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IDENTIFYING SUITABLE CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE (CSA) PRACTICES FOR SCALE-UP IN THAILAND

May 2020

SDGs:



Countries:

Thailand

Project Codes:

TCP/THA/3604

FAO Contribution

USD 212 000

Duration:

1 June 2018 – 31 December 2019

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Implementing Partners

Department of Agriculture (DoA), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC).

Beneficiaries

National policy-makers: DoA, MoAC, Ministry of National Resources and Environment (MoNRE), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and local governments.

Local level practitioners: rural communities, farmers, consumers and enterprises involved in the agriculture sector at the ground level.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

CPF Priority Outcome 2: Adaptation and mitigation of the negative impacts of climate change related disasters, and sustainable natural resources management reinforces the importance of climate change management at the government level.



BACKGROUND

With global weather patterns becoming increasingly unpredictable, like many other regions, Thailand's agricultural production systems and communities are expected to suffer from rapidly fluctuating temperatures and increased frequencies and intensities of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods. This will inevitably have adverse impacts on agricultural productivity, endangering economic growth and the livelihoods of the vulnerable smallholder farmers dependent on this sector for their well-being. In addition, decreasing productivity will substantially impact regional and national food security statuses. It is therefore imperative that agricultural systems evolve with practices that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation), and to adjust to the rapid environmental changes. However, the abilities of these agricultural production systems and dependent communities to cope with the constraints and opportunities that come with climatic variability are still not well understood, and should therefore be given higher priority, in order to enhance resilience. Developing farmers' capacities and knowledge to make climate smart choices in their agricultural practices is crucial, but requires in-depth understanding of the local socio-economic contexts and suitability in different agro-ecological zones of a country. Climate smart agriculture (CSA), which incorporates adaptation and mitigation measures while ensuring productivity, has the potential to build synergies and limit trade-offs in agriculture under present climate uncertainties, and reduce existing knowledge gaps and non-alignment between sectors and policies. Thailand has developed a national sector strategy to promote an approach that is consistent with CSA. However, there is limited understanding of how CSA technologies and approaches are being adopted or deployed by relevant government agencies. Against this background, the project aimed to enhance the resilience to climate change of rural communities in four regions (north, northeast, central and south), through the identification and proactive promotion of CSA practices.

IMPACT

The project is expected to contribute to ensuring that rural communities in four regions of Thailand are more resilient to climate change, through the identification and proactive promotion of CSA practices. This, in turn, is expected to lead to enhanced national food and nutritional security in rural communities in the target regions.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project encountered some difficulties and delays (please see below), however, it succeeded in implementing the majority of planned activities, and achieving its objectives. Existing and potentially appropriate CSA practices for implementation in Thailand were identified, CSA development plans were developed for north, northeast and central regions of the country, and a series of training activities and workshops on vulnerability and adaptation planning for CSA practices in Thailand were conducted with different stakeholders representing the agriculture sectors in the country.

An assessment on ways to integrate CSA indicators into existing MoAC Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems was prepared, in collaboration with the Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans (NAP-Ag) programme. In addition, a desk review was conducted by the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), to stocktake existing initiatives and programmes relevant for scaling up CSA in Thailand. The review was validated with relevant stakeholders and national experts at the Inception, Technical and Policy Workshop held in February 2019. A stocktake on Research and Development projects related to CSA practices in Thailand was also prepared for CSA training workshops in four regions; and site visits to observe CSA practices were organized as part of the regional stocktaking exercise.

The CIAT, with support from the project and staff from the Department of Agriculture (DoA), prepared a draft CSA country profile for Thailand, which has yet to be validated. Capacity to scale up CSA practices in Thailand was enhanced through a number of capacity-development activities. This included four regional workshops held in Khon Kaen, Chiangmai, Kanchanaburi and Songkhla provinces respectively, focusing on vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning for integration in national and regional level policies and programmes. In addition, a Training of Trainers (ToT) session on vulnerability and climate smart assessments of agricultural practices in Thailand was held to train experts and local level agriculture experts from the regional offices, enabling them to conduct further training sessions and relay the information within their networks. A training manual and guidelines on vulnerability and climate smart assessments of agricultural practices were prepared; and DoA Research and Development project activities related to CSA were identified using a Logical Framework Approach in three provinces, Khon Kaen, Kanchanaburi and Chiang Mai.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

Some difficulties and delays were encountered in the implementation of the project, which are outlined below. The project was initially scheduled to begin in March 2018. However, the process of identifying appropriate consultants to support the implementation of the project resulted in delays, and the inception phase of the project did not start until July 2018.

While the service provider for Output 1 activities was contracted during the inception phase, further delays followed when the lead national consultant retired from the project in December 2018. Interim support was provided by other related FAO projects, and an inception meeting was organized in February 2019.

