



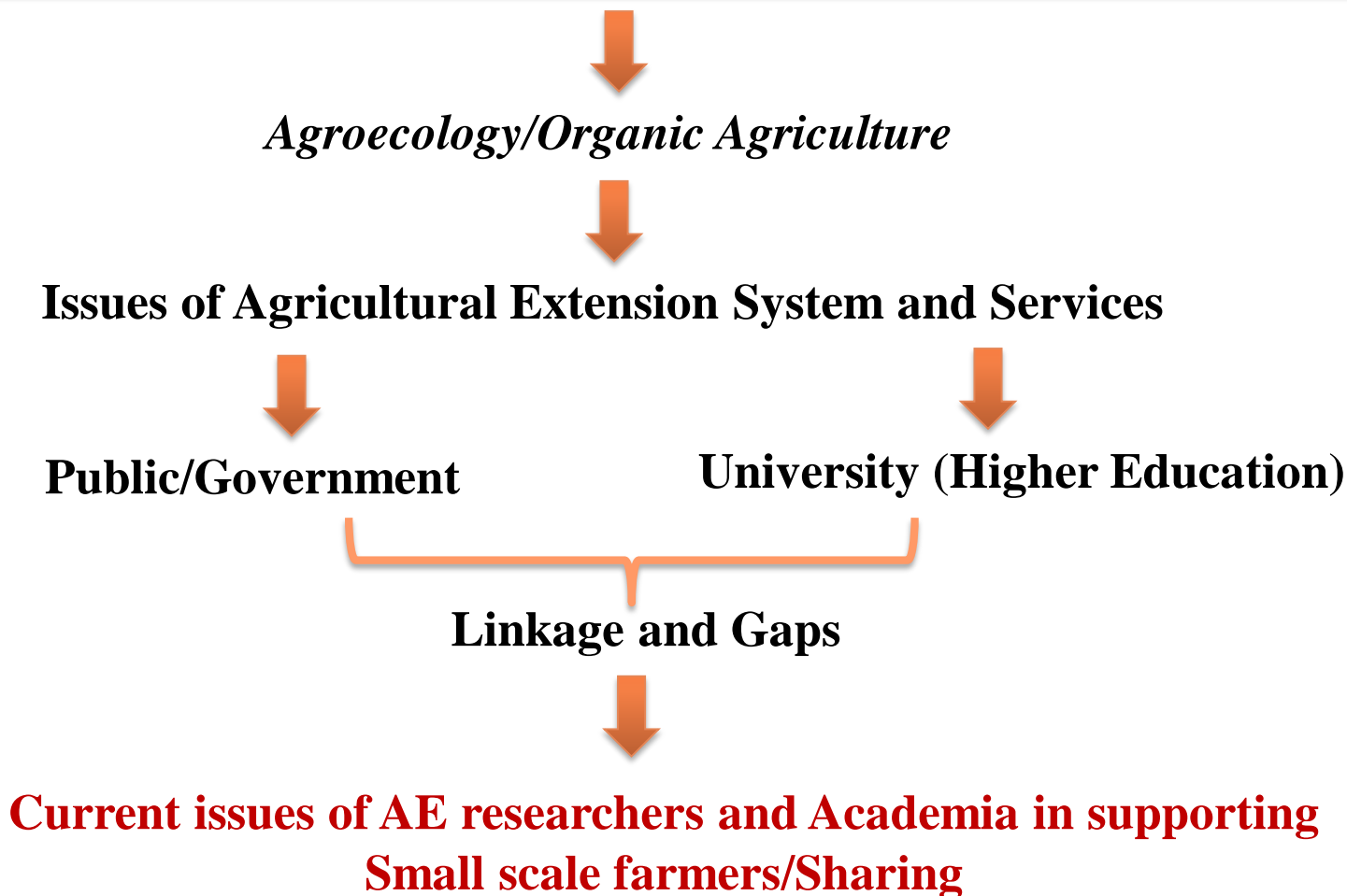
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# **Higher Education and Agricultural Extension Services in Thailand:**

## ***Current Situation and Future Recommendations***

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**“Mapping and assessing University-based Farmer Extension Services  
in ASEAN through an Agro-Ecological / Organic Lens”**



