACU who – in a long turn perspective - will be able to address prioritised needs of their members and ACs and be able to influence local decision makers and national agricultural policies. In short:

- CSOs develop higher reliance on own resources and improve sustainability
- Voluntary and open membership of ACs and PACUs - also for external members – is attracting members and catalysing further cooperative development
- Close collaboration between SR and ODM interventions (even merge of CSOs) increase number of CSO members, bargaining power and influence.
- It is planned to merge the interventions: “Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society development in SR” (EASY) and ACSO when they terminate in June/July 2020. It is foreseen that such aggregated project would involve at least 250 SHG, 21 ACs and 2 PACUs. An AC member base of 6.000 farmers in ODM and SR is expected in July 2020.

3. Partnership

Experiences, capacities and resources of participant partners and other actors

ADDA has worked extensively with agricultural development, empowering women and strengthening of civil society organisations in Cambodia since 1996. ADDA has (i) transferred knowledge to rural poor on best agricultural practices, marketing and (ii) improved business opportunities; (iii) established - or strengthened - independent and democratic self-help-groups, agricultural cooperatives and aggregated AC structures comprising rural poor. These initiatives have created awareness of the rights of rural poor. SHGs and ACs have advocated for their interests. ADDA combines an activity and a process-intervention strategy. The activity strategy addresses areas that directly aim to improve food and livelihood situation of poor families. The process-intervention is building the capacity of partners, civil society organisations as well as other stakeholders to improve livelihood of rural poor and to influence local and provincial decision-making. This is accomplished by; (i) building advocacy capacity; (ii) facilitating interactions between villagers, authorities and other duty bearers and (iii) promoting positive changes in rural communities according to priorities of the poor.

Common for all ADDA's projects is a bottom-up approach where the local community is strengthened, agricultural production increases, which significantly decreases food insecurity and improve livelihood among poor people. ADDA and READA train local NGOs to become trainers of the target groups, since this is an efficient way to keep knowledge within the communities, and to secure trainers with valuable knowledge on local conditions and habits. The ADDA board, senior advisors and the Country Coordinators have a strong professional approach regarding rural development and agriculture.

During the implementation of projects in Cambodia, ADDA has built effective partnership with local institutions (e.g. Ministry and Department of Agriculture, Department of Women Affairs, Public vocational training centres) local partner organizations (e.g. READA, Banteay Srei, RCEDO, CIDO and KBA) and NGOs in Siem Reap. ADDA is also a member of various networks in Denmark and Cambodia: The Danish NGO education network, the Danish Vietnamese Association, Civil Society In Development (CISU), the Cambodian gender and development network, the National climate change network, Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD).

ADDA has a long experience on CSO and women' empowerment in Cambodia (Annex A for details). ADDA has contributed to the formation of 175 SHGs, and ADDA, READA, CIDO, RCEDO & KBA has established 100 SHGs and 9 ACs in Oddar Meanchey. ADDA has worked extensively to strengthen the civil society; reaching out to more than 35.000 poor farmers, primarily women. Experience includes:

- Integrated Women Empowerment Project (IWEP I and II 2005-2013),
- Livelihood Enhancement and Association of the Poor (LEAP 2009-2011),
- Innovative approaches to food insecurity for urban and peri-urban poor in Siem Reap (SR) (INFOSE 2011- 2015),
- Cooperative and Civil Society Development in SR (COCIS 2014-2016),
- Strengthening and Consolidation of Women Microcredit Groups (CWM)
- Empowerment of civil society advocating for the rights of the urban poor in SR (CISUP 14-16)
- Empowerment of Civil Society in Oddar Meanchay, Cambodia (CISOM I & II 2013-2019)
- Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society development in SR, (EASY 2017-20)

ADDA and READA have cooperated since 2009 on the implementation of IWEP II, COCIS, CWM, EASY in SR and CISOM in ODM Provinces. READA is implementing project activities, which have included strategic services, capacity building, formation of SHGs, Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) and AC union as well as advocacy on behalf of poor people. A well-functioning partnership is established between ADDA, READA and the three local NGOs in ODM since May 2010 (Davies & Bunheng, 2018). The partnership has analysed problems and opportunities alleviating problems of poor people in ODM province using Theory of Change and a logical framework approach. Numerous

meetings with final beneficiaries, existing donors and local authorities in ODM have been executed within this partnership. Several workshops, impact assessments and evaluations have been conducted to outline lessons learned and to outline best approach to be implemented in ODM province. Local implementation, ownership, NGO training needs and division of roles within the partnership has been intensively discussed and clearly defined (reference is made to Annex 2)

Local knowledge, significant experience, and valuable reputation gained by the 3 LNGOs during implementation of projects in ODM Province – including CISOM I & II – highly contributes to address the project objectives and adjust interventions to challenges in the specific ODM context.

The local NGOs in ODM are very experienced and they have been operating from 15 to over 20 years on a number of projects related to agriculture, food security, community development & community based organizations, good governance, water and sanitation. They are very familiar with local conditions, they have outstanding sector specific expertise and long standing relationships with project stakeholder's e.g. they have strong relationship with local authorities, target groups/final beneficiaries, NGOs and projects in ODM. They possess technical and management expertise very suitable for the implementation of the ACSO project in ODM. Reference is made to organisational factsheets for further details.

Existing Agricultural Cooperatives and PACU in ODM are aspiring partners of ACSO

The ACs and PACU to be formed in ODM are aspiring partners of ACSO. ACs were established from 2016 to 2017 by the assistance of LNGOs and the PDA, meaning that they are young and possesses only limited experience. The global objective of the ACs and their PACU is to address members' needs e.g. marketing and/or adding value to the production of their members, and/or to provide comparatively cheap agricultural production inputs and relevant services to their members, including credit services. The sphere of activities covers the agricultural sector as a whole and the ACs plays an increasing role in influencing local decision makers, duty bearers and agricultural policies.

The ACs do not yet have capacity to qualify for a full project partnership; however, they have the aim and will to develop professional capacity, improve strategic planning capacity, ensure transparency and accountability in financial and administrative procedures, work for democratic processes, develop their organisation, including leadership, and they are executing sound cooperative business activities. The number of members has increased significantly to 1.245 members in May 2018 (target 2019 was 900 members), 70% of members are women.

The ACs are based on open and voluntary membership. AC members are from SHGs (77%) and villagers/farmers (23%) located rather close to the ACs. Experience has shown that trust must built before AC membership is attractive for rural poor/potential members living in the outskirts of an AC. The 9 ACs are located near-by 60 SHGs (out of totally 100 SHGs) of the CISOM project. The ACs have reached fine results and they have acquired fine reputations within their local communities. SHG members located far from ACs are increasingly becoming members, and ACs have recently attracted new members from totally 65 SHGs (May 2018). Consequently, it is expected that geographical coverage and the number of members of each AC will increase significantly in the years to come. 2.000 AC members are expected to be reached in 2020 (Table 7) covering 85 SHGs.

Member shares constitute initial capital, which was further increased by the profit generated from cooperative business activities, MFI loans and additional member shares. Competitive grants/loans (Totally 40.000 USD) were issued by ADDA/READA to ACs with convincing business plans and cooperative strategies. These loans are subsequently converted to grants for ACs executing business plans in a professional manner. Balance of ACs was USD 121,597 USD by the end of 2017. AC capital has increased compared to the capital at start. A rather high proportion of cooperative profit is divided to members, which is hampering comparatively fast accumulation of AC capital, but it is also attracting new members ("Money better be in the pockets of farmers").

Cooperative business activities are established according to member requests, market

opportunities and cooperative capacity. Credit schemes and input supply (fertiliser, seed, plant protection, feedstuff for animals etc.) are highly demanded and therefore operated by ACs.