A programme to organize field activities under Output 2 was developed and agreed on, following the inception workshop in February 2019. However, budget and internal approval procedures required by the national implementing partner (DoA) delayed the organization of the regional workshops, and as a result, field activities could not be undertaken until November and December 2019.

As a result of the cumulative impact of the issues outlined above, some activities under Output 3 could not be implemented.

All project activities were implemented within the planned budget.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The CSA profile should be validated through follow-up consultations with the DoA and relevant agencies at the MoAC.



SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project was highly relevant to FAO's ongoing regional initiatives on climate change and contributed significantly to: i) Organizational Output 20101 - Innovative practices for sustainable agricultural production are identified, assessed and disseminated and their adoption by stakeholders is facilitated; and ii) Organizational Output 20103 - Organizational and institutional capacities of public and private institutions, organizations and networks are strengthened to support innovation and the transition toward more sustainable agricultural production systems. Partnerships and alliances were created or strengthened, which would contribute to the project's sustainability. These included: i) a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the DoA to organize four regional training sessions, one national forum, and other workshops on capacity development for CSA activities in Thailand; ii) an LoA with the CIAT to develop a CSA country profile for Thailand; and iii) an LoA with Khon Kaen University to support the organization of and conduct regional training sessions on vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning for integration into the national and regional level policies and programmes.

2. Gender equality

Given that the project was mainly technical in nature, it did not address gender directly. However, the documents produced as part of the project incorporated the gender aspect into the analyses. The capacity-development activities ensured the participation of women. In addition, the CSA country profiles specifically take into consideration the gender dimension of the CSA practices and approaches in the specific countries.

3. Environmental sustainability

The project outputs/outcome can significantly contribute to achieving the objectives of Thailand's 10-year Strategic Plan on Climate Change (2010-2019) and the Three-year Action Plan (2010-2012), which highlight the necessity of building better climate change adaptive capacities across the nation to protect national food security.

The project activities contributed significantly to achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), goals and targets of countries in the region, by highlighting the important role that CSA plays in reducing emissions from the agriculture sector.

4. Technological sustainability

Capacity development was the core objective of the project. The project conducted a series of training sessions and workshops on vulnerability and adaptation planning for climate smart agricultural practices in Thailand, with different stakeholders representing the agriculture sectors in the country.

The CSA country profile developed by the CIAT consolidates current knowledge on CSA in Thailand, and provides a strong basis for identifying potential opportunities to formulate and implement future projects and interventions on CSA in the country and in the region.

5. Economic sustainability

It will be possible to directly link the CSA development plans to the budget allocation process for MoAC resources, to support the implementation of the Agriculture Strategic Plan on Climate Change (ASPPC), and extrabudgetary resourcing efforts to support action on climate change and Thailand's NDC priorities.

The CSA country profile and other knowledge products will be available online, free of charge, for wider dissemination.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Inception Report. S. Dasgupta, I. Saengkaew and B. Damen. 2019. 50 pp.
- ❑ Monitoring and Evaluation Report on Adaptation to Climate Change in Thailand's Agricultural Sector. P. Suttinon. 2019. 46 pp.
- ❑ Climate Smart Country Profile for Thailand. FAO and CIAT. 2019. 36 pp.
- ❑ Training manual and guidelines on Vulnerability and Climate Smart Assessments of Agricultural Practices. Khon Kaen University. 2019. 13 pp.
- ❑ Regional training and workshop reports and CSA development plans. Khon Kaen University. 2019. 65 pp.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Climate change resilient farming systems across Thailand contribute to a more resilient and sustainable Thai society with enhanced national food and nutritional security		
Outcome	Rural communities in four regions of Thailand are more resilient through the identification and proactive promotion of Climate-Smart Agriculture practices		
	Indicator	CSA promotion and investment strategies developed for communities in four regions.	
	Baseline	Thailand has developed a national sector strategy to promote an approach that is consistent with CSA. However, there is limited understanding of how CSA technologies and approaches are being adopted or deployed by relevant government agencies.	
	End Target	Nationally appropriate CSA practices for implementation in Thailand identified.	
Comments and follow-up action to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Despite the difficulties and delays encountered, the project was able to implement the majority of planned activities, and achieve its objectives. – With support from service providers, existing and potentially appropriate CSA practices for wider adoption in Thailand were identified. – CSA development plans were developed for north, northeast and central regions of Thailand. – A CSA country profile was developed, and has yet to be validated. This should be carried out through follow-up consultations with the DoA and relevant agencies at the MoAC. 		
Output 1	Nationally appropriate CSA practices for implementation in Thailand identified		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
Baseline	N/A	N/A	Partially
Comments	<p>The activities under this output were largely completed. The project collaborated with the Integrating Agriculture in National Adaptation Plans (NAP-Ag) programme, jointly coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO, together with the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE) and the MoAC.</p> <p>Overlaps were identified in terms of geographical focus areas and the participatory methodologies being used in the activities under the NAP-Ag programme, and the development of the CSA profiles and capacity-development training activities. As a result, adjustments were made with respect to the targeting of field activities. Specifically, field activities were targeted in Khon Kaen, Kanchanaburi, Chiangmai and Songkhla.</p>		
Activity 1.1	Identify potential indicators for CSA practices to support national policy reporting processes		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An assessment on ways to integrate CSA indicators into existing MoAC M&E systems was prepared, in collaboration with the NAP-Ag programme.	
Activity 1.2	Stocktake of potentially relevant practices/strategies for scaling up CSA being implemented in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	<p>A desk review was conducted by the CIAT to stocktake existing initiatives and programmes relevant for scaling up CSA in Thailand. The review was validated with relevant stakeholders and national experts at the Inception, Technical and Policy Workshop held in February 2019. In addition, a stocktake on Research and Development projects related to CSA practices in Thailand were prepared for CSA training workshops held in Offices of Agricultural Research and Development (OARDs) in four provinces, namely OARD-3, Khon Kaen; OARD-5, Kanchanaburi; OARD-1, Chiangmai and OARD-8, Songkhla. Site visits to observe CSA practices were also organized as part of the regional stocktaking exercise.</p> <p>It was not possible to prepare a database of CSA practices, as originally envisaged.</p>	
Activity 1.3	Prepare CSA country profile for Thailand		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	The CIAT, with support from the project and DoA staff, prepared a draft CSA country profile for Thailand. However, the CSA profile was not validated, because it was not possible to organize the planned final national workshop. The CSA profile should be validated through follow-up consultations with the DoA and relevant agencies at the MoAC.	

