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STIMULATING NEW 'SERVICE PROVIDERS'

Strategy for sustainable activity + dynamic expansion

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Interventions that entail the introduction of new technologies always run the risk that achievements are lost when projects end. SADU has piloted models to develop 'service providers' as a way to achieve sustainability and allow improvements to expand dynamically.

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Case Study: Commercial Animal Health Service Providers



The national strategy in Laos has relied on training farmers to work as 'volunteer village vets', however, the skills of volunteers are limited and delivery rates of animal health services have remained low. SADU has piloted an alternative model, allowing farmers to pay for training and then work as Commercial Animal Health Service Providers (CAHSPs).

Through this strategy, CAHSPs will:

- (a) charge for services as an incentive to remain active
- (b) work across villages to ensure sufficient demand
- (c) provide a range of services and work all year-round

SADU offered:

- training at \$25 for a five day course
- field back-up and top-up training

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Results

In one district, 13 farmers from 50 villages paid for training in animal health services. All remain active following the training, with an average profit of 70% over the cost of service delivering. The 13 providers worked across 20 villages and they have increased animal vaccination rates from 20% to 80%.

Implications

These results demonstrate farmers are willing to pay for training, which opens the door for 'cost-recovery' and allows government agencies to provide training on demand without the delays waiting for funding.

Generalized benefits from having commercial service providers

Service providers will remain active after the life of a project and be proactive in expanding to work in additional villages to increase their income. Also, they can be expected to network and transfer technical information, thus providing embedded extension. In the case of CAHSPs, animal vaccination rates will increase, facilitating the expansion of the local livestock industry, which in turn delivers profits to farmers and reduces poverty.

Generalized process

1. Conduct participatory assessment of the demand for new services. This primes the clients and also indicates the type of support and training needed for new providers
2. Disseminate information on the demand for services, potential income, and cost of training
3. Call for indications of interest from local farmers and then conduct registration
4. Provide support (training etc.), and follow-up for an agreed period.

In 2007 this model will be piloted for two additional services: (a) Forage Seed Supply, initially for Xieng Khouang Province, and then nationally; (b) Fish Fingerling Suppliers in districts with promising fish production systems.

Application of this model for a range of services will deepen understanding of the process, and the support needed for different types of services.

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