

Project to Study Agrarian Policies in Selected Developing Countries

Final Report

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IC Net Limited

Project to study agrarian policies in selected developing countries (from April to November 2015)

Summary Report

Background

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries shares the view that it is one of the most urgent tasks of the international society to increase the food production for resolving the hunger and poverty in the world, in particular in developing countries, and considers it important to discuss ways for the stable increase of the global food production. It has observed, however, that basic and objective information necessary for such discussion is still missing. Therefore, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has decided to launch a project to study agrarian policies in ten selected developing countries from April to November 2015, and has designated ICNet Ltd. as agency executing the project. The project study was conducted to analyze how agrarian policies in these countries are recognized by farmers and how they are implemented to know whether the agrarian policies meet the real needs of farmers and farmers' groups. The findings of the project study may be used as a basis for further discussion on strategies to resolve the hunger and poverty in the world.

Methodology of the project study and countries selected

The purpose of the project study is to elaborate policy proposals by analyzing gaps identified between the measures taken by the Government in its implementation of the agrarian policy and the actual needs of small-scale farmers. The project study was conducted according to the following procedure:

- (1) Clarify measures taken by the Government in the implementation of its agrarian policy through interviews to Government officials working in the section related to agrarian policy as well as officers of international organizations and/or donor countries.
- (2) Clarify actual needs of farmers to improve their life, through interviews with farmers and/or representatives of farmers' organizations as well as experts of NGOs working for rural development.
- (3) Compare the results of (1) and (2) to find whether there are gaps between the measures taken by the Government in its implementation of the national agrarian

policy and the actual needs of the small-scale farmers.

(4) Formulate proposals on the basis of analysis of gaps.

The project study has been conducted in the following 10 countries:

- Africa: Ethiopia, Madagascar and Mozambique
- Asia: Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar and Laos
- Central/South America: Bolivia, Paraguay and Cuba

For each country a report is prepared, consisting of the following four sections:

- Overview of agriculture of the country
- Overview of the agrarian policy and its objectives
- Recognition by farmers of the agrarian policy
- Gaps identified between the measures taken by the Government in its implementation of the agrarian policy and the actual needs of the small-scale farmers and policy proposals on the basis of analysis of gaps

Findings in the countries selected

Ethiopia

- Half of the population is small farmers. Cereals are cultivated in plateaus while slash-and-burn farming and animal production are conducted in the other areas. Indigenous crops such as teff are produced.
- The policy is in accordance to the “The Agricultural Development Led Industrialization,” where the development strategies encompass the dissemination of appropriate agricultural techniques, improvement of farmers’ land use, improvement of agricultural in-put material and infrastructure, export-oriented agriculture.
- Extension workers play the central role for the implementation of the agrarian policy. However, their capacity should be strengthened to ensure sufficient extension services.
- It is recommended to introduce a support system for the establishment of value-chains targeting high-level farmers and to improve the level of medium-level farmers to enable them to access to value-chains.

Madagascar

- Social infrastructure, agricultural input material, agricultural tools are all lacking. Agriculture remains at a primitive stage and vulnerable to natural disasters caused by climate change. Rice is the most important staple crop but its self-sufficiency has not been achieved.
- The agrarian policy aims at the achievement of self-sufficiency of rice, 50% reduction of the population of the poor and 40% increase of the income of the poor.
- The system of the dissemination of information has not been sufficiently developed and farmers are not sufficiently educated. Consequently, information is not shared between the Government and farmers.
- To alleviate poverty, it is recommended to provide farmers with simple farm equipment, to construct main roads and to improve farm equipment/machines powered by animals.

Mozambique

- Vast savage areas exist, meaning that there is a high potential to enlarge the agricultural production. The agricultural productivity remains low as the yield is low. Cassava is the main crop but is consumed by farmers. The Government plans to increase the production of cash crops.
- Main strategies for agricultural development include the improvement of the quantity of agricultural products, productivity of agriculture and competitiveness, introduction of agricultural infrastructure, modernization of agriculture, and enlargement of investment in agriculture.
- The dissemination of agrarian policy is not even and only a limited number of farmers can receive benefits of assistance provided by the Government in the form of support and/or training.
- As the procedure to receive the right to use the land (DUAT) is complicated and takes a long time, many small farmers are not in a position to apply for DUAT. Thus a support system is required to facilitate small farmers to receive DUAT.