Output 2	Capacity to scale up CSA practices in Thailand enhanced		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	N/A	N/A	Yes
Baseline	N/A		
Comments	<p>The implementation of the activities and the organization of the workshops faced some difficulties, as the approval for budget expenditures was delayed by internal coordination and approval procedures of the DoA. Initially, eight regional workshops were planned in four regions in Thailand. However, owing to time constraints, these were reduced to four, combining the objectives of the originally planned CSA prioritization exercises and capacity-development workshops. The workshops also focused on vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning for integration into national and regional level policies and programmes.</p> <p>With regard to the CSA training workshop held at DoA-8 Songkhla Province, DoA staff visited and interviewed farmers engaged in vegetable growing, cattle and goat raising, as well as integrated farming in the province, and field practice on smartness indicators. CSA and DoA Research and Development project activities were developed through the provision of Logical Framework Approach (LFA) training at OARD Region 4, Ubon Ratchathani.</p>		
Activity 2.1	CSA prioritization exercises undertaken in four regions		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A ToT on Vulnerability and Climate Smart Assessments of Agricultural Practices in Thailand was held in October 2019. – A training manual and guidelines on Vulnerability and Climate Smart Assessments of Agricultural Practices were prepared. – Four regional workshops on Vulnerability and Climate Smart Assessments of Agricultural Practices in Thailand, covering activities envisioned under Activities 2.1 and 2.2, were organized in Khon Kaen, Chiangmai, Kanchanaburi and Songkhla provinces. – DoA Research and Development project activities related to CSA were identified using a Logical Framework Approach in Khon Kaen, Kanchanaburi and Chiangmai. 	
Activity 2.2	Capacity development on appropriate CSA practices for extension providers in four regions		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	As mentioned above, four regional workshops on Vulnerability and Climate Smart Assessments of Agricultural Practices in Thailand, covering activities envisaged under Activities 2.1 and 2.2, were organized in Khon Kaen, Chiangmai, Kanchanaburi and Songkhla provinces.	
Output 3	National investment pipeline for scaling up CSA practices to contribute to national climate change and rural development goals prepared		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	N/A	N/A	Partially
Baseline	N/A		
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CSA development plans were developed for the north, northeast and central regions of Thailand. – Regional consultations and workshops involved a range of stakeholders, but did not engage, as originally envisaged, with the private sector. 		
Activity 3.1	Prepare CSA promotion and investment strategies developed for communities in four regions including potential public-private partnerships		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	CSA development plans were developed for the north, northeast and central regions of Thailand. There was no private sector engagement in developing the plans.	
Activity 3.2	Organize a national agribusiness forum to promote scaling-up of CSA practices to contribute to national rural development and climate change goals		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This activity was to be organized by the national implementing partner, as part of an LoA. However, it was not possible to organize this event, owing to delays and unforeseen procedural issues.	

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