



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



PRESS RELEASE

Switzerland – new project for small farmers in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, 28th January 2015

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC launches a new project to increase income and food security of small-holders farmers' households in Cambodia. SDC developed the "Cambodian Horticulture Advancing Income and Nutrition" (CHAIN) Project, in close coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery, MAFF. SDC has mandated a consortium led by SNV to implement this project. SDC finances CHAIN with 3.58 mio CHF for three years.

More than 40 % of the rural poor suffer from food insecurity. The increasing market demand for vegetable and fruits provides a huge opportunity for small holder farmers and processors, in particular women to increase income and food security. Based on close consultations with key stakeholders in Cambodia and in particular the MAFF, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Switzerland's governmental development cooperation agency, has designed the "Cambodian Horticulture Advancing Income and Nutrition" (CHAIN) Project. CHAIN will support female and male farmers and processors in increasing sustainable production, income and resilience in four of the poorest provinces of Cambodia, namely in Kratie, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear and Oddar Mancheay.

With its particular focus on fruits and vegetables, the CHAIN Project will tackle the key constraints of poverty and malnutrition in the four provinces, targeting in particular women farmers and ethnic minorities who have a limited access to productive assets.

The Project was developed in 2014 in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) through the General Department

of Agriculture and the provincial departments of Agriculture in Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, Kratie and Oddar Meanchey provinces. It is expected to provide sustainable income growth to 15,000 homestead farmers and improved household food security and nutrition to 24,000 households.

The CHAIN Project translates the focus of the SDC Country Strategy for Cambodia 2013-2017 on supporting Cambodia's poor and marginalised women and men in equitable access to economic opportunities, improved livelihoods and participation in decision-making.

"Switzerland is very proud to launch this important and innovative project which was developed with the beneficiaries and responsible authorities," said SDC Country Director **Mrs. Rahel Boesch**, "it builds upon the market potentials created by fast economic growth also to isolated farmer communities. It starts from the needs and priorities of the farmer small holders, women and ethnic minorities and links with promoting and sustaining a fruit and vegetable industry and market for the future. A real win win situation for both, the poor rural farmers and Cambodian markets."

The CHAIN Project is aligned with the Cambodian Government strategic orientation and its vision for the agriculture sector (NSDP 2014-2018), aimed at an annual growth of 5% through enhanced productivity, diversification and commercialisation. The CHAIN project also translates the strong focus of the government Gender strategy, the Neary Rattanak 2014-2018 by having a specific focus on women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector.

The overall timeframe of the CHAIN Project will be eight years, spread over three (3) implementation phases. The phase I was initiated in December 2014 with a budget of CHF 3.58 million (approximately US\$ 3.77 million) and will last until November 2017, benefiting 6,200 poor households, ethnic minorities' farmers and small processors. Based on tender, SDC has awarded the implementation of the project to a consortium consisting of the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) as lead agency, the Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation (Swisscontact) in cooperation with The World Vegetable Center (AVRDC) and local partners.

Despite Cambodia's rapid economic progress, many farmers still live below the poverty line. Their crops are increasingly threatened by the effects of climate change, and furthermore, traditional diets contribute to Cambodia's high child malnutrition rates. By supporting a diversification of diets and income sources this new development project aims to make changes to these serious problems.

Meanwhile, the demand for fruit and vegetables is increasing, yet currently they are mostly imported from Thailand and Vietnam. The project announced today aims to help smallholder farmers diversify into growing fruit and vegetables themselves. In cooperation with the Royal Government of Cambodia and various private sector partners, it will introduce modern horticultural techniques and the support people need to generate much-needed additional income, plus options for eating better too.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to strengthen a much-neglected sector in a much neglected region in Cambodia,” said SNV’s Country Director, **Mr. Eric van Waveren**. “With the right techniques and support (Market for the Poor), growing more fruit and vegetables right here in Cambodia will strengthen local economies, improve food security and empower low income farmers.”

For more information please contact:

Mr. Hem Sovannarith, Programme Manager for Agriculture and Food Security, SDC Cambodia, Tel: +855 89 666 092

Or

Mr. Bjorn Jensen, Team Leader of CHAIN, SNV Cambodia, Tel: +855 23 994562