Vietnam

- In various locations including deltas, plateaus and central dry regions, a variety of crops are cultivated, including rice and coffee, of which the volume of the production is at the top of the world. On the other hand there are poor farmers in the country.
- Tam Nong is applied as the overall national agrarian policy which includes the

programs for the modernization of agriculture, introduction of infrastructure, improvement of the quality of rural life. Under Tam Nong, the New Rural Development Program has been developed, focusing on the poverty alleviation in rural areas.

- The ruling of the Government reaches the bottom of the society, but it does not necessarily meet the needs of farmers. Capacity building is required for Government officials and farmers working at the grass-root level.
- As a great potential exists, it is recommended to introduce effective value-chains to add values to agricultural products, to utilize effectively international private investment and to introduce a cooperation strategy to facilitate such investment.

Indonesia

- The country consists of the world-largest number of islands. There is a considerable inter-regional discrepancy between Java and the other regions and its resolution through technology transfer is required. The self-sufficiency of rice was achieved in the past but it cannot be maintained until now.
- The achievement of self-sufficiency is the most important objective of the agrarian policy. In the Strategic Plan of Agriculture 2015-2019, it is planned to achieve sustainable agriculture through the production of high-value agricultural products and the introduction of a bio-industry system.
- Discrepancy exists between Java where the agrarian policy is well disseminated and the other regions, being a problem of dissemination of the policy and the equality of chance.
- It is recommended to encourage investment for the introduction of value chains and to improve the capacity of extension workers and farmers to increase farm income.

Myanmar

- There is enough land where the main crops planted are rice in the delta regions, pulses in the central dry areas and vegetables in the Eastern plateaus, respectively. The country possesses suitable conditions for the production of various crops. However, the delayed introduction of infrastructure is the main factor for the low productivity.
- The Sixth Five Year Short Term Plan has been elaborated as a mid-term development program, which includes three main objectives: sufficient food and nutrition, socio-economic development of rural areas, increase of the competitiveness of agricultural products on the international market.

- The agricultural technique which the Government intends to introduce does not meet the needs of farmers. The Government is not capable of resolving the poverty problem of minor ethnic groups.
- Because of insufficient in-put material, it is necessary to produce it in the country, where private investment is desired. Public-private partnership is required to promote the processing of agricultural products and mechanization of agriculture.

Laos

- Agriculture is conducted in rain-fed fields. The most of the country is covered by mountains and land with a high acidity, which is not suitable for agricultural production. Food self-sufficiency has not been achieved, thus stable food supply is the most important political goal.
- The Seventh Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan identifies the goals of production of main agricultural crops. The most important policy issue on which the Government places importance is the introduction of “clean agriculture” including good agriculture practices (GAP) and organic farming and development of food value chain.
- Organic farming receives a high priority in the country’s agrarian policy and is generally supported by farmers. It should be examined, however, whether it will contribute to the increase of farm income.
- Many Governmental officials do not have sufficient knowledge necessary to achieve their responsibility. It is recommended to organize capacity building activities such as training for officials of the central and local Governments to acquire knowledge on food security, food hygiene, nutrition and value chain.

Bolivia

- There is a contrast between the plateau regions where small-scale farmers produce potatoes and cereals mainly for their own consumption and low-land plain regions where relatively large-scale farmers produce soybeans, sugarcane for export. In the highland indigenous crops such as quinoa are also cultivated.
- Under the leadership of the President of indigenous origin, agrarian policies are implemented, focusing on the promotion of domestic food consumption, the breeding of new varieties and conservation and utilization of traditional varieties as well as the conservation of agricultural land, in the framework of the Law on the Revolution of Communitarian Agricultural and Animal Production (Ley de la Revolución Productiva Comunitaria Agropecuaria).

- The recognition of agrarian policies are related to the distance between the Government and farmers concerned. There is a clear difference in the level of recognition between farmers in the plateau regions and the low-land plain regions.
- It is recommended to strengthen extension services to enhance the capacity of farmers, by expanding the coverage of services to cover not only technical areas but also farm management areas including finances. For the plateau regions, it is recommended to strengthen poverty alleviation measures and to introduce high value cash crops such as quinoa.

