

Comparative analysis of CLMV countries' policies in regards to Agroecology

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Background



A comparative analysis relying on:

- **4 national studies** to map agroecology stakeholders and review agriculture policy frameworks
- Carried out between **October 2015** and **February 2016** in **Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar** and **Vietnam** in the framework of the **Agroecology Learning alliance in South East Asia (ALiSEA)**
- Full reports available on ALiSEA online library (<http://ali-sea.org/online-library/>)





**From subsistence & AE based
farming to Green Revolution led
agriculture policies**

Long tradition of subsistence-based integrated farming combining crops, livestock & trees in complex landscape mosaics

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Agricultural practices relied on strong ecological knowledge built over many generations

Over past decades (1980's), shifting cultivation vanished due to increased population pressure combined with government policies

Main objective of agricultural policies has been increasing production and productivity to improve food security and autonomy combined with exports to world market



All countries have engaged in a process of 'modernization' of agriculture by applying Green Revolution agricultural practices (monocropping, hybrid seeds, intensive use of chemical inputs)

GR practices have been promoted through public policies

Private fertilizer & pesticide companies have been established and connected to farmers

Impacts on environment (deforestation, contaminations, loss of biodiversity), on long-term sustainability (soil fertility, water resources) and human health not taken into account



A shift towards sustainable agriculture & agroecology



In the **2000s**, “modern agro-ecology” initiatives largely pushed by national and international NGOs as part of a global movement that spread across the region

Sustainability has been climbing up in the political agenda and agroecological principles have been progressively included into public policies in the CLMV countries, in varying degrees and paces



Vietnam: First to be confronted with GR consequences (& facing end of subsidized chemical input supplies) → Adopting AE policies (late 1990's)

Myanmar: Latest to address sustainable farming following country opening (2010s')



Main reasons for the shift towards SA/AE:

- Growing awareness of policy makers about negative impacts of GR model and its “limits”
- Influence of international organizations (FAO for IPM), research centers (CIRAD & ICRAF for CA & AF), donors, CSOs' & private sector (OA in Cambodia & Laos)
- Impact of climate change and need for adaptation (priority for CLMV countries)
- Rising market opportunities for safer and organic products combined with consumers growing concern over food safety



Different levels of AE inclusion in public policies across the region





Inclusion of sustainable agriculture principles in the **framework documents** (national strategies and policies for agriculture)

- Awareness of negative impacts and limitations of conventional agriculture model (GR)
- Willingness to promote a more sustainable agriculture
- Especially for Cambodia & Lao PDR

Implementation of **projects & programs** for specific territories, led by or with a full participation of public institutions, often with funding / technical support from international institutions / donors

- Increased awareness towards the need for conducive policies to more sustainable agriculture
- IPM widely supported by FAO in Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam
- CA supported by French government & CIRAD in Lao PDR and Cambodia



Effective integration of sustainable issues and AE principles in specific policies and regulations

- OA standards in Laos, SRI policy in Cambodia, IPM or VAC in Vietnam, Community forestry & AF in Myanmar
- But often limited & weak implementation leading to limited impacts of these policies
- In some cases, more engagement (and efficiency) at sub-national level (Vietnam → SRI actively promoted provincial level)





Several common hindrances to promoting AE across the region

Despite clear changes in agricultural policies, promoting AE is hindered by:

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- Conventional intensification practices, based on intensive use of chemical inputs & specialization still considered as the way forwards to increased production and exports
- Little or no regulation & control over chemical pesticides: intensive advertising campaigns from agrochemical companies, prohibited pesticides illegally imported and sold at low price to farmers





- Laws on foreign investments (Lao PDR), Decree on State land concessions (Cambodia), promotion of cash crops... tend to increase practices contradictory to AE principles
- Government structure not favorable to AE as agriculture, forestry and fisheries depend of several ministries (especially Myanmar)

Conclusion



Agricultural policies in the region have been increasingly integrating some AE principles over the past decade

But, public policies and regulations are still mainly promoting Green Revolution packages

Promoting more efficiently AE principles in agriculture policies would require a coordinated and regional approach for an AE transition of the whole agricultural sector (ASEAN level)



Building capacities for such transition is a key issue:

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- AE principles should be fully integrated in relevant curriculum in basic education system, Technical Vocational Education and Trainings, agriculture universities and technical colleges
- Reviewing the National Extension Approach to support shifting from Green Revolution packages to AE principles
- Increasing consumers involvement for weighing on public policies (growing concern over agriculture products safety)



At **regional level**, more emphasis should be put on the “**green economy**” and on the market opportunities offered by organic products / safer AE products in general





To go further...

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