



APIRAS Regional Learning Workshop

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1. MELA Introduction



Where is MELA
located on the
World Map?
And who are we?



MELA history and milestone



- Workshop on 'Reaching the Millions', funded by SDC and organised by Helvetas in cooperation with GFRAS, that took place in Hanoi in March 2015

MELA is a Learning Alliance in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)



MELA Vision and Mission

- The vision of MELA is to better serve millions of small farmers in the Region, so that rural families may overcome poverty and have better livelihoods.
 - The mission of MELA is to be a network for all stakeholders in agriculture and rural development in the Mekong Region to continuously learn and share knowledge and best practices with each other and from outside sources in the area of advisory services for sustainable agriculture, marketing and rural development.

MELA Functions and Regional networking



MELA Functions

- a. Providing voice and advocacy within regional policy dialogues and promote improved investment in RAS;
- b. Supporting the development and synthesis of evidence-based approaches and policies for improving the effectiveness of RAS; and
- c. Strengthening RAS actors through facilitating interaction and networking.

Regional networking

- Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service (GFRAS)
- Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Service (APIRAS)
- ASEAN Working Group on Agriculture Training and Extension (AWGATE)

MELA Outputs



Date/Year	MELA Meeting	Theme of Meeting	Place
26 th -28 th August, 2015	Inaugural Meeting	Working mechanism and Charter discussion	Vientiane, Laos
22 th -24 th June 2016	2 nd Meeting	Women and Youth participation in agriculture	Yangon, Myanmar
30 th Oct - 1 st Nov, 2017	3 rd Meeting	Innovation and future of youth in agriculture	Siem Reap, Cambodia
20 th – 24 th August, 2018	4 th Meeting	Young Farmer and Green Agriculture	Bangkok, Thailand
10 th – 14 th Sep, 2019	5 th Meeting	Smart Farmer and Climate Smart Agriculture	Danang, Vietnam



2. Country Fora (CF) Laos: Sub Sector Working Group on Farmer and Agribusiness (SSWG-FAB)

Scope of the SSWG-FAB

- Conduct capitalization studies on pertinent issues on stallholders service and agribusiness development;
- Identify opportunities and alternatives for promoting development of RAS and agribusiness to empower smallholders;
- Organise Information sharing (including online forums) and networking to build consensus on emerging issue within GoL, donor, communities and other relevant stakeholders on stallholders agribusiness development;
- Support SWG-ARD and liaise with other relevant SSWG and/or Network to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and integration of cross cutting issues;



Challenges and Opportunities

Country Level Challenges (SSWG-FAB)

- Policy making process is long and complex
- Staff turnover among SSWG members
- Multisectoral coordination is difficult (ie. silo thinking)

Regional Challenges (MELA)

- COVID travel restrictions
- Different national priorities
- Availability of funds to host meeting

Opportunities at both levels:

- SSWG / MELA both effective in sharing information and experiences;
- Many donors and organization interested to participate;
- Documentation of best practices from Laos have contributed to evidence-based decision-making at regional and global levels

Next Steps



Regional

- For MELA, we plan to organize the 6th MELA meeting in Laos which a them on climate smart extension through young entrepreneurship.

National

- For SSWG (CF), we will continue as secretariat for SSWG-FAB, and normally we organize a meeting twice per year.



Thank you very much!