

CASDP



SUCCESS STORY

CONTINGENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMPONENT (CERC)

2023



**Prepared By
Project Coordination Office
CASDP/MAFF**

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 www.https://casdp.maff.gov.kh/



A MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR

I extend my sincere appreciation to the World Bank (W.B.) for supporting the Consolidated Contingency Emergency Response Component in COVID-19 resilience in Cambodia.

The return of migrant workers as well as factory workers who became unemployed due to the Covid-19 pandemic was an extreme strain on many rural communities, and the CERC intervention significantly mitigated the hardships experienced by many rural households. The experience of CERC intervention has contributed to our knowledge of the impacts of emergency pandemics in Cambodia. It enables us to become familiar with best practices in order to promote successful recovery and post-COVID development in Cambodia. It is particularly reassuring to note that CERC's success has provided evidence-based learning and identified best practices to be adopted in order to combat other pandemics and mitigate impact on Cambodian society and economy over the next five years.

I trust that this success story of the CERC intervention provides a basis for designing appropriate policy responses that will enable the economy to bounce back more robustly and resiliently while keeping Cambodia on the path toward achieving sustainable development goals.

Dr. Sar Chetra

Deputy Secretary-General, MAFF
CASDP Director



FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic severely affected the lives and well-being of all in Cambodia. The country's response to the pandemic and ability to curb infection has been a remarkable success story. Thanks to the Royal Government of Cambodia's rapid and comprehensive delivery of public health measures and ambitious socio-economic stimulus packages, the negative effect on the economy was reduced. Nevertheless, the pandemic severely impacted growth and employment, and the country's progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was undermined.

This success story of CERC shows that the most vulnerable groups bore the brunt of the crisis and required specific support. The CERC in Cambodia was part of the Cambodia Agricultural Sector Diversification Project jointly initiated by the World Bank Country Team in Cambodia and led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAF), in collaboration with the line ministries, including the Ministry of Economics and Finance (MEF) the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM). It was designed based on the CSADP field observation report conducted in June 2020 in the 13 provinces. CERC aimed to promote short-cycle agricultural production to ensure access to food by the targeted rural households and generate marketable surpluses to restore household incomes.

The pandemic presented unprecedented challenges and opportunities to build forward better. We are at a critical juncture where we should review the latest evidence and rethink the medium and long-term development course for a resilient recovery aligned with Cambodia's commitment toward the SDGs and leaving no one behind. Lessons learned from success stories in the field are critically examined to identify and learn of the potential of these initiatives as best practice initiatives for their possible applications elsewhere in Cambodia.

The World Bank Country Office is committed to working with the Royal Government of Cambodia and other development partners to support Cambodia in building toward a robust and resilient recovery and sustainable development. Our collective efforts are needed now more than ever to ensure that no one is left behind in response to this crisis.

Ms. Mudita Chamroeun

CASDP Team Leader
World Bank Task Team Leader

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected Cambodia's leading growth drivers and threatened to reverse years of development gains. While gross domestic product (GDP) growth was strong at 7.1 percent in 2019, it was expected to contract between -1.0 and -2.9 percent in 2020 (MEF.2020). Key growth drivers have severely affected: merchandise exports, tourism, and construction sectors. Cambodia's tourism and hospitality sector, estimated to contribute about 20 percent of the GDP, was severely impacted. Cambodia's textile sector and footwear exports contracted by -5.4 percent during the first five months of 2020, compared to an expansion of 19.1 percent for the same period in 2019. These sectors are among the most employment-intensive in Cambodia: the textiles sector accounts for 17 percent of non-farm employment, the transport and hospitality sectors for 11 percent, and construction for 4 percent (MEF.2020).

Cambodia imports 32% of vegetables to meet its domestic consumption needs, 25% of fish, and around 20% of meat. Cambodia needs to take proactive measures to increase local food production to reduce its reliance on food imports from neighboring countries. It addresses the expected unemployment of both laid-off workers and returning migrants and ensures the availability of nutritious food for its vulnerable population.

Malnutrition remains a persistent human development challenge in Cambodia, mainly because of affordability issues of nutrient-rich diets. Only 21% of households can afford a nutritious diet and most food that poor agricultural families access needs to be more secure. Unsurprisingly, child stunting (low height-for-age) and a physical manifestation of chronic undernutrition affected one in three (32%) children under age five in 2014 (FAO.2014).

