



## Annual report for Year 2021

### 1. IBIS Rice project

#### 1.1 IBIS Rice promotion and Farmers recruitment

In 2021, SMP extended its activities in 13 new villages including 3 villages from Preah Vihear province, 3 from Siem Pang site, 2 from Prey Lang site, all situated in Steng Treng province and 5 villages from Rattanakiri province. Therefore, the total number of villages joining with Ibis rice program in 2021 were 37 villages from 4 provinces including Preah Vihear, Steng treng, Mondulkiri and Rattanakiri:

Table 1: Summary of SMP target locations, participating villages and registered households

#	Province	SMP Site	Total number of villages	New villages	Total registered Households	New Households
1	Preah Vihear	Preah Vihear	14	3	624	133
2	Stung Treng	Siem Pang	10	3	760	203
		Prey Lang	5	2	191	65
3	Mondulkiri	Keo Seima	3	0	64	04
4	Rattanakiri	Rattanakiri	5	5	138	181
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,777</b>	<b>586</b>

At the beginning of the calendar year, SMP teams started to organize meetings at village level to present IBIS Rice project, objectives, rules and benefits, to the communities. As a result, 1,777 households registered as Ibis Rice members (Preah Vihear: 624 households; Siem Pang: 760 households; Stung Treng-Prey Lang: 191 households; Keo Seima: 64 households and Rattanakiri: 138 households), which represents 586 new households joining the project for this season in 2021.

#### 1.2 Organization of the Compliance system

To conclude with the registration of IBIS Rice members, the farmers were asked to sign Conservation Agreements which state the 12 IBIS Rice project rules and that members commit to follow and respect by participating to the project.

Thereafter, 1,147.36 ha of lands from new and rejoining members (for 2021 only) were mapped by SMP teams and its partners, who map the lands owned by the participating farmers in order to assess their compliance with the project's rules and determine prior to harvest, if they are eligible to sell their paddy production to IBIS Rice Conservation Company (IRCC), SMP's private sector partner.

To monitor the IBIS Rice members' production, facilitate an efficient farm management and compliance with IBIS Rice project rules, and finally support the product handling and traceability, SMP provides Farmer Diaries to farmers (1 book per rice plot). From May to end of September 2021, trainings and one-to-one coaching were held by SMP teams for IBIS Rice members, on Farmer Diaries completion all along the rice season.

### 1.3 Agronomy trainings

In addition to trainings on quality and organic paddy production requirements, SMP provides theoretical and practical trainings on climate-smart techniques, with establishment of demonstration sites, which don't require to use chemical inputs and help farmers to face climate change impacts:

- Pre-planting training and demonstration: Prior to planting the main crop, pre-planting training were provided to Ibis members in Preah Vihear and Stung Treng provinces. Participants were trained on the benefit of planting method including transplanting, broadcasting and using seeding machine. In total, 67 Ibis members participated in the training, 23 are women. After training, 15 demonstration sites were established from 5 Ibis household members (3 from Preah Vihear, 2 from Prey Lang-Stung Treng).
- Pest & Nutrient management trainings: 479 farmers (including 286 women) participated to this training which aims to reduce pest, insects and diseases number, avoiding the use of chemical inputs but rather by managing profitable pests in the rice fields and reducing harmful ones. 4 demonstration sites were established at Thmat Boey, Prey Veng, Dang Phlet and Krala Peas villages, Preah Vihear province.
- Soil fertility improvement trainings: 191 farmers (including 137 women) from Preah Vihear, Steng Treng and Monduliri provinces participated in the training. Participating farmers could learn how to better understand the local different types of soils and learn some simple organic techniques on how to improve the soil quality and to protect it from external factors.
- Land leveling trainings: 124 farmers (including 75 women) participated in the training and 7 demonstration sites were established on 6.5ha of land in Preah Vihear to show IBIS Rice farmers the benefits of this technique which permits an easier and more equal access to water and nutrients for the crops.
- Wildlife-friendly irrigation ponds: SMP dug 3 irrigation ponds in Preah Vihear province, which provided a supplementary source of water for IBIS farmers' paddy fields, especially during the first stages of paddy growth, with wildlife-friendly specifications to enable endangered species to access water sources and respect the local ecosystem.
- Compost trainings: In 2021, SMP teams in Preah Vihear and Siem Pang site at Steng Treng province had provided training to IBIS Rice farmers on how to produce dry and liquid compost to emphasize the difference between chemical and natural fertilizers, as well as the importance of improving the fertility of the soil.

