Increasing farmers’ income through organic and certified rice production in Preah Vihear Province in Cambodia

Located in the north, Preah Vihear (PVH) is one of the poorest provinces in Cambodia. While certain market influences bring opportunities to the province, smallholders—particularly women—are often excluded from these potential benefits. Hence, PVH farmers, especially those in Sangkum Thmey district, suffer from low prices for rice and high production costs.

The Challenges in the District of Sangkum Thmey

Farmers in Sangkum Thmey have plenty of potential to produce organic rice for a higher price, as most of their rice fields are free from chemical pesticides and they use local rice varieties. However, agricultural cooperatives (ACs) in the district are not functioning, and—due to budgetary constraints and lack of incentives—there is limited support from the provincial department and district office of agriculture. Likewise, these ACs do not have the capacity to manage their members and to link their products, particularly rice, to the market with higher prices. Hence, farmers produce rice and other crops for family consumption only, while other families have left PVH to look for employment in provincial towns and cities.

Tapping the Potential of PVH Farmers

In order to tap their potential, PVH farmers should have the capacity to follow organic rice production standards and to put in place an effective internal control system to comply with these standards. Following these standards not only means producing organic and certified rice, but also taking into account socioeconomic and environmental aspects, as well as the health of producers and consumers.

Moreover, ACs should have the capacity to lead and manage their organization, and to support their members with appropriate production techniques, production input costs, and linkages to markets.

GRAISEA Interventions

Through the Gender Transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in South East Asia (GRAISEA) programme, Oxfam in Cambodia and its partners developed the capacity of four ACs in Sangkum Thmey (Ro Ang Romknea Aphiwat, Sen Kong Aphiwat, Sdao Aphiwat, and Ranakse Preah Khan Aphiwat) in organizational development and management. A total of 153 organic rice
producers—100 of which are women—were likewise trained on organic and certified rice production.

**INCREASE IN FARMERS’ INCOME**
Farmers in the four ACs in Sangkum Thmey are now applying the lessons they learned from capacity development sessions. An external certification body called ECOCERT audited their processes and found that these farmers also comply with organic rice production standards. As a result of project interventions, 251 tons of paddy rice had been sold to Amreth Rungroeung Rice Company, or AMRU Rice, as of January 2018.

**AS A RESULT, THE FARMERS CAN NOW SELL THEIR RICE AT A HIGHER PRICE (AN INCREASE OF 20 TO 30%) THAN THE NORMAL MARKET.**

 органическую и сертифицированную производство риса очень важно не только для помощи кооперативным членам увеличить их доход, производить безопасные продукты, и внести свой вклад в природоохранительную деятельность, но и для укрепления их лидерских и управленческих навыков, что, в конечном итоге, приводит к устойчивости.

—НЕМ ТАНЧЕНГ, РУКОВОДИТЕЛЬ ПРОЕКТА НА AMRU