COVID-19 significantly added a challenge to the remaining nutritional system. Fish, meat, and vegetables are part of the nutrition diet, and most people rely on rice and vegetables alone as the main diet, leading to an unbalanced diet with a lack of protein. The closure during COVID-19 has left thousands of farmers without income and nutrition for their families.

Responding to these challenges requires urgent actions. The Cambodia World Bank Group country partnership framework (CPF) for 2019-2023 aligned with the government's overall program to combat the COVID-19 pandemic was discussed significantly upwards to reflect the increasingly urgent need to address the non-health impacts of Covid-19. Of these needs, food security represents the significant component, for a total of US\$ 10,200,018, for short-term relief measures to enhance the resilience of targeted vulnerable rural populations through improved food security, livelihood improvement, and employment.

The emergency intervention activities were carried out through the CASDP sub-component: “Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC). The CERC beneficiaries were selected from the 13 provinces under the Cambodia Agricultural Sector Diversification Project (CASDP), including Kandal, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang, Battambang, Siem Reap, Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, Kratie, Ratanakiri, Mondolkiri, Tbong Khmum, Kampong Cham and Phnom Penh. The selection criteria were designed based on the finding of the Needs Assessment, among the 13 CASDP’s provinces, farmers/agricultural producers, affected households, adequate access to land, water, and other necessary assets, and ability to engage in project-supported activities of vegetable production, poultry (chicken), and aquaculture (fish & frogs). The proposed support of production activities under CERC aimed to promote short-cycle productions, including vegetable, poultry, and aquaculture. The proposed activities focused on the beneficiaries’ ability to meet home consumption needs and supply local markets when marketable surpluses were generated. The intervention was designed to assure financial sustainability; not require much land; easy mobilization of production inputs; and availability of relevant agricultural support services to farmers from public/or private sectors.



Photo: MAFF 2020

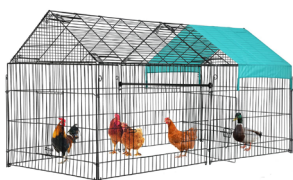
PROJECT INTERVENTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Chicken Raising

Key activities carried out by sub-contractors to deliver agricultural inputs and technical assistance in chicken raising and achievements – Action for Development (AFD) was contracted by CASDP under the CERC sub-component to implement “the support inputs for raising chicken /duck by setting up farmers for chicken/duck, vaccine, feed, technical assistance.” The project activities focused on setting up 2,929 small farmers for chicken/duck raising for 5,858 households, i.e., an average of one farm per two households.

The CERC project conducted coaching assistance and follow-up to provide capacity-building and skills for Village Animal Health Workers (VAHWs) so that they can follow up with direct farmer-beneficiaries. In the first place, the project provided Training of Trainers (ToT) for VAHWs to ensure, in turn, provided training for chicken producers permanently living in the community. The training sessions focused on how to construct chicken cages, methods to raise chicks, sources of feeds and formulation of combining meals, plans to provide vaccinations, chicken breed selection, and chicken raising with environmental protection.

The project team worked closely with VAHWs to enable them to produce poultry sufficiently and effectively through regular coaching follow-up conducted by the group, in parallel with providing direct support to chicken producers. The team also provided additional advice on how to take care of chicks, introduce them to strengthen biosafety, apply sanitation, and treat disease.