### 1.4 Maintaining seed quality

To help maintain the quality of paddy seeds, SMP first distributed high quality seeds (51,242 kg) to participating farmers. Furthermore, 49 households participated in seed production training and demonstration, resulting in a production of 31,523kg of high quality seeds. This activity contributes to develop a stock of high quality seeds in the village, for households directly participating to the project, but also for the other households of the community. The households participating to the seed production can then keep the harvest for next seasons or sell back to IRCC which re-distributes them to other IBIS Rice farmers. Trainings and field visits to land leveling demonstration sites established within the project showed IBIS Rice farmers better techniques to produce high quality seeds.

Finally, prior to harvest, trainings were held by SMP teams in each target villages on paddy quality, grade and specification. The trainings were held in Siem Pang, Prey Lang and Rattanakiri which gathered 349 Ibis rice farmers (185 are women). Moreover, recommendations were provided on harvest and post-harvest best

practices and requirements for organic certification (including threshing records, paddy storage and fields management).

### 1.5 Internal Control System & External audit

From July to October, SMP teams in coordination with their local partners and local authorities conducted the Internal Control System (ICS) process by visiting each IBIS Rice members farm and rice plots, to verify their compliance with IBIS Rice rules, and follow-up the information collected in Farmer diaries. These information were then compared and analyzed with SMART patrol data, GIS data, as well as data collected by SPOT satellite imagery. In 2021, teams conducted ICS with the 1,777 IBIS Rice households registered in a total of 37 villages among all target sites.

Among these households, 1,289 were found compliant with Wildlife-Friendly rules

Starting from mid-October, an external organic audit has been conducted by ECOCERT Company, in order to certify that farmers' production is following international organic EU/EOS and NOP standards, and enable compliant IBIS Rice farmers to sell their production as certified organic to IRCC. Due to the COVID-19 sanitary crisis, this external audit for organic certification was delayed and could only finish mid-November.

### 1.6 Harvest

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, a meeting was organized internally between SMP and IRCC to prepare for purchasing the 2021 harvest from IBIS Rice participants in all program areas. Following this meeting, SMP teams went in each village to provide information to VMN Committees and IBIS Rice farmers in all villages, about paddy grades and related prices as well as this harvest procurement plan, roles and responsibilities for the upcoming paddy harvest. Sacks were then distributed to the IBIS Rice farmers willing to sell paddy to IRCC, to ensure product traceability. Before the harvest, SMP teams provided trainings on Harvest and Post-harvest best practices (participated by 546 Ibis members, 309 were women), as well as trainings on Paddy quality checking (participated by 23 VMN Committees members, 10 were women), to support farmers in keeping a high-quality paddy before the sale.

As a result, from the 4 target provinces 791 households sold to IRCC up to 998,012 tons of paddy rice, for which they were offered a price from 40% to 70% higher than the local market price. This doesn't include the remaining portion that the Ibis members kept for their own consumption.

## **2. SRP project**

### 2.1 SRP promotion and Farmers recruitment

The Sustainable Rice Platform is an international multi-stakeholder partnership promoting agronomic and social standards in rice cultivation both on-farm and throughout the rice value chain. In this regard, in 2021, SMP promoted the SRP project to a new village in one commune: Kdey Ja village in Rong Reung Commune, and removed 2 villages after following their request of non-participation (Thmey in Prolay commune and Chias village in Damrey Slap commune). In summary, the SRP project currently includes a total of 29 villages, from 6 communes and 2 districts of Kampong Thom province (Stoung District: Pralay, Preah Damrei, Rong Reung, Chamnar Leu communes; Kampong Svay District: Damrey Slap and Sankor communes).

To facilitate the implementation and support the sustainability of the project, SMP establishes SRP producer groups at village level, and selects 1 to 3 Key farmers which helps the coordination between SMP and the farmers participating to the project. At the end of 2021, there were 29 SRP producer groups established, supported by 29 Key farmers, and a total of 487 farmers households (SRP farmers) registered within the

project. All along the annual production cycle, SMP is building the capacities of farmers to comply with climate-smart agriculture and quality production requirements, theoretically by introducing SRP scheme and standards as well as practically, by providing technical assistance to producers.