## **Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI) Expert Group on Higher Education for Sustainable Agriculture (HESA) in Southeast Asia 2016**

- There is inadequate focus on social, ecological and socioeconomic analyses or equity issues while much research and teaching focuses more on crop production.
- Adequate documentation of courses, programs, students, faculty, budgets and more is needed so we can better analyze strengths, weaknesses and needs.
- To counter historical bias in universities to research Thailand's Office of the Higher Education Commission, Ministry of Education is now setting new priorities for budgets that support more service and less research.
- Enhance academic services on sustainable agriculture and provide sufficient tools for both universities and communities.
- Provide training for government extension officials and other government staff. Precise and up-to-date information and knowledge is necessary to help farmers.

# Thai Agricultural Sector

- One of the main contributor to the country's GDP (9.1% in 2015)
- Thailand has total population of about 68 millions by which 25 millions are the people that engaged in agricultural sector (approx. 38% of total population) (OAE, 2016)
- Majority of Thai farmers living in rural areas and often associated with problems of poverty
- One of the contributing factor to farmers' poverty is the lack of appropriate knowledge from an efficient production and farming.
- Therefore, proper farmers's Agricultural Extension System and Services (AESS) is required to help the farmers

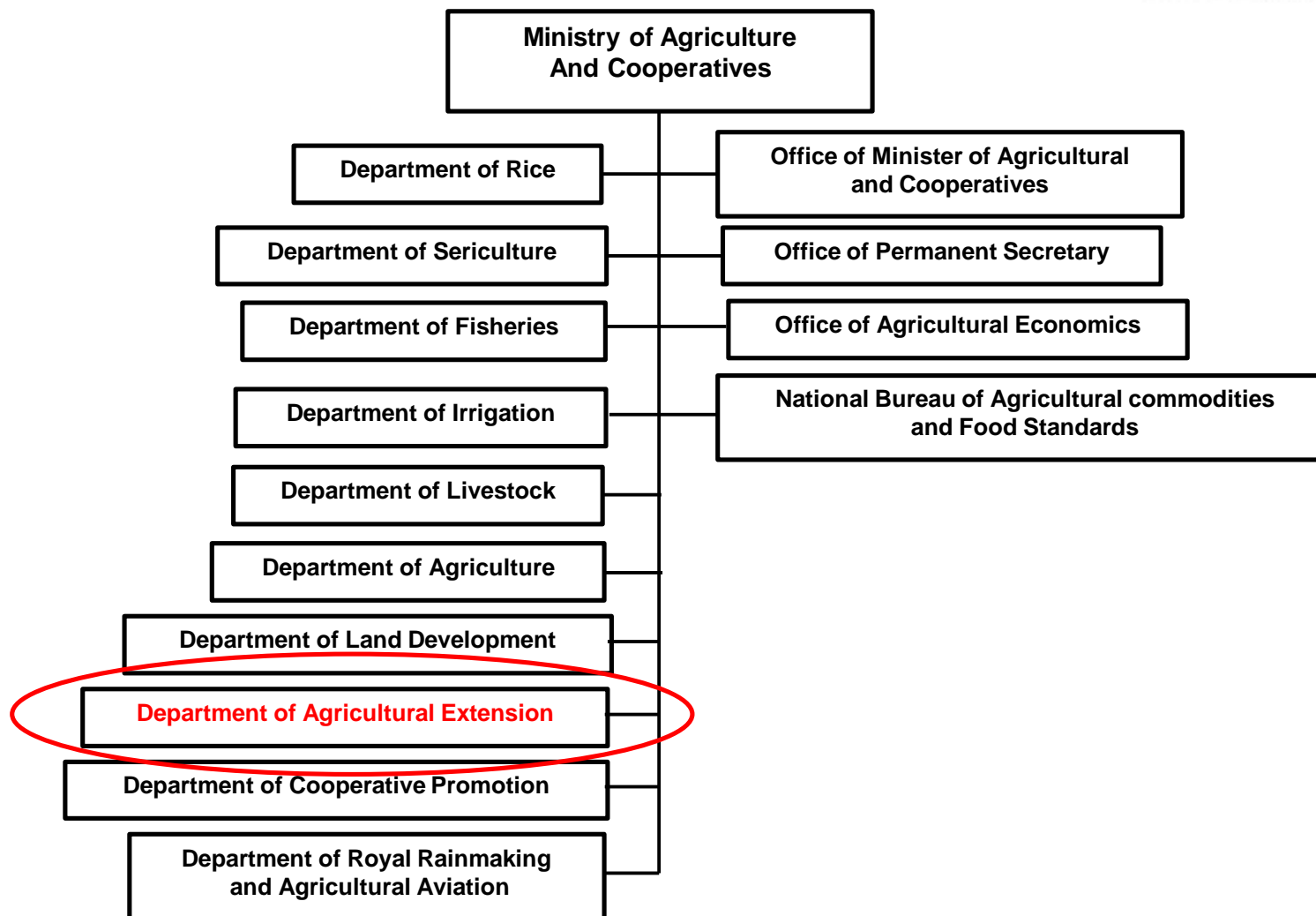
# Main Actors in Thai AEES

## 1. Government Sector:

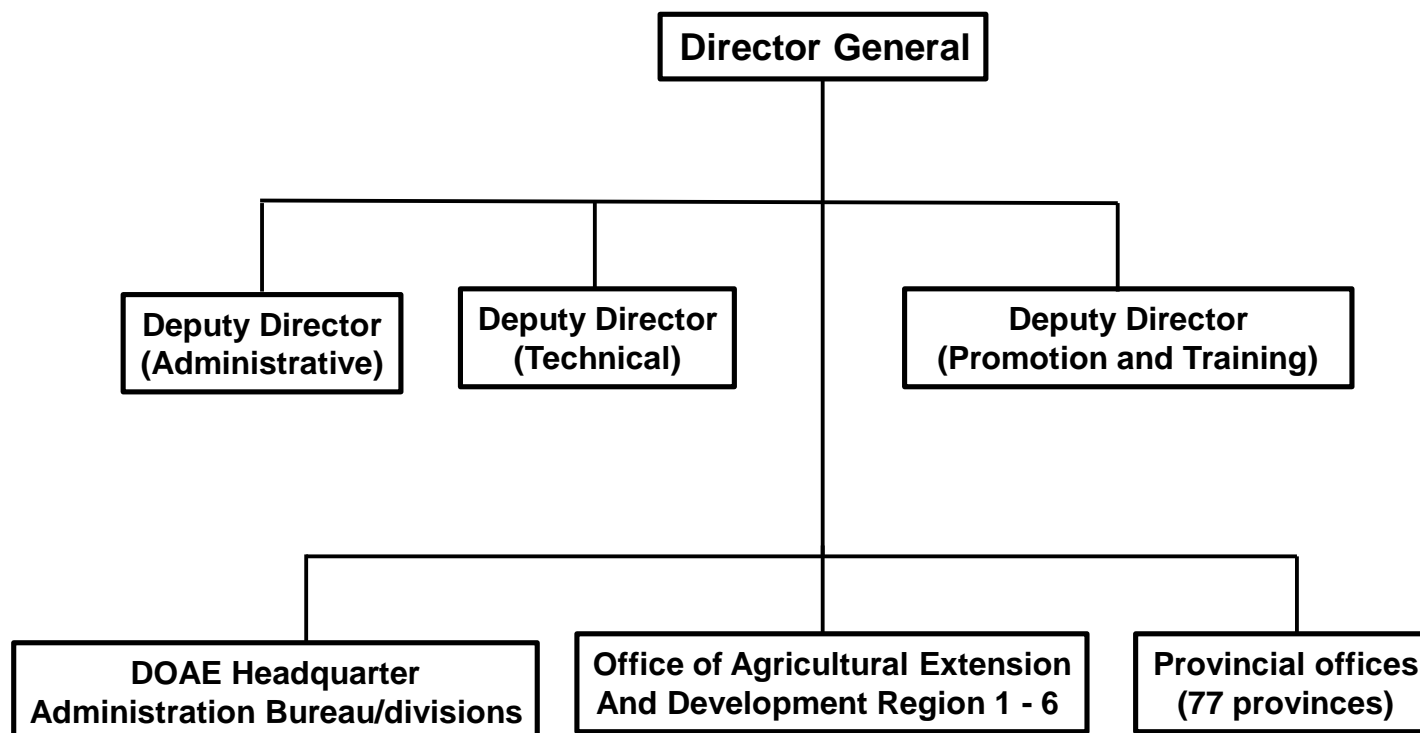
- Department of Agricultural Extension (DOAE), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC); DOAE has its officials in every province.
- Other Departments