5,858
Beneficiaries

2,929 Chicken cages installed

20,929 Chicken breeds delivered

277.41 Ton Chicken production in ton



Village Animal Health
Workers conducted

Fish Farming

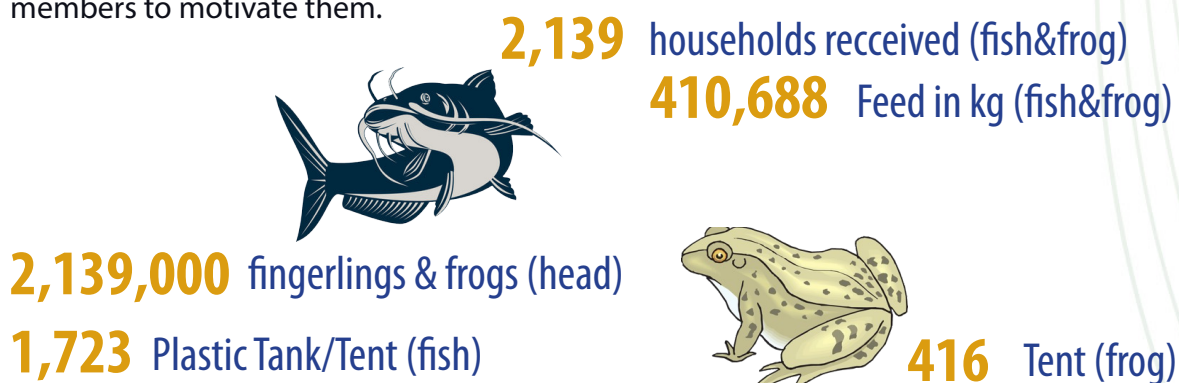
Key activities carried out by sub-contractor to deliver agricultural inputs and technical assistance in fish/frog raising and achievements – Apsara Agri Supplies Co., Ltd (AAS) was awarded by CASDP under the CERC project to deliver aquaculture inputs and technical assistance to direct beneficiaries of 2,139 households the selected agricultural cooperative/ producers' organizations in 13 targeted provinces covered by CASDP. These beneficiaries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic included 1,353 laid-off workers, of which 743 were females. In addition, 26 919 migrant workers, including 11,313 females, and 307 824 people, including 116,837 female people classified as ID-Poor.

The agricultural inputs consisted of plastic tanks/tens, feeds, fingerlings, and technical assistance of raining and plastic tanks/ten installation and follow-up activities. The information provided by the contracted suppliers also included some essential extension services. The CERC's beneficiaries from 2,139 family households covering 13 provinces received 1,723 fingerlings and frogs, 410,688 kg of feeds, and 2,139,000 fingerlings.

Coaching and follow-up activities are essential advisory services – AAS team designed training manuals and prepared the main thematic consist of the introduction of specific varieties of the cultured species, physical features of site selection, biological conditions, how to prepare items for tank installation, density requirements for culture species, how to transport fingerlings, how to release the fingerlings into the culture system, water quality management, sources of water (tape water, groundwater, canal, ponds/lakes, streams, and rivers, etc.), ho feed and feeding techniques, prevention and treatment, harvesting and benefit of such cultures for market and consumption.

The contracted Apsara team provided technical advice to fish/frog farmers and training manuals to understand the raising process and maintenance. Feed techniques and daily/ regular checks/observations during raising are essential. It is assumed that the survival rate could be between 85% and up. The mortality rate was estimated to be approximately 10 – 15% for the entire raising process.

With the delivery of agricultural inputs and advisory services, AAS made significant process toward becoming a progressive fish and frog farmer. Some farmers wholeheartedly shared their experiences and information about fish/frog-raising techniques with their community members to motivate them.



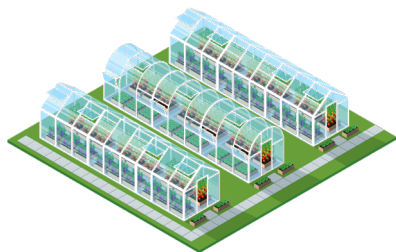
Safe Vegetable Production

Key activities carried out by sub-contractor to deliver agricultural inputs and technical assistance in growing safe vegetables and achievements – A second supplier, Tropicam Irrigation Solutions Col., Ltd was awarded acontract from CASDP through the CERC project to deliver six-month intervals of fully net-house installation, Agri-inputs supply, and technical assistance. Tropicam needs to support net houses to 3,600 households and agri-inputs to 3,696 households as selected beneficiaries of 7,296 family households. The participation of the selected family households is essential to the approach's success. Tropical developed and prepared an action plan, which was fully implemented in each target province. The work plan consisted of three activities: the delivery of net houses, Agri-input supply, and technical assistance coaching, including land preparation, vegetable rows, dripline irrigation, preparation for seedling plan and the use of natural fertilizers, conducting training on growing techniques and benefit of growing vegetables in the net houses, and follow-up.

As a result, Tropical installed 240 net houses in the 13 selected provinces, which benefited 3,600 family households, and one net house comprised 15 target farmers. After completing the net house installation, the project delivered an Agri-inputs supply, including 400 vegetable seedlings per net house, equal to 9,6000 and 150 kg (chicken dunk), like 36,000 kilograms.

On the agricultural input supply side, the project delivered Agri-inputs to 3,696 target farmers consisting of 1,479,600 vegetable seedlings, 36,960 kg of the net, and 554,850 kilograms of fertilizers (chicken dunk).