Table 2. Characterisation of existing Agricultural Cooperatives in Oddar Meanchey

Agricultural Cooperative		Established	Number of members		Number of members share		Geo coverage	May 18	Total balance	Own Capital	Total**	Profit
Name	District	Date	Originally	May 18	Origin	May 18	Villages	1-4*	USD	USD	USD	USD
Kork Khpos Smaki Takrabey	Banteay Ampil	05.09.2016	184(129)	262(189)	207	296	10	3	20.814	4.319	16.495	2.324
Beng Samiki Akpuiwat	Banteay Ampil	10.01.2017	126(92)	133(101)	170	282	10	3	13.746	4.246	9.500	2.343
Prasatsing Mean Chey	Banteay Ampil	01.02.2017	120(97)	142(119)	177	285	6	3	17.943	5.569	12.374	2.364
Kork Phlok Akphikwat 3	Koun Kriel	06.09.2016	93(68)	117(82)	107	143	6	2	8.136	3.636	4.500	1.484
Kouk Chhouk Samaki	Samraong	11.01.2017	80(65)	104(80)	100	170	3	3	9.192	4.692	4.500	2.561
Chongkal Akpuiwat	Chong Kal	02.02.2017	77(65)	83(70)	86	120	8	2	10.939	3.939	9.500	2.615
Phaav Samaki Kiri Dong Reak	Trapang Prasat	14.09.2016	127(80)	149(101)	201	234	7	2	13.686	4.186	9.500	1.717
Lomtong Meanchey	Anlong Veag	28.12.2016	111(68)	141(91)	186	255	7	2	14.897	5.397	9.500	1.955
Prey Saark Meachey	Anlong Veag	29.12.2016	61(23)	114(43)	76	178	5	2	12.243	3.243	9.000	1.416
Total			979	1.245	1.310	1.963	62	2	121.597	39.228	84.869	18.779
Female			(687)	(876)								

*(1: weak; 2: below average; 3: above average; 4: strong)

** Including competitive grants/loans

Experience and track record of creating outputs/outcomes relevant to civil society.

Livelihood of participating rural poor has significantly improved. Income from agriculture has more than doubled, because production quantity, quality and sustainability has improved over the years. Key points recorded by the external evaluation team is highlighted below (Davis & Bunheng, 2018):

“The impact of the project has led to a higher level of food security among group members, rapid social development, lower financial risks and ability to expand business, improved negotiation and conflict resolution at both a group and household level, higher levels of communication between community members and government authorities. Advocacy skills have meant that groups have analysed their problems, prioritized their needs, and approached local authorities to successfully gain a variety of resources, introducing electricity, schools, water ponds/wells, and mine clearing”.

ACs take part in policy dialogs. They advocate on behalf of farmers/members on issues especially related to business activities e.g. secure better credit schemes, lower prices and better quality of agricultural inputs, better sales channels and higher selling prices on agricultural produce. Existing ACs offer improved credit schemes: Interest rates are comparatively low, collateral is not requested and the flexibility is higher. Repayment rates are very high, delay can happen, but loan defaults are very rare: less than 0,01 %. ACs have built a fine reputation on management of credit schemes.

The ACs have secured better income for members and ACs have earned a profit from business activities to further boost cooperative activities and member income. AC members in Siem Reap and Oddar Meanchey acknowledge the following benefits of ACs (Sinang and Kimleng 2018):

- ACs offer better credit terms for poor people
- ACs offer easy access to fertilisers at competitive prices
- Farmers have a stronger voice and ACs is playing a role advocating for better prices, negotiating better terms of payment (“control of middlemen is better” according to members)
- ACs disseminate technical knowledge to farmers
- Farmers share information and experience (agriculture, business)
- Membership of an AC represent a chance for the poor farming community to learn from other countries and learn from good models
- AC Committees (mainly) and members gain skills on leadership, business, marketing, advocacy and financial management
- Interests is used to increase AC capital & profit made on products stay in the community/AC.

LNGOs and ADDA create outputs and outcomes relevant to the rural population, authorities at all levels and other concerned stakeholders, because interventions have established and developed well-functioning SHGs and ACs, who influence/catalyse problem solving within local communities. For example: (i) Invited to attend and able to influence “agendas” at provincial level, (ii) Communities consult LNGOs for advice and help, (iii) Communities acknowledge that LNGO staff is catalysing successful CIP processes, (iv) Efficient use of “soft” advocacy strategies – with ability to reach results, (v) Encourage rights based processes – even court cases (NGOs have become “teachers”).

Experiences of carrying out advocacy

Partner staff and Community Professionals (CPs) have built capacity and facilitated active participation of SHG members and other villagers during the Commune Investment Planning (CIP) processes to make sure that identified needs, and priorities of rural poor people are highlighted and integrated into commune investments plans. Consequently, SHG and partners are increasingly influencing local decision-making. A significant increase in representation of the poor during CIP processes during the CISOM project is revealed in table 3. Interventions have improved livelihood and legal rights of numerous rural poor, which is acknowledged by duty bearers. Advocacy road maps have been developed and the “soft advocacy approach” used is considered both effective and appropriate and it fits very well with the government policy to conduct public forums and CIPs.

Table 3. Representation of the poor target group, CIP integration of prioritized needs and realised proposals (CISOM 2013/14 to 2017/18)

Prioritised needs, integrated & realised	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number of prioritised needs of the poor submitted during the CIP processes	337	401	518	594	773
Number of proposals integrated into investment plans by Commune Councils	158	258	407	457	644
Realised proposals (incl. external support)	195	260	283	204	209 (ongoing)
Beneficiaries (families)	39.810	45.205	57.791	56.329	65.588

Numerous priorities and recommendations of rural poor were presented and discussed with relevant duty bearers - especially local authorities during implementation of the CISOM II project in Oddar Meanchey. 501 priorities of the poor from the 63 villages have been incorporated CIP during CISOM II. Local authorities have responded positively to the requests from villagers on numerous issues. Numerous priorities of the poor have been realised by duty bearers (28 roads, 1 kindergarten and 6 ponds were established/rehabilitated, one electric system installed, 4 sewages, 1 bridge rebuilt, 2 land case settlements were solved, 2 mosquito net projects and one bridge (35 m) constructed.

11 land cases were successfully settled directly benefitting 2,057 people (1,096 female). The Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction is measuring land for systematic land registration, which benefitted 500 families. The Provincial Governor directly intervened to solve one land dispute between the military and villagers. Recently, the government redistributed land from private companies and handed over to the farmers, following advocacy during public forum and CIP.

ACs, READA, CIDO, RCEDO and KBA have successfully advocated for e.g. better credit terms; that is AC loans without collateral from individual AC members and lowering of interest from best MFI rates from 1,8-2 % per month to interest rates is between 1 and 1,3 % per month without collateral. One Micro Finance Institution (MFI): Idemitsu Saison Microfinance has issued AC loans (loans between 2,500 USD and 20,000 USD per AC) on credit terms in line with terms negotiated by LNGOs and ACs.

How the intervention applied for will develop relations between the partners.

The organizational structure of the proposed project, tasks and responsibilities assigned to each partners favours collaboration, exchange of ideas and utilisation of lessons learned between the three local NGOs in ODM, READA in SR and ADDA. The project coordination unit (PCU) is

facilitating learning, efficient activity planning and execution. Regular steering committee meetings (annually) and project coordination meeting (at least every month), and frequent meetings involving all project staff are well established, including occasional exchange visits.

ACSO contribute to partners mobilising, building relations and cooperating with other actors.

Co-operatives in the North/DK (and ODM) started out in a single village or city. Members would be customers of - or suppliers to - the society's cooperative business activity and the society would reward these members with a proportion of any profits. Most societies started small. By 1900, there were numerous co-operatives covering virtually every area of DK. Gradually, societies expanded and increased activities or they merged with a neighbouring society. Membership was - and still is - open to everyone as long as they share values and principles of the Cooperative, which is in line with Agricultural Cooperative principles in Cambodia. Cooperative development, values, principles and actions are intensively shared and frequently discussed between ADDA, LNGOs, as well as other stakeholders at regional and national level in Cambodia, e.g. the Department for Promotion of Agricultural Cooperatives (DPAC).

