

Exploring Implementation of Sustainable Development Project in Timor-Leste Under Thailand - German – Timor - Leste Trilateral Cooperation

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Abstract

This research studied the sustainable development project in Timor-Leste under Thailand - German - Timor - Leste Trilateral Cooperation, the project entitled “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector” which is a trilateral cooperation project between the Kingdom of Thailand by Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), Thailand office and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) of Timor-Leste. This research is mainly focused on the implementation of TICA under this project including their roles and project outcome, the writer was researching from secondary data from four related organizations under the mentioned project.

The project purposed to improve community income in selected rural communities through higher agricultural productivity and commercial businesses. There are farmer groups in 4 selected rural communities for being pilot villages: 1) Hera; 2) Metinaro in Dili district; 3) Ulmera in Liquica District and 4) Lihu in Eemera district. TICA have sent their working group and technical assistances (Appraisal Mission) from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives) to Timor-Leste for training and sharing best practices followed work plan under the mentioned project with the MAP including supported MAP to set up their countries capacity building which is a part of their goal for developing strategies.

Keywords: *sustainable development goals, philosophy of sufficiency economy, trilateral cooperation, north-south-south cooperation, Thailand international cooperation agency*

1. Introduction

After the establishment of the pilot project following the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) at Hera Village in Dili, Timor-Leste, the development cooperation plan under bilateral cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand by Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Timor-Leste has been completed, the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), Thailand office have seen the successfulness of the above bilateral project and they also are supposed to support the Timor-Leste in the area of capacity buildings so the GIZ continue the mentioned project and expanded to trilateral cooperation by initiated project entitled “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector”. This project is a trilateral cooperation project between Thailand, German and Timor-Leste following the SEP and become a pilot model of North – South – South cooperation. Both Thailand and German parties would aim to assist Timor-Leste to strengthen the country’s capacity towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the areas which both sides can share the relevant experience and expertise as well as sustainable agriculture and share the knowledge which Thailand and Germany have expertise to the Timor-Leste (Thailand International Cooperation Agency [TICA], 2016).

By the end of 2013, both Thai and German parties have sent their working group and technical assistances (Appraisal Mission) from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives) which are implementing agencies on the Thai side to Timor-Leste for preparing a work plan under the above project with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) of Timor-Leste for supporting the MAP to set up their country’s capacity building which is a part of their goal for developing strategies as improving national food security, reducing rural poverty, supporting the transition from subsistence farming

to commercial farming of crops, livestock, and fisheries; and promoting environmental sustainability and conservation of Timor-Leste's natural resources (Thailand International Cooperation Agency [TICA], 2017).

This trilateral cooperation project will contribute to MAP's goals by focusing on the mentioned transition. In order to achieve the above goals, MAP needs further capacity building for its extension services while ensuring successful implementations throughout the country.

On these issues, Thailand has been supporting Timor-Leste via its bilateral technical cooperation projects in the agriculture for many years; after then the GIZ had come and MAP also would like to run a trilateral project aiming to extend both efforts by combining these approaches, which are fully in-line with its missions and goals, then the trilateral cooperation project had begun since then.

This trilateral cooperation project aims to develop agricultural products of pilot villages in Timor-Leste by ad of product values following the value chain including sharing the knowledge of food transforming, to build a pilot model and expand to the 3 nearby villages including the role model in each village for sharing their experiences and to extend service and build a capacity of MAP officers to work closely with farmers and pleased to share their experiences which had been learnt from the project experts.

2. Objectives

This research will find out the roles of Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) on sustainable development project in Timor-Leste under Thailand – German – Timor-Leste trilateral cooperation under the project entitled “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector” including analyzing the implementation of TICA on the mentioned project.

This research will also discover achievements and outcomes of the project through TICA implementation including successfulness of TICA in the act of implementing agency of Thailand side.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Materials and methods

This research is qualitative research that has a primary aim to study and research about trilateral cooperation project entitled “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector” between Thailand, German and Timor-Leste trilateral cooperation.

The research emphasizes to find out the implementation of Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) on sustainable development project in Timor-Leste under Thailand – German – Timor-Leste trilateral cooperation and analyze the roles of TICA on the mentioned project including discovering the outcome of the mentioned project through TICA implemented.

The research is also researching from secondary data, official documents from related organization under the project: there are 1) Countries Partnership Branch, Thailand International Cooperation Agency; 2) The German International Cooperation Agency, Thailand's office; 3) Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand; and 4) Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

The scope of this research is during the implementing period of the above project: January 2016 to December 2017, in Timor-Leste at 4 selected rural communities of a pilot villages: 1) Hera; 2) Metinaro in Dili district; 3) Ulmera in Liquica District; and 4) Lihu in Eemera district.

3.2 Literature reviews

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, is a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

These 17 goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success in one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The SDGs is an inclusive agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to

make a positive change for both people and planet. “Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, and so is the commitment to leave no-one behind,” United Nations Development Programme Administrator Achim Steiner said (United Nations, 2015).

Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)

“Sufficiency Economy” is a philosophy conceived and developed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand over 60 years of tireless development work to improve the lives of the Thai people and bring them a genuine and lasting happiness.

The goal of implementing the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is to create a balanced and stable development, at all levels, from the individual, family and community to society at large by developing the ability to cope appropriately with the critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid changes (i.e. globalization) in the material, social, environmental, and cultural conditions of the world.

The principle of Sufficiency Economy stresses the importance of following/adopting the middle path for appropriate conduct by the population at all levels of society (individual, family, community and nation) in terms of development and administration in order to modernize in line with the forces of globalization. In other words, we should try to avoid extreme thoughts, behaviors and actions.

Sufficiency has three components: moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity, with two accompanying conditions: appropriate knowledge and ethics & virtues (Royal Thai Consulate-General in Chennai, India, 2015).

North-South-South Cooperation

The United Nations Development Programme of Japan (UNDP/Japan, 2004) mentioned that North-South-South Cooperation (NSSC) (also called trilateral or triangular development cooperation) is a new route of development cooperation where aid is channeled through institutions in third-world countries in order to support development projects in poor countries. It is relatively new and different because most of the development aid goes through the bilateral route (North-South) with a large amount being channeled through inter-governmental organizations (IGO).

A North-South-South Cooperation activity can be the initiative of one or more Southern countries that wish to cooperate with one another. Such countries can ask for the support of a Northern donor as a third partner in order to maximize their financial, logistical and technical resources. Alternatively, a donor can partner with a developing country willing to provide technical support to other Southern partners whose initiatives match the Northern donor’s priorities and interests. The Northern donor would then offer to support South-South cooperation through a triangular approach by providing financial and/or technical support.

In general, donor countries have continued to support South-South cooperation through triangular arrangements. In this form of North-South-South Cooperation, developed countries can use UN agencies as a support channel. Another type is the pulling together of resources by different organizations to address one common issue affecting various developing countries.

In other cases, developed countries provide their support directly to groups of developing countries or entities serving these countries. This can mean that a group of developed countries gives support to a group of developing countries or a sub-regional organization. The support of developed countries for North-South-South cooperation is mainly situated in the area of human resource development, research and institutional capacity building. Increasingly the aid has been given to groups of countries or institutions that address overarching thematic issues. Donor countries have in general facilitated North-South-South Cooperation by supporting centers of excellence and knowledge networks (United Nations, 2015).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The objective of “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector” project

The overall objective of the mentioned project is improving income in selected rural communities through higher agricultural productivity and commercial businesses. There are farmer groups in 4 selected rural communities for being pilot villages: 1) Hera; 2) Metinaro in Dili district; 3) Ulmera in Liquica District; and 4) Lihu in Eemera district.

The project also has 4 specific objectives, first, to improve the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) extension services. Second, improve the agricultural productivity (quality and quantity) of

communities. Third, improve market-oriented business performance of communities. And forth, provide recommendation for policy and value chain/sector support strategies.

Their strategies are improving capacities of selected farmer groups in subsistence farming (mainly for own consumption or local community market) – at the same time helping farmer groups to commercialize beyond their current local markets. The project shall also facilitate the market - demand - oriented business development of the selected farmer groups together with traders and other business services to ensure a more regular and stable market.

In case of improving the capacities of its extension workers in the area of “sufficiency economy village” and “business development and value chain promotion”, the project shall develop training curricula and carry out training of trainers (master trainers) for MAP and guide the trained extension units to independently carry out pilot implementations in selected communities in Dili and neighboring districts

MAP would also like to gain policy and strategic recommendations on how to promote certain subsectors or products or support the outreach and positive impact of the project services. Aim to incentivize further communities to develop income-improving farming and business activities as well as to support the outreach of the extension services utilizing the services and experiences of the project (The German International Cooperation Agency, Thailand office [GIZ], 2017).

The project’s target groups are farmer groups in 4 pilot villages in Hera, Metinaro in Dili district, Ulmera in Liquica District and Lihu in Eemera district including master trainers and extension workers of MAP at the national and SUCO (district/villages) level.

4.2 The roles of TICA on the mentioned project

TICA (Thailand International Cooperation Agency [TICA], 2017) mentioned that their response for promoting South-South cooperation and North – South – South cooperation under partnership programmes with other donor countries including non-government organizations and international agencies for development cooperation in developing countries in various regions. Second, they administer Thai international development cooperation projects including the administration of Thai international volunteer and expert programmes.

They provide funding support to Thai government agencies and private organizations in organizing training courses for developing countries and logistical services for foreign recipients of Thai scholarships and fellowships include advice its external cooperating partners about the kinds of educational opportunities in Thailand, and encourages them to screen potential candidates for study in Thailand. They also procure and keep track of materials and supplies for various technical cooperation projects and provide tax clearances, visa extensions and ID cards for eligible foreign experts, volunteers and accredited NGO staff in Thailand.

