



Cambodia Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC)

Summary of Report on Social Media Use in Cambodia's Agriculture

May 2019

CAVAC Summary report on Social Media use among stakeholders in Cambodia's agriculture sector

Background

Cambodia's agriculture sector is one of the pillars of the economy, accounting for approximately **23%** of the Kingdom's GDP in **2017**¹, and employing some **60%** of the Kingdom's total labour force. The World Bank ranks Cambodia's agriculture sector as one of the fastest growing in the world.²

Concurrent to this growth in agriculture, social media use has exploded in Cambodia since **2011**, and there are now more than **8 million** active monthly users of Facebook across the Kingdom.

In **2018**, CAVAC released a report on the use of mobile phones among farmers which found that **52%** percent of the respondents in the study used social media platforms like Facebook to try to find information on market prices for their goods, but only **15%** said they actually found the information they sought.

To understand why so few stakeholders in the agriculture sector were able to access relevant information on social media despite many having the tools to do so, CAVAC contacted Cambodia consulting agency, QED, to conduct research on the access to agricultural information on social media in Cambodia, and their work constitutes the bulk of this report.

The research concludes that the *lack of expertise* and *adequate knowledge* of social media and social media advertising is an impediment to building more active and engaged communities of stakeholders in the agriculture sector and recommend that efforts be made to raise awareness on the power of social media like Facebook as a tool for improving community building and knowledge sharing in agriculture across the Kingdom.

Considering the importance of agriculture in Cambodia, the researchers were expecting more agriculture-specific resources to be available on social media, or on the internet overall. In contrast, the analysis found that there were *not many* resources online and most have a

¹ Data from the Ministry of Economy and Finance in Cambodia

² Source: Cambodia Overview - World Bank Group

commercial purpose, such as promoting products and services.

The research found that the **most popular resources** are related to marketplaces and prices, followed by fertilisers and machinery companies, along with communities sharing general information on agriculture.

However, the research highlighted that while the *majority* of the **questions and enquiries from the community** are related to technical support for Cambodia-specific farming activities, there was a *shortage* of relevant information provided as answers, with majority of the content shared by existing Pages are related to a particular company, its products, services and promotions. While many of these Pages did provide some global industry insights, there is no dedicated resource(eg. staff of the company dedicated as an administrator of the FB page/group) responding to the particular needs expressed by the audience.

Even though the researchers observed a *lack* of **accurate content** as well as in the **community management**, they noted that many pages are putting a lot of effort sharing different content types, responding appropriately to comments and providing quality information to their followers. The fact that **12%** of the pages analysed have invested in Facebook advertising tool shows a willingness by some stakeholders in the agriculture sector to use social media to improve the visibility of the content and broaden access to the information.

Approach

The researchers identified *39 Facebook Pages* and *9 Facebook Groups* that relate directly to agriculture and examined the groups and pages to determine the spread and quality of different content and topics, the size of the communities, the frequency and nature of interactions, the use of advertising, and the quality and responsiveness of the community management.

Analysis overview

The Facebook Groups and Pages examined for this analysis are managed by *private companies, organisations, government institutions* or *public figures* - with the *majority* managed by **companies that trade in agricultural inputs** (fertilisers, seeds and equipment). Other Groups and Pages are run by **commercial entities** and feature general agricultural information, market trends, and particular topics such as exporting rice and cassava, while some Groups and Pages have

been **set up by public figures or organisations**, and carry official announcements and regulatory updates.

Size of Communities

The size of the Facebook communities that were analyzed varies broadly with *some* Pages having **more than 1 million followers** but *most* having **less than 2,000**. The **total number of followers** of all the Facebook Pages analyzed was *more* than **5 million people**. By comparison, there were *far fewer* Facebook Group subscribers with a total of **34,000** members averaging **3,800** members per Group - which is negligible compared to other popular Facebook Groups in Cambodia. The decision to start a Facebook Page or a Facebook Group is key - with both having pros and cons. *Facebook Groups* are more open to discussion and sharing but limited content curation can be a challenge with Group members able to post irrelevant content. Content on Facebook Groups *cannot* be promoted so the reach is *limited* to Group members. *Facebook Pages* are curated by individuals or companies and are more likely to have a clearer editorial line and are often used to showcase products or insights in a professional manner. However, Facebook Pages need to be *actively managed* to be successful by using Facebook advertising to ensure widespread reach for their content.

Content

The analysis revealed that the content shared on curated *Facebook Pages* tends to be *quite limited* in its **design** and **copywriting** with *very few* Pages crafting their own content themselves, instead relying on screenshots or very basic pictures with limited relevant information shared in picture captions. *Facebook Groups* content was identified as being *even lower in standard* since Group members can share **miscellaneous** and **irrelevant information** in the Groups. Producing good content using different formats (photo carousels, videos, gifs etc.) is *essential* to maximising reach and engagement through Facebook.

Understanding the use of Facebook's advertising platform

The analysis also underlined gaps in the understanding and use of Facebook's advertising platform to promote content and disseminate it to the widest possible audience, with only **12%** of the Pages analyzed actively using Facebook advertising to promote their content. Within that **12%**, many of the Pages *did not* follow *Facebook's advertising guidelines* thus limiting the impact of their advertising budget. The most frequent issues limiting the impact of advertising were post designs which feature text in **more than 20%** of the frame which *cannot* be boosted under

Facebook guidelines, posts with **overly long captions** containing too much information, or posts featuring a call to action button that is not relevant to the content.

Frequency of posts

The frequency with which *Facebook Pages* share new content was also reviewed and showed a broad discrepancy, with the *majority* of Pages either posting *very frequently* (more than 5 posts a week) or posting *rarely* (less than once a week). *Facebook Groups* followed a *similar pattern* with some Groups seeing several posts a day from Group members while others saw less than a post a week.