Development programs

Several international and local organizations operate in Oddar Meanchey Province (Annex 3). These organisations and their projects are well known to ADDA/LNGOs and interventions are fully coordinated with ACSO activities. Interventions to be highlighted:

- The Regional Economic Development Program III (RED III) is implemented by GIZ in the three provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Oddar Meanchey and Preah Vihear. Objective is that the poor, rural population - especially women - use new, sustainable business and employment opportunities to increase income and overcome poverty. The program supports the cooperation between the public and private sectors, small-scale producer initiatives and civil society in order to identify and unleash local economic potential.
- iDE is aiming to build profitable enterprise value chains delivering sustainable benefits to poor rural households. iDE facilitate creation and strengthening of high value horticultural cash crop commercial enterprises of 1500 motivated farmers in ODM. The project is implemented in Siem Reap, Banteay Meanchey and ODM provinces from Jun 2014 to Jun 2019.
- The Cambodia Horticulture Advancing Income and Nutrition project (CHAIN) is implemented from 2017 to 2020. Objectives: (i) Capacity building of farmers and processors for increased and sustainable production; (ii) Strengthening farmers' and processors' groups improving member services and equal market engagement; and (iii) Facilitating increased inclusive service delivery of public and private sectors. CHAIN is implemented in cooperation with PDA, PDWA and LNGOs (KBA and RCEDO).

The ACSO project build on previous training, inputs, equipment to achieve synergy with ongoing project in Oddar Meanchey. Many ACs have been established in ODM; however, without strong foundations and they are comparatively weak. It is recognized by the partners that the progressive and phased approach used by ADDA and LNGOS, as well as close cooperation with PDA and strict procedures has resulted in well-grounded SHGs and ACs. It is the intention of the ACSO project to build on existing strengths of SHGs and ACs to reach further progress.

LNGOs and ADDA further develop linkages with PDA and participate during NGO network meetings organized every second month in Oddar Meanchey, where all NGO partners are represented. New project initiatives are outlined, activity plans drafted, risk of overlapping and possible synergy is discussed and utilised. It is the intention to facilitate synergy with other projects and especially to encourage building of advocacy capacity of civil society organisations funded by other donors. It is noted that the number of new development interventions in Cambodia and ODM have declined significantly during recent years. ACSO will continue to help raise the profiles of LNGOs, ACs and PACU as civil society actors. They will reach higher level of influence through their action at provincial and national levels and within extended networks.

Duty-bearers

Governments and line departments:

The ACSO project contribute to the obligations of local, provincial and national government authorities and fulfil major missions of these institutions e.g. improve livelihood of poor people, taking “voices of poor people” into account during investment planning processes, on legal issues as well as policy processes etc. Local authorities will be able to boost activities, achieve synergy in terms of agricultural production, empower cooperative business development, and respond to the needs expressed by the target beneficiaries.

PDA and other authorities in the province (E.g. PDWA, DPAC, DFID) as well as national level Ministry of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry (MAFF) are major stakeholders that may influence the project significantly. They will gain more knowledge and experience on community development work, ACs and the PACU from the project. Governmental duty bearers (authorities and line departments) improve overall image; because local people achieve better living condition and they become better organized and heard. A very close collaboration, communication and involvement of governmental authorities/staff at all levels is planned in order to share the outcome from success stories and events e.g. the PACU, AC and SHG activities, events and campaigns. Such an approach minimizes the risk of undermining their authority and power and it reduces any fear that the ACSO project may draw attention to shortcomings of local authorities and government.

The governmental institutions have only limited capability to respond to an omnipresent need for development in the provinces due to lack of resources in terms of manpower and capital. LNGOs and ADDA are going to work very closely together with local authorities at all levels, because they represent a very important framework. Furthermore, local authorities possess limited financial and legal capacity (the authority) that may further be directed towards the needs of poor people.

PDA, DPAC and PDWA are present members of the CISOM II steering Committee and continues as ACSO steering committee. Very positive support is received from these institutions.

Local authorities - including village chiefs, commune councils, district governors and provincial authorities - strongly support ADDA/LNGO interventions in ODM. Authorities at all levels have credited LNGOs and ADDA for working with the poor target groups and the positive impact of ongoing projects on poverty reduction and empowerment of women. They are looking forward to further support implementation of the ACSO project (Annex 15 & 19 PDA & PDWA Support letters)

PDA, PDWA, and DPAC strongly support the ACSO project and they will actively participate in the implementation of interventions. The project concept and interventions will become widely disseminated by the PDA and MAFF participation and support; ACs and PACUs will benefit from their contacts and link ACSO to their own programs.

The private sector

The private sector is an important stakeholder in the project, which will benefit in terms of a more professional business cooperation resulting from better organisation of farmers and enhanced agricultural development in the provinces. Key stakeholders include financial institutions and importers/distributors of agricultural inputs since they provide financial services to SHGs, ACs, and PACUs. Agricultural value-chains actors e.g. rice millers are supportive, because of their interactions and business linkages with ACs (existing as well as new linkages). A comprehensive description of primary stakeholder’s interest, fear, strengths and weaknesses/risks is outlined in annex 4.

Contributions, roles and areas of responsibility of all partners

The organizational structure of the proposed project, roles and responsibilities assigned to each of the partners favours collaboration, exchange of ideas and utilisation of lessons learned between ADDA, LNGOs, SHGs, ACs and the PACU. A Project Coordination Unit (PCU) is designed to facilitate a fruitful and learning partnership between the ADDA and LNGOs: annual Project Steering Committee meetings (PSC) and project coordination meetings (PCU meetings - at least every month), and meetings involving all project staff are planned, including occasional exchange visits. Key roles and responsibilities are in line with existing CISOM organisation (Ref. annex 2 & 5).

The project is implemented in close cooperation between READA in Siem Reap (SR) and the three local NGOs in Oddar Meanchey (ODM) in order to strengthen a dynamic, diverse and democratic civil society in ODM. The local NGOs in ODM comprises (i) CIDO covering Koak Khpos and Koak Mon commune in Banteay Ampil district, (ii) KBA covering Chong Kal and Samrong districts and (iii) RCEDO covering Anlong Veng and Trapeang Prasat districts. READA is transferring knowledge from SR and building further organisational capacity and advocacy skills of the NGOs based in ODM (reference to figure 1).

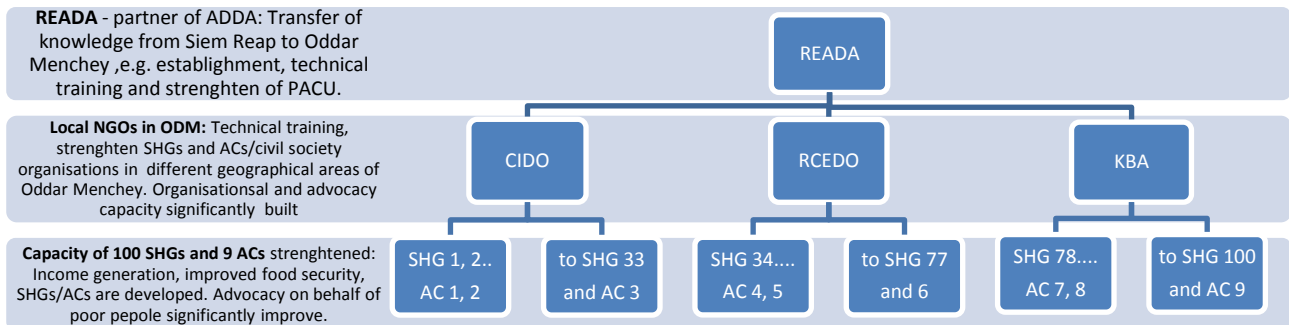


Figure 1: The local organisation.

4. Target groups

Relevance of target groups in view of the intervention's subject matter and context.

The target group (Right-holders) of the project are primarily poor farmers - existing as well as new - members of Agricultural Cooperatives and members of Self Help Groups.