The provision of technical assistance and follow-up by the Tropical team ensured that farmers could produce high-quality vegetable productions. The farmers learned about land preparation, vegetable rowing, plan preparation for seedlings, use of natural fertilizers, and small watering pipeline. Besides, other approaches were applied to further technical assistance, monitoring, and getting improvement of beneficiaries during the growing time.



240
Net houses were
installed



3,696 households received
nethouse.

36,000kg Fertilizer (Chicken dunk)

96,000 Seeding

13 (TA) Training Assistance



INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS STORY

_Chicken farming improves incomes
for villagers during the covid-19
pandemic outbreak

Chicken Raising

Chicken farming improves incomes for villagers during the covid-19 pandemic outbreak

Mrs. Chhim Samoeun lives next to the Mekong River in Sorp village, Sorp commune, Prek Prasop District, Kratie Province. She lives with her husband and six children and can earn extra income by raising chickens and spending little time and money on chicken care and vaccination. Introduced by Contingent Emergency Response Component under Cambodia Agricultural Diversification Project (CERC/CASDP), these simple practices offer her family an alternative source of income to complement her dependence on working for daily pay in the construction sector.



“

Covid-19 seriously impacted my family, my sons lost their jobs during the covid-19 outbreak, and I had to work hard to save my children. In the beginning, as a family raising chickens, I was worried about raising chickens and losing them due to bad weather or viruses.

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Mrs. Chhim Saeoun, chicken farmer, is feeding chicken during CASDP team's interview in August 2022. Photo: Chuon/2022

The CERC project has played a crucial role at the frontline of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas. COVID-19 generated extreme vulnerability in the agriculture sector by creating a threat to food security. With the financial support of \$10.20 Million from the World Bank, CERC has contributed to resolving the negative impact on vulnerable rural households.



_Local buyer was scaling chicken during CASDP team's interview in August 2022. Photo: Chuon/2022

“

CASDP gave my family the best hope by providing chicken and other agricultural inputs. By selling old Chicken, I now have money to support my family. With support from CASDP, my husband now works at home and feeds chickens, using technic to produce chicken feed. The project provides agricultural input, including seven chicken breeds per family, chicken cages, bird pens, birds, feed and vaccines, and medicine for chickens. My chicken grows very fast because my husband understands how to produce chicken feed using all vegetables around the house and sprayed pesticides.

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Initiated in September 2020, chicken farming has dramatically improved farmers' livelihoods. Mrs. Chhim Samoeun, a 45-year-old farmer living in Sorp Village in Sorp Commune, earned 50 percent more income for her family by raising chickens and selling fattened broilers. With 70 chickens, she could now produce at least 15 kg per month and sometimes over 20 kg per month. With the price of 15,000 Khmer riel (US\$4) per kg, she could get a net profit of between 225,000 and 300,000 Khmer riel (US\$75) every three months from selling them after deducting costs for chicken feed vaccines and medicine.

“

My husband and I have strongly committed to raising Chicken and helping each other so that our Chicken grows well. Because those chickens grow fast, we hope we can earn income by selling our chickens between 10 to 15 per harvest among 70, and during the wedding season, we can sell for 17,000 riels/kg. I want to add more chickens to cages to earn a little more. Before raising the chickens, I didn't have much money, but now, I have enough money to pay for food and healthcare,” said Mrs. Chhim Samoeun. “It's easy for me to spend my money since I don't have to depend on daily pay. So even when there is no daily work payment, I still have my own money to spend.

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A full screenshot of chicken cage installation, delivery of broiler chicken, and backyard chicken harvest during the CERC implementation - Photo: Chuon/2022

In addition to selling chickens, Mrs. Chhim Samoeun also sells day-old chicks and chicken feed to other villagers. She learned how to mix the ideal chicken meal and began sharing the recipes and feeding techniques with other villagers. Soon, villagers started coming to her to buy their chicken feed.