## 2. Private Sector: NGOs, Private organizations

## 3. Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) (e.g. Universities)



## Organization structure of DOAE



# Higher Education and Agricultural Extension Services (AES)

- There are more than 120 HEIs in Thailand.
- About 52 universities having program and curriculum in ‘Agriculture’ but not all institutes having the program or courses in AES
- Many departments and faculty are doing their own extension and services, because of the existing gap and absence of linkage between HE and governmental units i.e. do their own extension services.



# Higher Education and Agricultural Extension Services (AES) (Cont.)

- *Findings from the First National Consultation (August 2016)*
  - Gap/Detachment between Education Institutes and Government's Agricultural Extension Department
  - Segregation of knowledge and expertise
  - 'Fragmented Centralization' i.e. Public sector is highly centralized

## Higher Education and Agricultural Extension Services (AES) (Cont.)

- Lack of systematic channel or means to allow direct cooperation between HEI and government.
- No systematic program/or link that could allow universities' researchers to apply their research output to farmers.
- Universities normally performed their own outreach or area-based AES, based on their university strategy and current projects => *ad hoc*

# Other related issues in AESS

- **Human resources**

1. Government' DOAE and other related units

- Skilled AE officials
- Officials with limited man-power but multiple tasks and Lack of DOAE officials' training (*Nelles and Visetnoi, JAEE 2016*)
- Education/knowledge and ability to examine issues

2. Education Institutes

- Education institutes are also facing a problem in producing university graduates and experts to work in the field of agricultural extension, both, in terms of course contents and training.
- Reduction in no. of students enrolled in Extension Department
- Reduction in structure, contents, courses and ability to integrate knowledge of students etc.

# Higher Education (HE) and Agricultural Extension Services (AES)

Types of Extension and Services in Thai HEIs	Characteristics and Drawbacks
Project-based(driven)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Depends on budget and researcher's own interest/expertise</li><li>- Often lack of continuity, not sustainable</li><li>- Only benefit small specific group of people</li><li>- Often lack of follow-up</li></ul>
Area-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Model/ Case</li><li>- Policy-dependent</li></ul>