The target groups are highly relevant to the intervention's subject matter and context. Poor farmers lack representation in development processes and policy dialogs. The project strives to increase awareness of poor communities on agricultural and rural development issues, basic rights, legal frameworks and policy processes, because such core knowledge is necessary for a qualified policy dialog and influence on rural development. Furthermore, the Action ensure that ACs, the PACU and SHGs have efficient internal leadership, operate according to democratic principles, sound business activities, well-functioning structures, procedures and protocols to secure transparency and an ability to effectively advocate on behalf of their members in order to improve/influence:

- Access and control over productive assets to increase productivity (e.g. land, water, energy)
- Rural finance (access to better credit terms e.g. "affordable credit")
- Access to market and urge for better market regulation
- Rural investment: Infrastructure and processing industries (needs, planning and financing)
- Improve technical capacity and resources (production techniques and extension services)
- Take advantage of opportunities available for ACs & PACU
- Empower women in agriculture.

The project is designed to (i) further develop activities and services of civil society organisations, which significantly will improve livelihood of rural poor and (ii) facilitate democratic representation of poor farmers' in policy dialogs at all levels. Basic rights of rural poor are more likely to be acknowledged by duty bearers with proper representation. Further aggregation of SHGs/ACs and professionalization of LNGOS is a priority to gain and exert influence at higher levels of dialog and decision-making processes, because this significantly increases influence and sustainability of the ACSOs and previous interventions.

Composition of target groups

A survey reveals that approximately 17,1 % of the households in rural areas of Oddar Meanchey belong to ID Poor 1 or 2, which are households that are at severe risk of suffering from lack of food up to 6 months every year. Common causes of poverty are identified as (i) Material/asset deprivation

(food shortages, lack of land and investments, limited access to credit); (ii) Lack of voice and ability to influence decisions; (iii) Acute vulnerability to adverse shocks (illness, economic shocks, floods); (iv) Lack of access to markets and marketing services, and (v) Low human development (education and health). These factors are very much present in many of the poor communities and households in ODM. Improving livelihood therefore demands strong attention to income generation and supplementary food production for improved nutrition wherever possible. National and international experience suggest that these constraints could only be addressed by initiating policies and programs that support mobilization and empowerment of the poor, especially women, and enhancing opportunities for economic and social empowerment.

Table 4: ID Poor 1 and 2 households in 5 districts of Oddar Meanchey 2015

District	Commune	Villages	Total number of	Total population	Households		Percentage of ID	
					ID Poor 1	ID Poor 2	Poor 1 %	Poor2 %
Chong Kal	4	37	5.581	24.167	160	476	2,87	8,53
Samraong	5	75	14.478	62.029	1.420	1.759	9,81	12,15
Banteay Ampil	4	98	11.941	44.651	618	1.066	5,18	8,93
Anlong Veaeng	5	62	10.003	41.925	766	1.069	7,66	10,69
Trapeang Prasat	6	53	11.212	51.393	869	908	7,75	8,10
Total	24	325	53.215	224.165	3.833	5.278	7,20	9,92

The project is based on target groups (Table 5) involved in previous or ongoing projects - CISOM II as well as newcomers – e.g. new members of ACs. Activities are primarily targeting poor farmers in the target area, and more directly their organisations (ACs, Self-Help Groups and the PACU).

All SHGs are deeply engaged with Local Authorities (LA). SHGs have established wells and rice banks for their communities, and they obtain fine results from their advocacy activities, e.g. reach better public services. Solidarity and teamwork as well as transparency are characteristics defining stronger groups (Ref. annex 6: Characteristics of CISOM II, SHGs). A large number of SHGs members (80) have been promoted and become “agents of change” in their local community, 53% of them are women – in short: SHGs contribute to community and female empowerment. Strong SHGs are able to operate on their own, medium SHGs have potential to improve few elements to reach better status, whereas weak groups still need back up to become completely independent.

The Action follows an inclusive and gender sensitive approach. It is expected that all poor farmers in the project area will benefit from “a pulling effect”. The project also target local authorities: Commune and provincial councils, provincial governorate as well as staff from line departments at district and provincial levels (estimated 100 persons) to create an enabling environment for policy dialogs.

The main target group are 9 existing Agricultural Cooperatives established with previous project support. At present ACs represent 1,245 households/members. Total number of members is expected to reach app. 2.000 in 2020. The ACs are linked to the Self Help Groups (SHGs) with app 23 members equalling a total of 2,331 persons in 5 districts, 14 communes and 82 villages in ODM.

How the target groups view the partnership’s legitimacy in terms of advancing their cause.

ADDA and LNGO are highly recognised by the target groups, which was reported in the final evaluation report of CISOM II (Davies & Bunheng, 2018) e.g. impact: *“Project staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders see the overall impacts of the project including more rapid social development, higher levels of food security, lower financial risks and ability to expand business, improved negotiation and conflict resolution at both a group and household level, and a much-improved level of communication between community members and government authorities”, “High level of cooperation with authorities, including commune, district, provincial and national level”, “10 cases of land conflict raised and settled affecting over 1900 people; over 26 000 people involved in prioritizing issues for CIP during CISOM II”.*

Involvement of the target groups in preparations and influence on the implementation

The relationship with the target group is very close because ACSO is targeting SHGs/ACs and poor farmers addressed during previous interventions. All analysis for the current project proposal are based on existing results of the CISOM, EASY and other related project. The design and concept of ACSO is based on (i) findings and recommendations from SHGs and ACs during project implementation, (ii) and discussions during final evaluation and internal assessment of the CISOM II (and EASY) projects as well as (iii) recommendations from the CISOM II Steering Committee. The target groups, LNGOs, PDA, PDWA were all deeply involved during project preparation. Recommendations of AC and SHG leaders are incorporated into the project design and leaders from ACs and SHGs express that ACSO it is in line with their “dreams” and “the concept is highly demanded to reach higher degree of sustainability of their organisations”.

Results and recommendations from the CISOM II impact assessment and final evaluation reports along with interviews and dialogs with final beneficiaries, as well as village, commune and provincial governing bodies are built into this project proposal.

The target groups influence on the implementation of the intervention

Experience and recommendations regarding project implementation is systematically collected from ACs, the PACU as well as SHGs and communicated to the ACSO project coordination unit. Project implementation plans are adjusted to reach best implementation practice and impact. Consequently, the target group directly influence implementation and contribute to adjust and improve project methods and interventions. The PACU board director will become member of the PSC - representing the target group - and directly influencing overall direction of the project and implementation.

5. Strategy and expected results of the intervention

Objectives, activities, expected outputs and indicators applied³

Overall Development Objective: *Poor people in rural areas of Oddar Meanchey have increased livelihood, because strong civil society organisations have developed in their local communities.*

Immediate objectives of the intervention.

- July 2020, one PACU have built democratic and organisational capacity to efficiently support 9 Agricultural Cooperatives representing at least 1,500 members
 - End 2019, one PACU is created and registered in Oddar Meanchey province.
 - The PACU embrace at least 9 ACs and operate in a democratic manner.
 - July 2020, the PACU has initiated provision of basic services and training that meet the needs (80%) of member ACs.
 - July 2020, 9 ACs use services of PACUs on computerised double entry bookkeeping and economic reporting
- July 2020, 7 out of 9 Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) have enhanced capacity to operate viable cooperative businesses and deliver appropriate services to members (Input supply, contract farming, credit lines, agricultural and business training,)
 - July 2020, 7 ACs have improved socio-economic performance compared to their results in the initial performance review
 - July 2020, 60 % of SHG members have joined an AC
 - By 2020, 60% of AC members are satisfied by the services delivered by - and the support received from the AC
- By 2020, 90 out of 100 SHGs, 9 ACs, the PACU and local NGOs understand agricultural and rural development policy issues and they influence local and national decision making on rural development.
 - READA, LNGOs, the PACU, ACs; and SHGs advocate for better income generation opportunities and legal rights of poor people at all levels - from village to national level
 - 650 priorities of farmers are integrated into CIP and 40% are addressed.