Launching the initiative in September 2020, CERC first gave basic training and equipment to help farmers raise fish and chicken, produce chicken eggs, and grow organic vegetables at home. For the chicken farming project, selected farmers for a training program to raise poultry in 2.5m x 4m cages constructed consecutively adjacent to each other in a row. Farmers received training on how to give correct feed, vaccination, and medicine to the chickens. Farmers who produce chicks for sale were provided with one incubator. She Said:



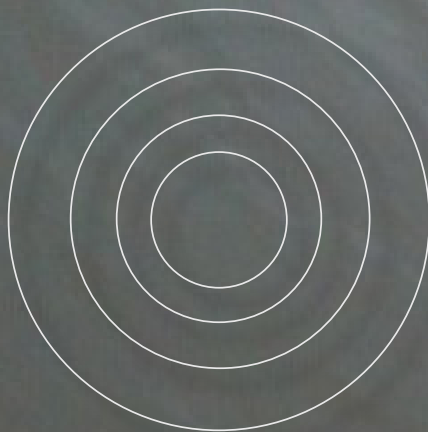
“

Raising chickens is easy and light work. In the morning, we clean the troughs and then prepare the feed and water. That's it. Nothing is tiring.” “The benefit is that even if my husband doesn't have a job, I can still have the money to support our family.

”

Mrs. Chhim Saeoun, chicken farmer, one of CERC beneficiary, thanks to MAFF during CASDP team's interview in August 2022.
Photo: Chuon/2022

Raising chickens has changed livelihoods completely for some farmers—from having barely enough to eat, they now have savings for their families. This transformation has inspired other villagers to begin raising chickens, too. One example, Mrs. Chhim Samoeun, a 48-year-old farmer living in Sorp Village, Sorp Commune, used to make a living by farming rice which hardly earned her enough for her daily meals. But today, thank to the CERC project, she can adequately provide for her family by raising chickens and chicks in incubators.



FISH FARMING

_Enhancing access of vulnerable households to aquaculture inputs to assure sustainable family incomes — How Mr. Khun Ly and Mr. Lim Thoeun coped with the COVID-19 crisis

FISH FARMING

Enhancing access of vulnerable households to aquaculture inputs to assure sustainable family incomes – How Mr. Khun Ly coped with the COVID-19 crisis

Mr. Khun Ly lives in Pongro village, Neang Teut commune, Tambe district, Tbong Khmum province. He is a fish farmer. He used to work as a subsistence farmer daily. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, he has not worked outside and he is now at home. The CERC, in collaboration with the Tbong Khmum Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, distributed catfish fingerlings and inputs and a set of technical training. Thanks to these supports, he started farming catfish. The fish farming is excellent, which allowed him to take care of his family and raise fish at home.

The CERC assisted farmers in facilitating technical training on fish farming and provided some agricultural inputs for the construction of fish tanks after completing the specialized training. These agricultural inputs include fish feed, and health supplements. Each family received eight packages of fish feed for two seasons, three boxes of health supplements, and an allocation of 1,000 fingerlings per family.

The fish farming techniques provided by the project includes the construction of a fish tank (5m x 4m). The project also supports irrigation ditch or pond systems and extensive homeland ponds. In addition, training is provided on handling fingerlings, draining dirty water, and adding fresh water to the plastic fish tank. The basics of fish disease diagnosis and prevention are also covered in the training package for the beneficiaries.



To maintain the water quality of the fish tank, we have to be covered so that there is no soiling of the water, causing a bad smell. People and animals are not different. If there is a bad smell, it is difficult for us to live. The trainer also came to monitor and explain that when the fish are sick, we have to add salt into the water and stir well, then sprinkle it into the fish tank to prevent the fish from getting sick.

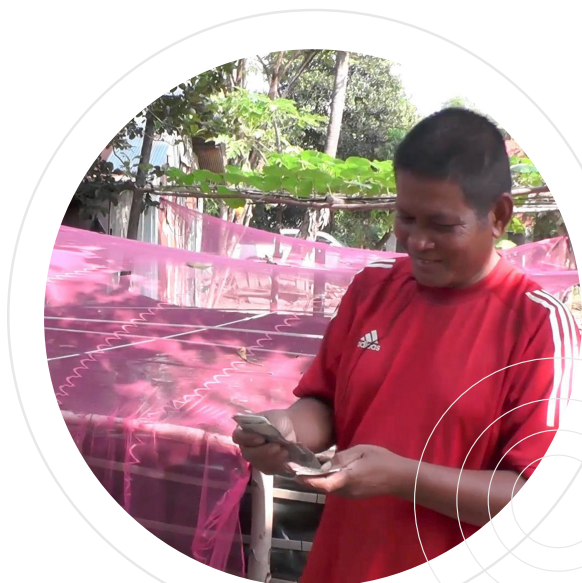


Mr. Khun Ly, fish farmer, is feeding catfish during CASDP team's interview in October 2022. Photo: Mr. Neang Sotana/2022

Mr. Ly explained two different methods of raising fish: in open ponds or under tents. Farming fish using the tent system is easier to maintain and gives better results. Despite the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project has already proven successful. Almost a year since it began, about 400 participants have gained knowledge of fish/frog raising techniques and received agricultural inputs, enabling these families to generate family income from fish farms. He could harvest about five to six units per kilogram, the fish he could gather. As for the price, he can sell from 10,000 to 11,000 riel/kg and about 100 kg in the first round.