Interactions

The researchers also looked at interactions (likes, comments and shares) between Page followers and Group members and the Pages and Groups they participate in. It was noted that on the *majority* of Facebook Pages and Groups, interactions were *very low* especially for comments and questions. However some *professionally run Pages* which showcase agricultural businesses and which use advertising to enhance the reach and engagement of their content (i.e. SPK1 and Kubota Phnom Penh) did see **thousands of interactions** with their Page followers including **comments, likes and shares**. Topics that elicited the most interactions revolve around *practical information* on crop performance, pricing, promotions and requests for tips on best use of inputs like fertilisers.

Quality of Community Management

The quality of community management was also analysed - looking at how Page managers responded to questions and comments posted to their Pages in terms of **time of response, tone of response and quality of response**. Only around **40%** of the Pages analysed responded to their followers questions or comments in a *timely manner* (1-2 days) with around **60%** responding *slowly* (more than 2 days) or *not responding at all*. The tone of response was similarly divided with about **40%** of the responses being judged *appropriate and professional* in their tone with **60%** judged to be *uninformative and casual* in tone. There was an even wider gap in the quality of response with only around **30%** of responses providing *clear and actionable* information and around **70%** providing *little or no useful* information in response to the comment or question. While the researchers judged the community management efforts of the pages they analysed as adequate they recommended that more effort from community managers would see their Pages perform better and engage their followers more.

Social Media Glossary

Facebook page

A Facebook page is a public profile created for businesses, brands, celebrities, causes, and other organizations. Pages do not have “friends”, unlike personal profiles, but gain “fans” and “followers”. Fans are people who decide to “like” the page while followers are people who decide to “follow” the page without necessarily liking it, and vice versa.

Facebook group

A Facebook group is a page that any Facebook user can create that others can join, allowing group members to interact based on a common interest, affiliation or association. Facebook groups may be open to anyone, or joined by invitation only. A Facebook group allows members to create a community by promoting, sharing and discussing common topics.

Facebook post

A Facebook post can be a status update, a picture or other media that Facebook users publish on their Facebook page or "wall."

Facebook status (or Facebook status update)

A Facebook status is a update feature which allows users to discuss their thoughts, whereabouts, or share informations with friends.

Facebook ads

Facebook ads are content that a Facebook page has paid to promote through Facebook, Instagram and other placements that are connected to the platform (Messenger, Audience Network, Whatsapp, etc.)

Facebook Ads Policies

These policies provide guidance on what types of ad content are allowed. When advertisers runs an ad, each ad is reviewed against these policies. Before ads show up on Facebook or Instagram, they're reviewed to make sure they meet Facebook Advertising Policies.

Facebook will check your ad's images, text, targeting, and positioning, in addition to the content on your ad's landing page if your ad redirects to a website.

Main policies notably include:

1 - Text in Ad images

Excessive text in ad images may result in your ad reaching fewer people or not running at all.

2 - Prohibited content

- Community Standards: Ads must not violate Facebook Community Standards.
- Illegal product or services: Ads must not constitute, facilitate, or promote illegal products, services or activities.
- Discriminatory practices: Ads must not discriminate or encourage discrimination against people based on personal attributes such as race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, disability, medical or genetic condition.

3 - Positioning

- Accuracy: Ads must clearly represent the company, product, service, or brand that is being advertised.

Other policies can be consulted here: <https://www.facebook.com/policies/ads/>

(Sources: Facebook)

Engagement and interactions:

Facebook reactions

Facebook reactions are Facebook's emojis that allow Facebook users to react to Facebook posts with six different emotions: Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad and Angry.

Facebook comments

A Facebook comment is when Facebook users submit a comment on any piece of content on Facebook. By default, comments are made public so everyone can see.

Facebook private messages

Sending a private message allows Facebook users to have a private conversation (unknown to the public, contrary to Facebook comment) with other Facebook users such as a Facebook page.

Facebook reviews

A star rating system that lets Facebook users share their experience (whether positive or negative) on Facebook pages.

Community Management

Community Management is what happens after and beyond your social media publishing. It's part of customer service, part listening to the internet, and part being active in discussions that relate to your brand.

Static design

Visual content that remains the same like a picture.

Dynamic design

Visual content that moves like a video or GIF.

AGRICULTURE FACEBOOK ANALYSIS



39 FACEBOOK PAGES
AND **9** FACEBOOK
GROUPS WERE STUDIED

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A TOTAL OF **5 MILLION**
FOLLOWERS AND **34,000**
GROUP MEMBERS



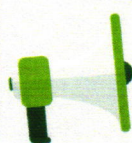
52% OF RESPONDENTS USE
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM
TO SOURCE FOR MARKET
PRICE INFORMATION
BUT ONLY 15% ACTUALLY FOUND
THE INFORMATION THEY SOUGHT

INTERACTIONS

MAJORITY OF AGRICULTURE-RELATED
FACEBOOK GROUPS AND PAGES HAVE
VERY LOW INTERACTIONS WHILE
PROFESSIONALLY RUN PAGES SEE
THOUSANDS OF INTERACTIONS



ADVERTISEMENT



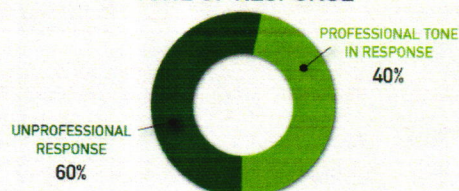
12% OF ALL PAGES USE
FACEBOOK ADVERTISING
TO PROMOTE CONTENT
WHICH MANY DID NOT FOLLOW
FACEBOOK GUIDELINES

COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

TECHNICAL AND QUALITATIVE RESPONSE



TONE OF RESPONSE



TIME RESPONSE