³ The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) contains a comprehensive description of objectives, activities (table 6), expected outputs and indicators to be applied (Annex 7).

- 2 suggestions/priorities are addressed by duty bearers at provincial or national level
- By 2020, the positive outcome from ACs and the PACU as well as involvement of local NGOs in the planning process and policy dialogs at village, commune provincial and national level has been communicated to a wider range of civil society organisations
 - 1 workshop organised with 100 participants, 1 radio talk show & 5 articles published
 - Elements of ACSO are replicated by LNGOs, PDA reach 30,000 households

Methods of the intervention leading to the objectives defined, including catalyst role.

Core strategy of ADDA and partners' is to expand impact of previous project interventions e.g. to support and consolidate existing SHGs and ACs. Knowledge and methodology is transferred on:

- (i) Create a PACU to aggregate ACs and mutualise services
- (ii) Create alliances/network to improve representation of poor farmers in policy dialogs
- (iii) Human and legal rights of farmers promoting capacity to access and analyse information
- (iv) A conducive environment for right holders promoted to advocate for their interests towards duty bearers at all levels of policy dialogs
- (v) Agricultural technical/production issues, marketing, cooperate business activities.

The approach ensures tangible results and ensure that South partners and civil society organisations attain skills and capacity supporting their constituencies. The strategy is fully in line with CISUs development triangle where capacity, advocacy and strategic delivery are linked and implemented in conjunction. Main strategy components of ACSO are capacity building and enhancing advocacy competences of SHGs, ACs, the PACU and LNGOs.

Methodology

The first objective of the Action is to establish a Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union to represent 9 ACs; to advocate on their behalf, and to deliver services supporting further development and sustainability of underlying member ACs. The PACU is based on aggregations of existing ACs sharing common objectives. Establishment and overall management of the Union is set up in line with the Cambodian sub-decree on Cooperatives combined with Cambodian and West European best practice to secure sustainable Agricultural Cooperative development in Cambodia. MAFF, PDA and the Department of Promotion of Agricultural Cooperatives (DPAC) are responsible for the application of the sub-decree, whereas ADDA and READA contribute with transfer of "Danish Best Practice" as well as Siem Reap experience to the cooperative concept. A comprehensive training program on establishment, objectives, cooperative principles and management of PACUs is delivered in close collaboration with MAFF and DPAC.

Project partners have established a fine partnership with MAFF and DPAC, which will facilitate an efficient and smooth registration of the PACU. Training of Trainers (ToT) on cooperative principles, democracy, advocacy, member service and cooperative business development is planned at the beginning of the Action. Training sessions are combined with a study tour for both trainers, project staff as well as PDA field staff to the recently established Union in Siem Reap province: "SMACU". Project partners & staff, MAFF and DPAC staff will subsequently discuss and outline key objectives of Agricultural Unions, democratic principles, management aspects as well as steps of PACU establishment with committees and member representation from existing ACs. The Action mainly focus on ACs supported by ADDA and LNGOs during previous projects, because an overlying supporting structure (PACU) to previous interventions would significantly increase sustainability and further build capacity in terms of cooperative business development and advocacy. Applications for membership by "external" ACs is also welcome by the end of the Action.

A workshop will be organised with ACs to discuss mission, vision and define common grounds for forming the PACU. The foundation meetings is starting point of the PACU, and the PACU committee will be elected during this meeting. The PACU is supported during registration; the committee is trained and coached to ensure that the PACU is established and subsequently operates according to cooperative principles and the Cambodian Cooperative law (annual general assembly, financial report of ACs). The PACU is expected to provide services and trainings exactly matching needs and

Table 6. Objectives, main expected outputs and major activities.

O	Expected outputs	Main activities
In pursuit of objective 1	End 2019, one Provincial Agricultural Cooperative Union (PACU in ODM) is established at provincial level and operating according to the guidelines and best practice for PACUs in Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings of Trainers (ToT) • Exchange visit to existing Agricultural Cooperative Unions • Information sessions and workshops within all ACs • Organise PACU foundation meeting and coaching of the Committee • Complete and submit the PACU application to PDA and MAFF • Support organisation of Unions' annual assemblies • Assist the PACU in preparing their first annual reports.
	July 2020, the PACU is able to represent and facilitate further AC cooperative development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PACU are regularly updated about new development, regulation etc. • AC meetings and exchange of knowledge with the PACU • Assist the PACU committee in analysing the ACs context • Assist cooperative business planning and operation of the PACU.
	July 2020, the PACU is offering relevant services to ACs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC performance assessment conducted by the PACU Committees • Gender disaggregated Training Needs Assessments and training • Prioritisation, development and delivery of relevant training/services
In pursuit of objective 2	July 2020, 7 ACs have efficient internal leadership, structures, procedures and protocols and have a broad and democratic membership base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ACs – members as well as non-members of an AC Union to identify strengths and weaknesses and facilitate appropriate strategic development. • Support to ACs – PACU members: facilitate AC cooperation and interaction with their AC union
	July 2020 ACs are operating improved cooperative businesses increasing their self-reliance and the income of their members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business management training and refresher trainings: Business planning and execution, finance, marketing and control • Further AC business development e.g. value chain/export approach • 9 business plans are elaborated/updated to boost activities of ACs • Business management planning and execution coaching
In pursuit of objective 2	ACs are delivering appropriate services to SHGs and their members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACs organise members consultative meetings to outline priorities and best practices to further develop/update ACs strategies and plans. • ACs establish financial and business linkages with SHGs • ACs support to SHG's: bookkeeping, leadership & conflict resolution • ACs support farmers' organisational and technical development.
In pursuit of objective 3	Committees of the PACU and ACs have strengthened knowledge on agricultural, rural development policies and governance frameworks, which is utilised in their direct dialog with authorities to address the needs of farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of PACU committee, AC leaders, local line departments and Authorities representatives (LAs) on: (i) Basic rights, legal frameworks and policy processes, (ii) Agricultural and rural development issues, (iii) Roles, opportunities and challenges of CSOs • Training Union and AC leaders on advocacy • The ACs and the PACU committees translate priorities of farmers - expressed during consultative meetings - into advocacy road maps.
	July 2020, 90 out of 100 SHGs and 7 out of 9 ACs efficiently advocate/participate in policy dialogs at local levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory Village Development Plans (PVDPs) • Participation and follow-up on CIPs/CDPs and DIWs, Public forums • CDPs: formulation, financing/ partnership building, implementation, operation and maintenance. • Monitoring impact of advocacy actions striving to secure change
	End of 2020, READA, CIDO, RCEDO, KBA and AC representatives are efficiently advocating/ participating in policy dialogs at provincial and national levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-organising working groups/conferences- for CSOs in rural areas • Join national workshops partner and advocate at national level • Outline and communicate prioritised needs of poor rights holders to duty bearers at high levels e.g. high ranking officials and influencers • Monitoring impact of advocacy actions and securing that change happens from top to root level.

requests of member ACs. The PACU committee is trained to analyse information about the AC context (Agricultural national policies, AC status and plans, training needs), identify and prioritise training and services needed (e.g. business planning tools, professional book keeping, reporting) by the ACs, mobilise and develop internal and external skills and put in place cost-recovery models for

delivering training and services. Expanding membership basis of the Union to reach “economy of higher scale” and improve representation of the poor (AC members) in policy dialogs with public and private duty bearers are core mission elements of the PACU.

The second objective is to enhance capacity of 9 ACs to operate viable cooperative businesses and deliver appropriate services to their members (agricultural and business training, credit lines etc.)

Existing ACs - supported by ADDA and LNGOs during CISOM II - are further developed (Reference to table 2). Learning loops (training, coaching, monitoring and reflections on future using lessons learned) are basic methodology used to support efficient AC planning and follow-up, internal leadership, procedures, democratic development, and the ability to operate viable cooperative businesses. This include effectiveness of financial procedures, transparency of records, regular reporting's and meetings (Monthly and annual reporting's for e.g. General Assemblies). The Action is aiming to further expand the number of AC members and encourage an active AC membership of PACUs wherever applicable (The PACU is formed by and representing 9 ACs).