In addition to catering to the family's food requirements, fish is an essential source of income for the family. Mr. Ly expressed satisfaction with the benefits of raising fish because he could work at home with his family and prevent himself and his family members from the negative consequences of Covid-19. He said he only needed a short time to earn money to support the family's livelihood. He could earn about 500,000 riels from raising fish; he sell to the neighbors who come to purchase 1 kg or 2 kg. It took him only three months to expand, and he could harvest; he is not worried about the market for catfish.

Due to the profitable nature of fish farming and the knowledge gained from the training supported by the CERC under CASDP, Mr. Ly's family has achieved a better standard of living. Mr. Ly is committed to raising fish to sustain his family's income in the next phase. After the harvest, he plans to buy fish fry and raise them again because the materials supplied by the project can be used two times, especially since my tent is still usable; the trainer explained that the equipped tents could be used for three years. Mr. Ly expressed his true feeling that he was lucky that the project helped him and put high hopes in the fisherman. After his success, he intends to share the knowledge from the CERC with his local community to become knowledgeable and raise fish like him to earn a living for his family.



Mr. Khun Ly, fish farmer, is counting money earned from the sale of fingerlings. Photo: Mr. Neang Sotana/2022

“

I am interested in raising fish when I watch aquaculture programs on TV. In the future, I will raise fish while I am old and cannot go anywhere; I will have time to feed the fish at home to take care of the family. Regarding this fish farming, I would like to send a message to my neighbors who are interested in it because it has brought many benefits. Thanks to the project, I have a better living standard, and I would like to thank the project, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, for taking care of the fish. I only wish him happiness and prosperity.

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FROGFARMING

_Enhancing access of vulnerable households to aquaculture inputs to assure sustainable family incomes – How Mr. Lim Thoeun coped with the COVID-19 crisis

FROG FARMING

Like catfish farming, the CERC, in collaboration with the Tbong Khmum Provincial Department of Agriculture, distributed frog breeds to target farmers for raising at home and earning income for their families. The CERC provides agricultural inputs and facilitates training for farmers on how to grow frogs, such as choosing a site for a frog farm, digging a frog pond, putting plastic lining and water, releasing frogs, raising frogs, and how to harvest frogs.

Mr. Lim Thoeun, living in Khor village, Neang Teut commune, Tambe district, Tbong Khmum province. The Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and local authority selected him to join training on frog breeding techniques and distributed materials such as tents, frog breeds, and food supplements for frogs. He received eight bags of frog feed and three packages of food supplements for frogs. As soon as the frog fry arrived home, he had to keep them in the cage for 3 to 4 hours before putting them in the tank and adding water to prevent waterlogging. Each time we add water, he has to spray it on the frog gently so that the drops can clean the skin of frogs.



Apsara firm's representatives were delivering agricultural inputs during CASDP team's interview in August 2022.
Photo: Mr. Neang Sotana/2022

As for frog farming techniques, Mr. Lim Thoeun said that the material used as a shelter for frogs is relatively easy to find; frogs can live in old car tires or motorcycle tires. For maintenance of the frogs, Mr. Lim Thoeun said:



“

For care, it is not difficult; we see if there is a need to feed the frogs, and then we need to mix three teaspoons of nutrients, mix well and rest for 10 minutes, then sprinkle it in the pond. We only have to feed a little daily; it depends on what we observe; we provide food when the frogs need to be more active.

”

-Mr. Lim Thoeun, frog farmer, is looking after frog during CASDP team's interview in August 2022. Photo: Chuon/2022

Mr. Lim Thoeun described his interest in raising frogs. He said that frogs have a good market; he can sell frogs to his neighbors after catering to his family's needs. He is determined to continue raising frogs in the next phase and plans to expand large-scale farming and sell more.



