



## Enhancing Capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction in Agriculture - Cambodia

### Background

Natural disasters regularly affect agricultural production and food security in Cambodia. Floods, such as the 2011 flood, and droughts cause significant losses in agriculture. Other hazards that also cause serious damage in agriculture are pests and diseases, storms and typhoons like Ketsana in 2009. Small farmers who live in hazard exposed areas, and have no safety net, or alternative means of support are most vulnerable to disasters. The re-current exposure to natural hazards creates additional stresses, in particular, to the smallholder production systems, and endangers poor farmers' livelihoods, which are already suffering from limited productivity, low profitability and a lack of crop, livestock and fishery intensification possibilities. Because there are few off-farm diversification opportunities, the additional economic distress that disasters bring to poor farming families can be devastating.



Climate change creates an additional layer of risk and uncertainty with additional detrimental impacts expected for agriculture and allied sectors.

In 2009, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) established institutional structures and policies to pro-actively address Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) provides the overall coordination, and promotes the integration of pre-disaster risk reduction measures and post disaster emergency management. All key ministries are involved, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MOWRAM).

In line with the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) and its plans to develop an overall strategy for disaster risk reduction, including the agriculture sector, the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has requested a joint project with FAO to assist in planning and testing specific DRR measures that are tailored to the needs of agriculture. The GDA has selected Kampong Speu Province and the districts of Aoral, Baseth, Kong Pisei and Phnom Srouch as pilot sites for field activities. These districts are prone to both drought and floods. The project will distil key lessons and planning advice on proactive disaster risk reduction measures in agriculture for further replication in other provinces.

### FAO supports DRR in agriculture

Disaster risk management is a corporate priority at FAO as stipulated in the Organization's Strategic Framework 2010-2019. FAO's new strategic objective titled "Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises" (2013) further enhances the Organization's commitment to disaster risk reduction and resilience building against threats and crises affecting agriculture and food security. In preparation for the Disaster Risk Reduction pilot project in Cambodia,



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table 1: Hazard calendar Kampong Speu

Hazard	Early Wet Season			Main Wet Season				Dry Season				
	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
Drought				■	■			■	■	■	■	■
Flood							■	■	■			
Storm				■	■	■						
Insect attacks							■	■				
Livestock diseases							■	■				
High temperature	■	■	■	■	■							

FAO conducted an in-depth study to assess institutional capacities for DRR coordination and delivery in agriculture, agriculture-specific hazard information and early warning systems, the knowledge and access of farmers to risk reducing practices and technologies, and capacities for risk prevention, disaster preparedness, response and recovery in agriculture.

The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department provides financial support of USD 371 000 to the project proposal through its DIPECHO Programme. The project started in July 2012 and will operate for 18 months. At the national level the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) will lead the implementation in collaboration with the Department of Meteorology.

### Project objectives

The principle project objective is to enhance the livelihood’s resilience of small-scale farmers and fisher folks in disaster-prone areas through improved Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in agriculture. The project promotes the development of enhanced planning tools and capacities for proactive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) service delivery, including enhanced outreach to farmers in hazard prone areas.

Approximately 1 500 farm families, and more than 250 technical staff will directly benefit from the project. In addition, awareness raising and strategic planning support at national and provincial levels will catalyze spill over of project results to other districts and provinces, and thus also benefit agriculture producers outside the project pilot sites.

The project aims to deliver the following results:

- A model for a sector specific Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction in Agriculture: An initial plan will be related to the mandate of activities of the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA). A provincial level plan will be developed in Kampong Speu. Lessons learned from the process will serve as model for replications elsewhere.
- Dissemination of good practices options (GPO) for disaster risk reduction in agriculture: GPOs will be promoted in selected communes in Kampong Speu through the national agricultural extension and NGOs. This will include improved use of water resources for flood and drought management. Ten existing rice-banks will be supported through management training and drought tolerant seed varieties.
- Capacity development for agriculture specific weather and climate information products in MoWRAM/PDoRAM and GDA/PDA: this includes the piloting of seasonal climate information bulletins for agriculture.



### Implementation partners

The national authorities involved in project coordination and implementation include: the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) of MAFF, the Department of Meteorology (MoWRAM) and National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM).

At the provincial and local level in Kampong Speu, partners include the Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA), the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology (PDoWRAM), the NGOs Srer Khmer Organization and Aide au Développement Gembloux, as well as the Provincial Committee for Disaster Management (PCDM).



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