It is expected that net annual profit of ACs and AC own capital increases by 50 % during the project period. Training and close up coaching of ACs is provided to secure that planning and execution of cooperative businesses is developed in line with AC competences/capacity – taking into account technical and financial capacity of each AC, local context and emerging opportunities. Existing activities are boosted and new options are explored (e.g. contract farming, private/public partnerships, value-chain approach). The project will support studies and assist ACs to develop improved business models in partnership with MAFF/PDA and in line with business best practices.

AC performance and development rely on the capacity of their members. ACs intends to improve performance of SHGs and individual farmers. The Action is supporting ACs to deliver appropriate services to their members – reference to strategic services: “Professional service and management packages” of ACs. Dissemination of information by the ACs to farmer communities is planned to raise awareness and motivate mobilisation on specific agricultural or rural development policies. These interventions is reaching more than 4,100 farmer households (Table 7), skills are transferred from ACs to 100 SHGs (managerial, technical skills, intermediation) and the establishment of systematic business and financial linkages (including SHGs collection/distribution; credit lines for SHG businesses and/or individual microbusinesses of farmers). ACs will progressively replace services previously provided by project support to SHGs. ACs will provide such services in pace with improvement of their own capacity.

Third objective state that 100 SHGs, 9 ACs, the PACU and LNGOs understand agricultural and rural development policy issues and they influence local and national decision making on rural development. SHGs and ACs take part in advocacy and they are engaged in policy dialogs at local level (Annex 8 and 9 - outlining CIP principles and the two level advocacy roadmap). Their engagement in village development planning, participation in commune investment planning processes and public forums as well as implementation of community development projects will continue during the Action with some support from LNGO staff (incl. legal advisors) and Community Professionals (CPs). ACs, PACU leaders and District Officers (DOs) will be trained by LNGOs to represent their members during policy dialogs at higher level addressing issues and challenges commonly met by farmers - that require adaptation/changes in agricultural and rural development national policy framework or investment strategies. LNGOs will join national alliances to participate in national dialogs representing views, arguments and priorities of their member farmers (Annex 10 & 11). This required a deep knowledge and a good understanding of basic rights, legal frameworks and policy processes, agricultural and rural development issues and roles of Farmers Organisations (FOs). Representatives must have analytical, strategic planning and strong communication skills. Furthermore, they must have ability to build relevant network to reach influence on policy dialogs. ADDA senior advisors and project legal advisors will support CIDO, RCEDO and KBA on methodology, analysis and elaboration of specific roadmaps on advocacy at provincial and national levels. Training sessions are planned to secure that roadmap skills are transferred to ACs and PACU

committees. Skills, knowledge and strategy is used to gain influence on cooperative business and rural development during forums mentioned in Annex 9 and 10.

Women's and men's equal participation

All trainings and training venues will be suitable for both male and female participants. However, the strategy of ACSO is explicitly and deliberately gender biased, due to an already existing target group from CISOM, where women have been in focus. Women represent more than 80% of SHG members and 70% of AC members are women in Oddar Meanchey. Lessons learned in previous projects reveals that women who gain confidence and leadership experience within SHGs often go on to become members of village development committees and other local CSOs. It is the aim of ACSO to further strengthen involvement of poor woman and men in ACs, the PACU and their active participation in policy dialogs. It is expected that poor farmers improve their social status and livelihood from their membership of SHGs, ACs and the.

Previous **ADDA projects have shown significant outreach and great catalysing** effect to the families, neighbours and friends of the primary target groups. It is estimated that app. 11,000 individuals will increase knowledge on Cooperative development, PACUs, and they will benefit from improved income, influence community development, and/or improve legal status by the end of ACSO. AC business planning concepts and tools are widely distributed by stakeholders e.g. Ideomitsu bank & PDA. Table 7 reveal total number of beneficiaries of ACSO main interventions.

Table 7: Total number of beneficiaries of ACSO interventions

Interventions	Number	Participants/- intervention	Total number*	Unit	Remarks
Povincial Agricultural Cooperative Union	1	9	9	ACs	
Agricultural Cooperatives	9	222	2.000	Households	CSOs reduce costs of inputs and increase income. Suggestions and priorities of rural poor is efficiently communicated to duty bearers at local, provincial and higher levels
Self Help Groups	100	23	2.331	Households	
Legal rights addressed/context analysed	9	9	81	AC/ACU committees	
ACs/PACU - showcases for PDAFF, farmers etc.	13	25	325	Households	PDAFF/farmer groups frequently visit ACs
Focus trainings - AC and business development	18	9	162	AC committees	
Focus trainings - agricultural production	100	23	2.331	Households	
Focus trainings - legal rights	100	23	2.331	Households	CSOs are efficiently operating forums, where rural people are able to analyse social issues, acquire knowledge of local governance frameworks and the skills to make use of that knowledge in community decision-making
Participatory Village Development Planning	82	50	4.100	Households	
Community Development Projects	27	50	1.350	Individuals	
Organisational training and follow up on SHGs	100	23	2.331	Households	
Partners capacity building	4	250	1.000	Households	Major elements of the ACSO concept is applied outside the project focus areas by READA, CIDO RCEDO KBA PDAFF, CPs
Partners/ADDA - AC business execution tools	15	150	2.250	Households	
Capacity building to PDAFF and PoDWA staff	15	350	5.250	Individuals	
AC methodology and tools used by MAFF	73	150	10.950	Individuals	E.g. AC organisation, marketing methodology

*Major interventions has a significant impact on all members of households and not only a single person participating

Interlinkage and balance between capacity development, advocacy and strategic deliveries Capacity building

LNGOs will build capacity on the PACU role, objectives, organisation and management, new business models and how to establish partnerships/alliances and take part in policy dialogs. LNGOs staff requests further capacity building on these areas in order to help implement activities of the target group. They will be able to use such skills in their future work – promoting further aggregation of community-based organisations, supporting more ambitious cooperative business activities and representing farmers at higher-level policy dialogs.

Community Professionals (CPs), District Coordinators (DC) District Facilitators (DFs), AC, PACU committee members and leaders will be trained during short-term courses, workshops, on-the-job training and a sequence of meetings and “homework” related to updating of business plans, reports and the elaboration of “Professional service and management packages of ACs and the PACU”.

Capacity of the CPs, DFs and DCs is initially updated during TOT and subsequently via on-the-job trainings. DCs, DFs and CPs are responsible for direct training and coaching of the target group, including AC and PACU committees (external service providers to ACs and PACUs are also invited

to take part in capacity building). AC committees and Union leaders will attend workshops on government policies, characteristics of the rural context and they will improve their soft skills, how to conduct participatory assessments, how to deliver appropriate technical trainings and services to members etc. Capacity building of committees is planned according to Trainings needs Assessment (TNA). Their capacity is built to serve their members in appropriate manner, technical training according to TNA, management issues/soft skills, basics of finance and economics, market analysis, business planning, analysis of government policies/regulations and laws as well as advocacy and possibly technical trainings.

More than one third of the budget will be directed towards the AC development and associated activities, because they play a crucial role in forming the Union and support to SHGs. Approximately 25 % of the budget is allocated for the PACU development. PACU is a new civil society organisation in ODM undertaking significant responsibilities which calls for resources to develop into an organisation capable of delivering appropriate services to ACs and representation of member farmers at provincial and national levels.

Advocacy

SHGs and ACs undertake dialogs with local authorities and express prioritized need at village and commune levels. The processes - which is well developed - started during previous projects have built valuable capacity and experience of CBOs, which in turn has shown to local authorities that SHGs and ACs are very useful community development actors. This will continue in ACSO, with SHGs committees and AC committees leading the advocacy processes with support from ASCO legal advisors, DFs and CPs (PVDP, CDP, public forums, advocacy roadmaps). This approach is very much in line with the strategy of the government - bringing development to the rural areas and allowing rural people take active part in decision-making. This methodology is acknowledged and accepted by all main stakeholders e.g. LNGOs, SHGs, private sector as well as local authorities and provincial departments as an appropriate way to work with poor rural people making sure that their voices/priorities are heard.