Under this project, TICA did promoted North – South – South cooperation under trilateral cooperation with Germany as a partner country and Timor-Leste as a receiving country for development cooperation in 4 pilot villages of Timor-Leste and provided funding support to experts from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand and Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University in organizing the above mentioned project in 4 pilot villages of Timor-Leste including providing logistical services for both agency’s experts.

4.3 Finding of the implementation of Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) on sustainable development project in Timor-Leste under Thailand – German – Timor-Leste trilateral cooperation under the project entitled “Sufficiency Economy and Business Promotion in the Agricultural Sector”

Normally, Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) is formulating an international cooperation plan, to study and analyze a cooperation policy including implementation, follow-up and evaluation of technical cooperation projects. TICA is also administering development cooperation programme and providing developing countries according to foreign policy of the Royal Thai Government. They always cooperate with various development partners including foreign governments and international organizations to formulate, implement, and assess technical cooperation projects / programmes under bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Sometimes they provide fellowships and scholarships offered to developing countries for human resources development in public and private sectors as well as civil society and coordinate international development cooperation include disseminating information regarding development cooperation to concerned government agencies and international organizations.

For implementing this project, TICA had Thai support experts, which were from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand and the Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, for training and coaching extension workers from selected areas, communities and farmer groups in 4 pilot villages. The training was based on business development and management, agricultural productivity support and farm techniques. Thai experts from the 2 mentioned agencies facilitated business development for selected products from pilot villages including conducting workshops to discuss policy and other support measures with related partners.

TICA also started outreach and campaigning activities for supporting Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) projects beyond the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Thai experts had training and coaching extension workers emphasize self-sufficiency at the personal and family level by following “New theory Agricultural” especially in terms of subsistence. Thai Experts also received a good support from MAP officers whom joined this project. The MAP officers had a mix of farmland in their own land in case of making extra income for their family and also being a good example for others farmers in the nearby area to learn and practice.

4.4 The finding of achievements and outcomes of the project through TICA implemented

After the project have been done, the farmers from selected communities who joined the mentioned project training improved their own productivity, farming and produce improvement action plans, they also had their own product and business development and marketing plans following the Thai experts guidelines. They had improved products and business performances in case of increasing their family and community income.

The MAP extension workers used the knowledge gained from training and coaching to implement in selected communities, MAP started their training curricula and coaching guidelines for MAP extension services, they also did the analysis of needed policy and support measures for MAP itself and qualified group of Master Trainers and extension workers for further plan follow MAP strategy.

The role model and pilot groups have ability to apply and disseminate SEP and value chain approaches including business and marketing plans of selected products in each pilot community and created models of local product development / value creation in markets. They also would like to share their best practices for nearby communities.

There were also impacts of the implemented project which contributed to food security, employment and poverty reduction in rural areas by improving income in selected rural communities through higher agricultural productivity and commercial business.

The 4 pilot villages had used the knowledge gained from training and adapted to their village’s appropriateness;

Lihu village was setting up the village learning center for sharing the best practice in their community, as well as increasing family income in double or triple times of their previous income.

Ulmera village was improving the good management in their community, and ladies and girls in their community also could participate in community activities. They also could earn money from the community businesses with 8 USD/family in one month.

Metinaro village prepared and created their own accounts on family and farm expenses, as well as increasing family income in double to four times the previous income and earn money from the community business with 30 – 40 USD/family in one month.

Hera village was setting up the village learning center for sharing the best practice in their community including sharing the core value on SEP, they also created their community plan with participation of youth farmers in their community. In each month, they could earn the family income up to 200 USD/ month.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Understanding of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)

The farmer groups in 4 pilot villages; from Hera, Metinaro, Ulmera and Lihu and master trainers including extension workers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAP) at national and SUCO (district/villages) levels understood more about the logic of SEP and possibly could continue for working

by following “New theory Agricultural” especially in terms of subsistence, to emphasize self - sufficiency at the personal and family level. The MAP is pleased to support MAP officers who joined this project to make use of farmland in their own land in case of making extra income for their family and being a good example for other farmers in the nearby area to learn and practice.

5.2 Learning of New Innovation

The mentioned target groups understood on the basics of agricultural knowledge which was learnt from the above mentioned project and possibly to gain knowledge for being a well-practiced farmer in their community and reducing the cost of production such as food processing from bananas which was well-planted in their community, producing fertilizer from banana trees in case of taking care of land and soil around planting area, processing of natural herbs for using on anti-pesticides in case of protecting planted material from insects and producing of microorganisms to nourish their land and soil including their plants around planting area.

5.3 Working on communities work plan

The mentioned target groups had organized their own working plan, understood creating working plans and learnt more about being a facilitator from Thai experts from the Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand and Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University such as organizing the community stage for sharing their best practice, best practice for collecting community data, best practice for analyzing community data and best practice for community development and possible beyond to project ideals for continuing in the better level of their community.

6. Acknowledgements

- 1) Countries Partnership Branch, Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA)
- 2) The German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ), Office of Thailand
- 3) Department of Agricultural Extension, the Ministry of Agricultural and Cooperatives of Thailand
- 4) Department of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

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