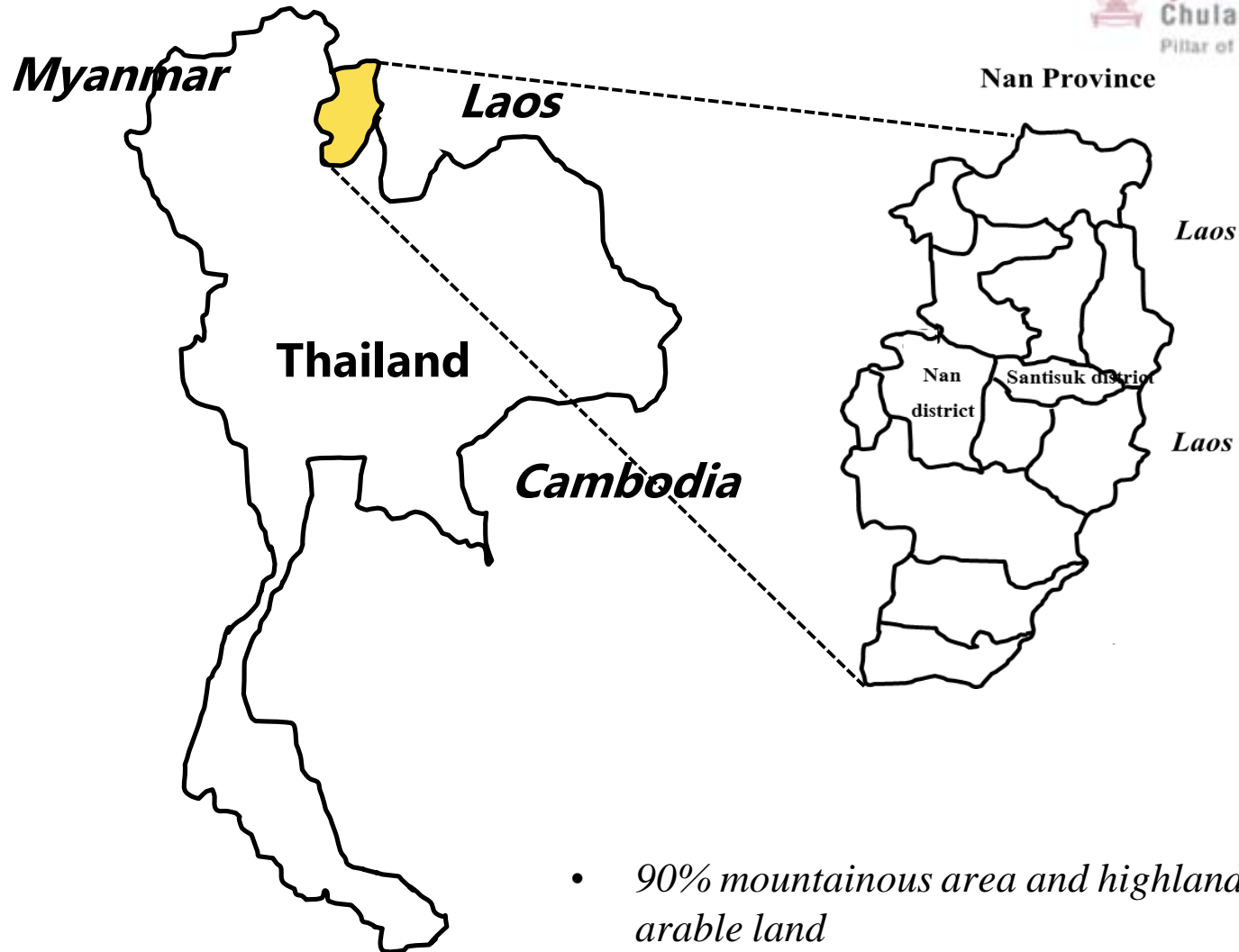
# AESS in Thai HEIs

**Example:** Chulalongkorn University  
Extension services = ‘Academic Services’  
(*i.e. Research output application to community*)

## Missions:

- Different fields of expertise/discipline
- Organize trainings/ Seminars / Technology transfer for government and private sectors
- Two Center of Learning Network for the Region (CLNR) in 2 provinces; Saraburi and Nan Provinces
  - Local/Area-based academic services

# CU-Learning Centre Nan Province



- *90% mountainous area and highlands; only 10% arable land*
- *Problem of deforestation for cultivation*
- *High level of agrochemical use especially herbicides*