The ACSO project is aiming to create linkage and synergy between existing CBOs - ACs, the PACU, LNGOs - and national networks in order to join policy dialogs at higher levels of planning, decision and policymaking. The PACU is expected to summarise and influence duty bearers on common issues, which is most efficiently dealt with at provincial and/or national levels after some time of operation. Such issues may cover larger geographical implications (e.g. irrigation scheme, roads...), they may involve provincial/national stakeholders (e.g.; land conflicts with Economic Land Concessions, military, or importers/exporters); relate to provincial/national policies (e.g.; importation standards, informal taxes imposed locally etc.), regulations and/or laws. PACUs – and subsequently aggregations of PACUs - represent a larger number of farmers, which result in a stronger voice.

Union committees, AC leaders and LAs are assisted to understand their rights, legal framework and policy processes. They will be trained to analyse agricultural and rural development issues and understand the AC/PACU role and how to address these issues within the legal framework of Cambodia. They will be trained to develop their advocacy skills such as strategic advocacy planning, communication and negotiation skills, how to mobilise media and other strong voices. ADDA/LNGOs will assist the PACU and ACs to develop specific advocacy roadmaps in line with priorities of farmers – roadmaps that will guide them in their dialog with provincial and national stakeholders (private and governmental) - during conferences, workshops, network meetings, technical working groups etc. Reference to annex 11). Additionally, mechanisms will be developed in the community/organisations to monitor the impact of advocacy at local, provincial and national levels striving to ensure that changes happen.

Strategic services linked to capacity building and advocacy

Strategic services are limited to 10 competitive grants for ACs and the PACU implementing “Professional service and management packages”, replacement of outdated computers, studies (internal assessments, gender assessment), training inputs during ToT, focus training sessions for

ACs and the PACU, costs of provincial and national workshops, meetings and communication (media) and limited technical training sessions for farmers. Third parties/external donors are expected to support Community Development Plans (CDPs) and minor investments.

The competitive grants for “Professional service and management packages” of ACs and the PACU is a strategic service for the project. Each AC/PACU have to elaborate detailed plans to further develop management, transparency, accountability and sound business activities of their organisation and how to secure that the proposed management plans/activities can continue after termination of the ACSO project. The grants are between 1.000 – 1.500 USD for each AC and app. 5.000 USD for the PACU. The packages may cover costs of part time hired staff (e.g. DFs, CPs or other qualified service providers) and costs of operating a double entry bookkeeping system (Quick Books) producing monthly and annual reports, e.g. Profit and Loss calculations, Balance sheets comparing realised figures versus planned costs for each ACs and the PACU. The PACU is expected to “computerize ACs” next years, e.g. introduce and maintain a double entry bookkeeping system in all ACs and build a database for comparisons between ACs, and to prevent errors, issue early warnings and prepare ACs for annual audit. Reference is made to Annex 12: Profit and loss recording of AC Kouk Thlok Krom. The well-functioning CISOM and EASY competitive grants inspire the awarding procedure of the competitive grant. A rather demanding - but fair - evaluation grid including criteria’s regarding plans of the AC committees, verbal and written presentations regarding AC vision, mission, strategy, services, management, organisation, accountability, ambitions and business plans is used for constructive dialogs/workshops with the AC committees before a grant is released. Current and expected future performance of the ACs is also evaluated.

Democratic representation of rural poor, leadership, proper management, accountability and sound business activities is fundamental to reach long-term sustainability and solid foundation under AC and PACU activities and necessary for further progress. However, - with solid foundation - ACs and PACUs are legitimate representatives of rural poor with ballast to exert significant pressure on “duty bearers” on framework conditions.

External technical assistance is necessary (local and international) for specialised inputs. Terms of reference of the ADDA Country Coordinator, the ADDA Deputy Country Coordinator, Senior Advisor and External Technical Assistance are attached (Annex 13).

The potential for advocacy

A proclamation issued by the Cambodian government after the national election in July 2013 instructs the provincial authorities to conduct public forums addressing any issues relevant to local communities, including human and land rights issues. The ACSO project takes advantages of the proclamation and makes sure that public forums are conducted within project areas according to intentions - using a rights based approach. This is done in a very fruitful manner securing that (i) appropriate knowledge on law and procedures is transferred to stakeholders/duty bearers (ii) local authorities are supportive (iii) a forum/room for advocacy related to priorities of the poor is actually created and duty bearers seriously consider such priorities (and take appropriate actions). The potential of public forums and CIP processes may be utilised in a more efficient manner following each relevant/major case/issue from local level to provincial or higher level. Forums, congresses and national working groups outlining Advocacy Opportunities at National Levels are outlined in Annex 11

A plan for the realisation of actual advocacy is described.

SHGs and ACs continue “policy dialogs” with local authorities and private stakeholders. They express prioritized needs of rural poor at village and commune level (Public forums and CIP). LNGOs, the PACU and ACs participate in selected provincial and national networks in order to join policy dialogs at higher levels of planning, decision-making and policymaking. This include forums and public events with dialogues related to issues on agriculture, business management of ACs, women and children, Farmer Congresses, “National Working Group offering Assistance to Local Levels”, as well as “Monitoring and Supporting the Rectangular Strategy Development of the Government” (reference Annex 9, 10 and 11).

How priorities, plans and resources existing within the context are taken into account.

The Sub-National Democratic Development (SNDD) and the Sub-National Administration (SNA) has provided more space for CSOs to facilitate dialogues amongst citizens, elected officials and government officials on development priorities and issues at local level. The Principles of Commune Participatory Planning and Commune Annual Investment Program are outlined in annex 8.

“However, given the hierarchy-conscious political and bureaucratic culture in Cambodia, facilitating such intermediations remains a challenging, but important intervention. Such support, although minimal at present, but has the potential for authentic community empowerment” (Bandyopadhyay, K. K. and Khus, T. 2012). This quote highlights the very essence of what ACSO is striving to achieve in terms of community empowerment and advocacy.

SHGs and ACs are acknowledged for their role of promoting agricultural production, which was expressed by the Minister of Agriculture during a parliament session: *“Currently, agricultural communities are playing an important role to help the government promote paddy production and milled rice exports,”* and *“The communities will improve food security, reduce starvation and bolster economic and social development”*.

Table 8. Risk factors, assumptions and mitigation measures

Risk	Type	Assumptions	Mitigation
Advocacy is not tolerated	Political	Authorities tolerate “soft advocacy approach” where dialog is favoured against confrontation. Dialogs on sensible issues e.g. land rights, human rights continues at local level - during forums and CIP	Appropriate planning and timing of sensible NGO; AC and PACU advocacy. Partners will carefully assess the situation in the target area and seek for authorisation by authorities’ before meetings are organised
Threats and violence	Political	Violence may occur in the capital, but is not likely to happen in the provinces and will not affect the project significantly	SHGs, ACs, PACU and READA use a “soft advocacy approach” where dialog is key and not confrontation
Governmental structures and/or management overrule an independent member elected leadership of ACs and PACU	Political	Elected PACU and AC committees manage planning and execution of activities independently from governmental direct interference	Member elected AC leadership and management capacity building during the Action and encouraged during meetings with all stakeholders
Local authorities are not supportive; fearing that intervention are undermining authority, power and drawing attention to shortcomings of themselves	Political	Local authority encourages the voices of poor people and acknowledges the influence on decisions at local and provincial level	It is planned to network and involve local authorities from the very start; to share and highlight the positive role of local authorities in any good results of the ACSO interventions
Local authorities does not allocate resources to facilitate ACSO interventions	Political	Local authorities allocate some resources in respond to the priorities of the poor people and their specific need for sector development.	Highlight role, legal framework and impact of local authorities and staff to motivate/secure use of appropriate resources
Weak market linkage between seller and buyer. Selling impossible, or prices are very low	Economic	There is a continuous market and it is possible to establish acceptable market linkage	Before entering into contract farming an assessment will be made to ensure a feasible market for the products
Lack of leadership support in SHG’s, ACs and PACU	Social	Leaders of SHG’s, ACs & PACU are motivated and committed to overcome challenges and pursue goals of their CSOs.	Committee leaders are compensated by small member payments and high “esteem” in the community.