“

Raising frogs is very important because we do not have to spend money to buy additional food for the family outside and save some money to survive. I now thrive in raising frogs and know how to grow and care for frogs. I'm thrilled, and I plan to expand the cage even bigger. Finally, I would like to thank the CERC under the Cambodian Agricultural Diversification Project of the Department of Agriculture and wish you every success.

”

-Mr. Lim Thoeun, frog farmer, Photo: Satana/2022



SAFE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

— Woman improving food quality and
nutrition in Chambok Village, Thpong
District, Kampong Speu Province

SAFE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

Woman improving food quality and nutrition in Chambok Village, Thpong District, Kampong Speu Province

Mrs. Pho Chansothol lives in Chambork Touch village, Kat Phlok commune, Borseth district, Kampong Spue province. She lives with my elder parents and is a mother of a 9-year-old. As a widow with a 9-year-old son and living with her elderly mother, Chan Sothol became a double victim due to the spread of Covid 19. She has a small beauty salon near the market but is occasionally closed due to a lack of customers or clients for fear of contracting the disease.

She started growing vegetables as a surplus on her land plot. She used a net house gardening technique she learned thanks to the Contingent Emergency Response Component under the Cambodia Agricultural Sector Diversification Project (CASDP) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

Mrs. Chansothol and her group in the village of Chambord, Kat Plok commune, have begun to harvest almost two times more productive than before. She was impressed by the community members who could access safe vegetables to eat. She said:



Since I have started growing vegetables in the net house, I am not worried about selling; I can earn and save some money for daily support to my family, utilities, and school fees for my kid.

About 30% of the harvested vegetables are surplus, which I sells on the market. I has managed to increase her income by nearly three times. I can sell safe vegetables to wholesalers between 50 to 60 kg per week, costing 2500 Khmer riel/kg. "Our vegetables taste different. They are richer and more delicious.



-Mrs. Pho Chansothol, safe vegetable farmer, was interviewed during CASDP team's visit to her net house in September 2022.
Photo: Mr. Neang Sotana/2022

The project provided a greenhouse to the selected 20 households with ID Poor; now they have fresh greens almost year-round. In the village of Chambord, in the Borseth district, all irrigation previously went toward rice crops, and therefore, local households had no water to irrigate their plots. However, the project provided training and equipment for Chansothol to apply a drip irrigation system.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the project provided a day of training before delivering agricultural inputs, but the project limited number of participants, respecting the preventive measures of the Ministry of Health for social distancing.

Eventually, she came up with the innovative idea of setting up a net house and training support to use the knowledge gained from trainers to share with her neighbors and community. She was impressed by the vegetable-growing techniques.

Knowledge is essential for her practices of growing vegetables. Thanks to the CERC project, she can learn how to improve soil fertility, which fertilizers to apply, and which organic fertilizers she can prepare ourselves.



-Mrs. Pho Chansothol, safe vegetable farmer, was interviewed during CASDP team's visit to her net house in September 2022. Photo: Satana/2022

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

Improving nutrition and increasing resilience to the Covid-19 crisis are essential for the people of Cambodia. It can only be achieved by building better and more sustainable food systems. This project gives them reasons to believe they can start their own business on fish farming, chickens, or another value chain.

Small-scale intensive poultry and aquaculture farming are mainly practiced by rural, resource-poor people who often experience food insecurity throughout the years of the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the intervention of CERC, such poultry aquaculture farming models are easily accessible to those rural people. Most importantly, it could be a good income and nutritious food source for them to improve food security. Not only does small-scale poultry farming enhance nutrient utilization, but it also significantly contributes to mixed farming practices and women empowerment in rural Cambodia.

Apart from the benefits of extensive small-scale poultry production systems, rural farmers often need help getting full benefits due to disease and climate change. Such problems can be overcome with better agricultural and livestock management.

The matching grant models under CASDP have been introduced to Agricultural Cooperatives that need to invest in agribusiness and are limited to accessing the loan. A matching grant benefits small-scale intensive farmers experienced with the CERC project to move to a small-scale business. The trend is considered a successful model established by the CERC project. Today, after successful poultry and aquaculture management training during the Covid-19 pandemic, the fund, made possible for women farmers who are members of agricultural cooperatives through a matching grant of 40% of the total investment plan from CASDP, will support their business plan for agricultural product value chain.

CERC 2023



CAMBODIA AGRICULTURAL SECTOR DIVERSIFICATION PROJECT

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