Paraguay

- The country is one of the most important exporters of soybean, maize and beef where most agricultural land belongs to large-scale farmers. To the contrary, small-scale farmers constitute the majority in number of the farmers. The disparity between the large-scale farmers and the small-scale farmers is the source of various political problems.
- The Framework of Agrarian Strategy 2014-2018 (Marco Estratégico Agrario 2014-2018) has been adopted as the guidelines focusing on the improvement of competitiveness of national agricultural products, the assurance of food security, the strengthening of family farm management and the countermeasures against climate change effects.
- As small-scale farmers receive information on agrarian policies through agricultural cooperatives and/or extension services, it is necessary to strengthen the functioning of this system. The Government seems to be capable of establishing national agrarian policies, but is not effective in implementing the policies.
- Both small-scale and large-scale farmers need to receive training in the area of farm management. It is recommended to activate extension services in order to strengthen the training in that area.

Cuba

- Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite States, the country has been changing its agrarian system from large-scale farming system based on mechanization and heavy use of agricultural input material to the organic farming system. Conversion from sugar cane cultivation to other crops is urgently required. The increase of productivity is also required to improve the food self-sufficiency level. Whereas the land belongs to the Government, the privatization of land use is on the way by granting the right to use land to cooperatives.

- The Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policies of the Party and Revolution (Lineamiento de la Política económica y social del Partido y la Revolución) of 2011 is the basis of the national agrarian policy. The provisions of the Guidelines are implemented in accordance to regulations called “Politica.”
- Agrarian policies are disseminated well in the whole population including farmers through channels of the organization of the Communist Party. As agrarian policies are implemented strictly in conformity to “Politica,” it is indispensable also for cooperatives to receive information on the government policies.
- The country faces an absolute shortage of agricultural input material such as seed, fertilizer, agricultural chemicals and machines. The normalization of the diplomatic relationship with the United States of America may change this situation. It is recommended to make full use of the energy of the private sector and to establish a system enabling it. It is also desirable to improve the technical support and extension services to facilitate this process.

Conclusion (1): Analysis of agrarian policy

Agrarian policies of developing countries

In all countries studied, agrarian policies exist, typically in the form of “5 year program.” In many cases in the process of establishing the agrarian policies, the Governments organize meetings with farmers and/or farmers groups to integrate farmers’ needs into the agrarian policies. Many countries received support from donor countries and/or international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The existing agrarian policies cover a wide range of areas where the Governmental action is required. Many Governments have not sufficient financial and human resources to implement the all areas identified in the agrarian policies, thus prioritization needs to be done. Some Governments such as Cuba and Bolivia have developed an agrarian policy associated with the Governments’ ideology.

Farmers’ needs

In general, farmers demand for support to inputs such as seed, fertilizer and agricultural chemicals and for a grant of loan. Requirement exists also for support for farmers to use legal instruments to defend themselves (for example right to land use). While small farmers expect supports from the Government, large farmers seek for independence from the Government intervention.

Acceptance of the agrarian policy

In general, farmers understand that “Agrarian policy” is “a concrete action to promote agriculture” offered by the Government. The direction of the agrarian policy is generally supported by farmers.

Conclusion (2) Proposals

For more effective dissemination of agrarian policy

In order to improve the dissemination of agrarian policies to local farmers, it is recommended to use local languages in parallel to the official language. Diversification of communication methods seem to be useful for example by using mobile phones. The role of the extension system and farmers’ organizations in the dissemination of the agrarian policy should be recognized and strengthened. Utilization of NGOs as a bridge between the administration and farmers should be also considered and the activities of NGOs should be supported. Pilot projects should be also used as a tool for the dissemination of the agrarian policy.

For assistance to developing countries

It is important to take into account different levels of farmers when planning and implementing an assistance project. Some projects such as the establishment of a value chain for export are only effective for advanced farmers while small subsistence farmers may rather need direct support to escape from poverty in the form of humanitarian aid. Special projects to facilitate the transition from poor farmers to advanced farmers need to be considered.

The establishment of the food value chain, appearing in many countries’ agrarian policies, should be achieved through cooperation of the public, private and academic sectors. The notion of “food safety” is emphasized in many countries and its realization requires assistance not only in the technical field such as the introduction of laboratories but also in the legal area such as the elaboration of regulations.

In order to add values to agricultural products, it is recommended to introduce environment friendly agriculture such as organic farming and good agricultural practices (GAP).

It is also recommended to develop appropriate agricultural input material such as agricultural tools or machinery, also using animal power, by using technical experiences of small and medium sized enterprises.

As the extension system needs to meet the requirements of small farmers, the strengthening and diversification of the extension system should be considered, also through cooperation with the private sector and NGOs.

As many farmers are not in a position to benefit from the existing legal instruments, support should be provided for farmers to receive legal protection, in particular for the right to land use.