Systematising and using experiences of the intervention

Dissemination of experiences will be done systematically during the project period. An internal assessment will be made by the end of the project. The internal assessment report will be available to ADDA, READA, CIDO, RCEDO, KBA, PDA, PACU and other interested stakeholders. Project partners of ADDA will definitely use the experiences in present and future projects addressing SHGs, ACs, PACUs and civil society organisations.

A workshop will be conducted as one of the final activities, where several Cambodian stakeholders will be invited for the purpose of sharing the results of the project. It is anticipated that the positive results will engage them to work with the same issues: poor, rural people, gender, community development and civil society. Dissemination of success stories will be one of the main sources of information showing to a wide audience that the interventions of ACSO are making a difference in people's lives. The dissemination of success stories will be designed to address and activate poor people, local authorities and key stakeholders. It is our expectation that the experience on best practice is going to be intensively used and shared among ACSO direct beneficiaries, other poor villagers and local authorities.

The experience of the ACs and the PACUs in Oddar Meanchey as well as Siem Reap is communicated to the ACSO network of stakeholders thus also contributing to dissemination of best practices as well as new approaches and methods. The ADDA expatriate project coordinator will be the overall responsible for systematising the experiences. In practice this will be executed in cooperation with the NGO partners. The internal assessment will be carried out 3 months before termination of ACSO project. The results of the assessment will be compared to the findings of the baseline study. The aim is to obtain an analysis of the ACSO in terms of its impact and sustainability. This is to learn from the results and to incorporate the learning as feedback into future planning processes and to the exit strategy of ACSO. An evaluation seminar with the implementing partner and "the aspiring ACSO partners" will be established.

6. Phase-out and sustainability of the intervention

Local partners and target groups are not left in an inappropriate relationship of dependency

SHGs, ACs and the PACU are based on cooperation among rural poor, democratic principles and self-help. ACs and the PACU are based on the same foundation – basic civil society organisations where rural poor develop knowledge and skills. They will be able to realise higher goals in terms of income generation, improved livelihood and social security of their family (a rights based approach improving social security, networks and better economy), and they acquire higher recognition and respect in their communities and within the society.

The intervention is envisaged to lead to lasting improvements for the target groups.

ACs, the PACU and SHGs build organisational capacity, improve business activities and significantly strengthen their position as civil society actors. They will not be economically dependent of the project during implementation but rely on their own income and resources. Improved capacity of CSOs will increase income of members and give rural poor "an even stronger voice".

SHGs – especially weak SHGs - are further supported and organised during the project. Management and micro business activities will improve by AC interaction and support. This will increase income of rural poor and SHGs during as well as after the project. Well-established and lasting linkages with CSOs, knowledge and continuous self-propelled development of competences will be part of their working habits after termination of the ACSO project.

Capacity of partners' and other actors' continue when the implementation period expires

A stronger linkage is gradually established between the ACs and SHGs, which will reduce need for direct support to SHGs from LNGO staff. Required services in terms of organisation, management and financial guidance will increasingly be delivered by - or channelled through - the ACs. PDA, LNGO staff and CPs will build capacity to organise connections with only limited budget.

If the PACU, ACs or SHGs should encounter problems after the project period, NGO staff and CPs

are available to help overcome challenges. CPs are local change agents operating at village level and they are expected to continue their advising activities and facilitation of change in their local communities after project completion. They will charge a fee to the PACU, ACs and SHGs for their services. Users of CPs and district facilitators e.g. SHGs and ACs, will be further encouraged to compensate DFs and CPs for their time spent on services rendered to their customers. Consciousness related to value of organisational/management capacity, services and costs of relevant services will be evident during implementation of the ACSO project, e.g. PACU and ACs are hiring – and pay fees for - CPs and/or DFs part-time to implement the “Professional service and management packages” (ref. to page 24). The PACU and Agricultural Cooperatives operating at high scale are expected to increasingly demand services of more specialised staff e.g. DFs; and strong ACs have capacity to pay for such services. Union committees become experienced, qualified and committed, known and recognised by their fellow villagers. It is highly possible that CPs and possibly DFs are represented in the board of the PACU and board of ACs. The PACU will propose and offer their services, (services of qualified staff/consultants) for a fee, and thus structure and professionalise the systems initiated in previous projects: e.g. users of CPs e.g. SHGs and ACs, were encouraged to compensate CPs for their time spent on services rendered to their customers.

Close cooperation between ADDA and LNGOs continues. The demand for capacity building and projects in line with previous interventions is high and partner capacity is further strengthened during the Action.

How the intervention is expected to become politically, organisationally, socially, technically, financially and/or environmentally sustainable.

ACs and the PACU are legal entities, registered by the Ministry of Agriculture who are entitled to institutional support. The existence of a reasonably well developed national legal framework define the objectives of the ACs and PACUs and guarantee rights and obligations of the members and their organisations. It also encompasses institutional support, and it is the obligation of MAFF and PDA to promote and support the development of ACs and PACUs. Institutional support is anticipated because interventions are coordinated with project interventions and can relay project interventions by the end of project.

The PACU is a new organisation established by the project in a context that offers limited opportunities for learnings from other experiences in Cambodia at the moment. The AC Union is organised in self-financing way, however, full autonomy may not be expected by the end of the project. Young ACs and the PACU will need guidance from PDA to sustain their organisations and activities. LNGOs also offer assistance to the PACU on management and advocacy issues.

LNGOs improve organisational, training and advocacy skills, to be used in other interventions. LNGOs represents beneficiaries / members in dialogs regarding agricultural and rural development policies. LNGOs become more influential in provincial and national instances, which will continue to benefit rural communities. LNGOs master advocacy on behalf of vulnerable farmers without putting its own organisation and its members/ beneficiaries at risk. (Ref. context, problem analysis, risks).

LNGOs have income from other sources, and is not solely dependent on Danish contributions.

ACSO partners plan to merge the CISU supported interventions: “Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives and Civil Society development in SR” (EASY) and ACSO when they terminate in June/July 2020. Such Action would resource efficiently build further capacity of aggregated farmer CSOs and represent a member base of at least 6.000 farmers in ODM and SR by July 2020.

Planned intervention-related information work in Denmark

Project-related information work is planned in Denmark to create awareness and attract donors for CDP projects. Articles will be published in ADDA’s newsletter and ADDA’s member magazine (News & Views) to continuously update on the progress and status of the project. These articles will also be published on ADDA’s website (www.adda.dk), and on ADDA’s Facebook page (ADDA currently have approximately 11.000 followers). Bodil Pallesen carries out the information work.

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Annex no.	Annex title
1	Tangible advocacy results achieved until May 2018
2	Key roles and responsibilities of NGO partners
3	Annex 3: List of IOs, LNGOs and UN agencies operating in ODM, August 2018
4	Stakeholder analysis
5	READA Partner Agreement
6	Main characteristics of strong, medium and weak SHGs supported by CISOM II
7	Logical Framework Approach
8	Principles of Commune Participatory Planning and Commune Annual Investment Program
9	Advocacy roadmap at local level and principles of higher level advocacy
10	Mobilization of Advocacy by Agricultural Cooperatives (ACs) and Provincial AC Union (PACU)
11	Policy dialog opportunities at National Level
12	Profit and loss recording of Agricultural Cooperative Kouk Thlok Krom, Jan – Jul 2018
13	ToRs and Selection criteria of key positions of the ACSO project
14	Project implementation plan
15	Supporting letters from PDA
16	Supporting letters from PDWA
17	Translated supporting letters from PDA and PDWA