

Activities of the Prolinnova–Cambodia Country Platform in 2018

1. Farmer-led innovation in community development

Prolinnova–Cambodia, especially CEDAC as the Country Platform coordinator, continued promoting farmer-led innovation development by introducing this idea into its projects. The key activities included farmer-led experimentation on various farming techniques in growing rice and vegetables and raising animals, which helped farmers reduce production costs, increase productivity and adapt to the current change in climate. As part of this process, field-day events on crop planting and harvesting were conducted in the rural villages, where local farmers could join to try the new farming techniques and also assess the experimental results, which led to wider dissemination in the communities. In 2018, five farmers experimented on organic fertilizer application on spring onion by comparing the effect of commercial organic fertilizer and their self-made compost tea. The plots with the compost tea provided higher yields (14% increase).



Farmers experimenting with compost tea application on spring onion showed 14% higher yields compared to use of commercial organic fertilizer (Photo credit: Yang Saing Koma)

CEDAC was also active in institutional innovations such as collective marketing of agricultural products and facilitation of interactions with input suppliers and local microfinance institutes to give farmers better prices for their agricultural products, lower prices of inputs and lower interest rate on loans for investing in their farming. This resulted in increased food security and income for the local farmers.

In 2018, CEDAC started promoting organic coffee produced by indigenous people in Mondulkiri by certifying organic standards and facilitating marketing with four private coffee shops that are currently becoming popular in the country. This helps around 20 indigenous farmers gain better prices for their coffee, which contributes to enhancing their livelihoods and the practice of permanent cropping in place of slash-and-burn farming.



CEDAC supports indigenous people with organic certification and market facilitation, which brings good prices for their products (Photo credits: Tong Chantheang / Tath Sok)

2. Hosting student internship

CEDAC hosted three students from the University of Virginia, USA, namely, Isabella Dillon, Anna Shaw and Hang Trinh, who came to learn about farmer-led innovations that lead to increased and sustainable productivity for local Cambodian farmers. The students spent one month learning about soil conditions by using a test toolkit, climate-adaptive and resilient agriculture, conducting on-farm experiments, and sharing lessons among farmer organisations on how they improve production, access markets and save money for future investment. The students also had an exciting time in the field by staying in the village and learning farming techniques from the hosting farmers.



Students from University of Virginia came to learn from Prolinnova–Cambodia (Photo credits: Tong Chantheang / Ieng Yan)

3. Publishing on local innovations and knowledge

CEDAC continues to conduct case studies on local knowledge and farmers’ good practices and produces articles and video documents for sharing on social media and websites through CEDAC’s Facebook page and a new website ‘sambosambay.com’. It changed from printing the *Farmer Magazine* to online publication in accordance with the current trend in information and communication technology development. The articles attracted a high readership and the page received about 10,000 Likes and Follows.

4. Country Platform functioning

It was not possible to organise a meeting of CP partners in 2018 because of changes in CEDAC management and staff turnover, and it will take time to coordinate work again with partners. However, the partners continue their activities such as documenting local knowledge and innovation and facilitating farmer-led joint experiments.