Even though complicated by the COVID-19 worldwide sanitary crisis, SMP teams recruited farmers and introduced them to SRP scheme and standards from January to June. In order to monitor their production, facilitate an efficient farm management and compliance with premium market quality requirements, and finally support the product handling and traceability, SMP provides Farmer Diaries to farmers (1 book per rice plot). In total, 620 Farmer Diaries were distributed to the 487 SRP farmers. From May to October, SMP teams provided training and coaching to the SRP farmers, as independent completion of these documents remains a challenge for a lot of participants, due to illiteracy and innumeracy issues.

In 2021, SMP continued to support the Agricultural Cooperative of Chhouk Samaki in building the capacities of their members in terms of administration, governance and finance management. In joining the AC, SMP also agreed to bring advises on SRP rice production and support the members in assessing the possibilities to develop alternative livelihoods (chicken, pigs raising, vegetable gardening, ecotourism, ...), in reaction to the risks of climate change.

In support of SRP promotion and implementation in Cambodia, SMP is also working on the development of the first draft of SRP Production Guideline for Phkar Romdoul rice, which will be soon distributed to participating farmers.

## 2.2 Agronomy trainings

During the dry season, trainings with demonstration on climate-smart agronomy technics were provided to target farmers, to reduce their vulnerability to climate change, improve their rice production yields and quality in respect with the environment.

- In February and March, trainings on cover crops, crops rotation and diversification were held in all villages, gathering 76 participants (including 41 women), and 11 demonstration sites were established on 5.22 ha of land, to practically show the benefits of these technics for soil fertility improvement.
- An irrigation pond of 435 m<sup>3</sup> was excavated in Chhouk village, to allow the nearby farmers to harvest water for their crops during periods of short droughts, and presented the technique to 53 participants, including 21 women.
- In August-September, 7 demonstration sites in Pest & Nutrient management were established, each one divided into 3 blocks receiving different treatments to show the quantity of inputs to apply. The related trainings involved a total of 169 participants, including 99 women.

Furthermore, to help maintain the quality of seeds, SMP provided seed production training to 129 SRP farmers (including 54 women), and distributed high quality seeds (80 kg of Foundation seeds) to farmers participating in seed production trainings, to apply on 7 seed production demonstrations sites over 1.87 ha of land. In October, during the harvest season, rice specification trainings were held and 27 participants (6 women) have jointed the training.

## 2.3 Harvest

At the end of the rice production cycle in 2021, SRP farmers from all targeted villages had harvested their rice and sold a total of 1,554,325 tons of high-quality paddy to local buyers. This doesn't include the remaining portion that SRP farmers kept for their own consumption.

## 2.4 Women Economic Empowerment

Through the promotion of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE), SMP intends to facilitate the fair participation and benefit from the SRP project, both for the women and men rice producers of the target villages. Indeed, women make almost half of the agricultural workforce over the world, but continue to face a variety of obstacles and constraints in context of agriculture.

After having supported the target communities in understanding the concepts of gender and WEE, and identifying the gender-related social and cultural obstacles that can restrain full participation of women in the rice value chain, SMP supported women in taking the initiative of leadership in SRP project and supported the election of 7 women as SRP Key farmers, 6 as representatives of Chhouk Samaki AC committees (3 from SRP key farmers and other 3 from SRP members) as well as 1 other woman interested in taking more responsibility in the project, were trained to support the implementation of the SRP project at the village level. SMP then organized capacity training in leadership and negotiation skills in context of SRP project, in order to strengthen their confidence in their roles and also gain more knowledge on market system and value chains.

In February 2021, SMP held 2 trainings with SRP key farmers (men and women) and women leaders, AC Committee members to review and reflect on Women's Economic Empowerment previous trainings, how gender roles impact SRP project and how gender equality can be better achieved into the project. The trainings gathered 31 participants – including 21 women and was facilitated by a women key farmer as a practical demonstration of how they can facilitate the project based on what they learned.

Because gender equality cannot be achieved without the implication of men, in September, a workshop with men, women and boys of the community were organized to raise awareness on gender, WEE concept and objectives. Specifically, a workshop entitled "Men Dialogue for supporting WEE" was organized on work division and household tasks (unpaid care work) to support full participation of women within the program and recognition of their participation in the rice value chain. A total of 18 participants (10 are women) participated in this workshop in September 2021.