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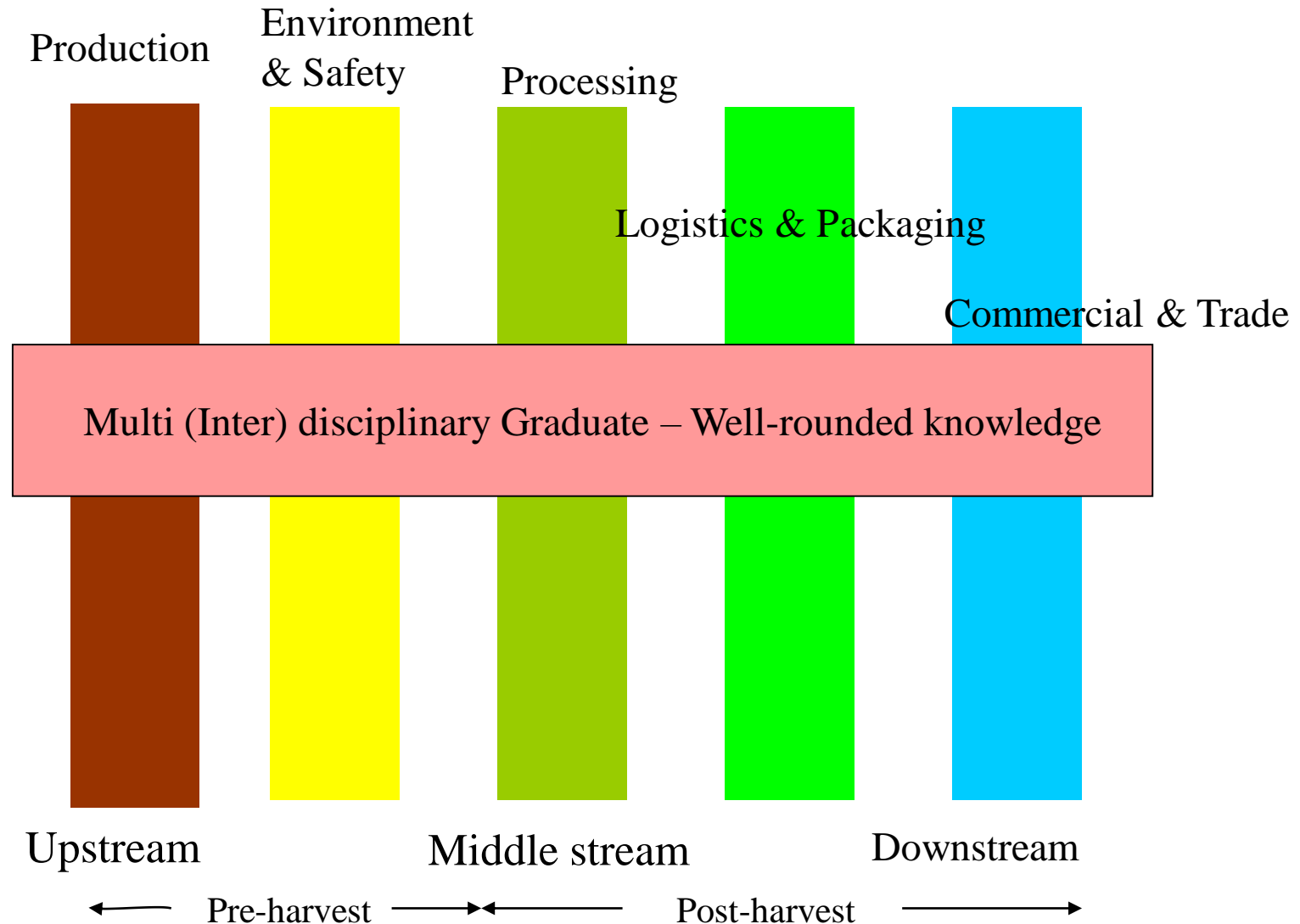


# Chulalongkorn University

## School of Agricultural Resources (CUSAR)

- Undergraduate Program, established in 2009
- New generation farmers with management skills and volunteer mind
- Most students came from rural areas.
- Focus on community (rural) agriculture and entrepreneurship, not serving industry
- Encourage students and graduates to go back to serve their community
- Learning centre in 'Nan' province

# Philosophy of Agricultural Entrepreneur Graduates





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Types of Extension and Services in Thai HEIs	Gaps / Drawbacks
Area (Province)-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Mostly depends on researcher's own interest/expertise</li><li>- Often lack of continuity because high variations in terms of projects</li><li>- Project-based (driven)</li><li>- Not only for farmers</li></ul>
Problem-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To meet people's need</li><li>- More sustainable/ continuous</li><li>- Suitable for the locals</li></ul>

## **Future Research and Recommendations**

- Promotion of community or area-based research and participatory action research (PAR), enhancement of community engagement research.
- Create mean or channel that allow better cooperation between researchers and governmental units to meet the needs of farmers
- Setting up a national center of excellence for sustainable agriculture to gather experts and scholars for accumulation of knowledge for farmers and the promotion of AEISS to cover the whole value chain.
- More study is needed to better understand specific programs, courses and extension services Research on re-assessing curriculum, program and training in extension program in Thai universities
- National agricultural, agricultural education and extension services planning should be more evidence-based, small-farmer friendly and supportive of agro-ecological and organic agriculture (OA) alternatives to conventional farming.



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