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## The official kick-off workshop on Agroecology and Safe food System Transitions in Southeast Asia



The official kick-off meeting of the regional project for the development of [Agroecology and Safe food System Transitions in Southeast Asia](#) (ASSET) took place on November 10-12 in Vientiane, Laos. Around 130 people attended this event online and 20 in person both in Lao PDR and in Vietnam. The objectives of the kick-off workshop was to introduce the ASSET project, with online plenary presentations and Q&A in the afternoon (Asian time), and discussions in working groups in the morning (Asian time). Due to the Covid situation, the working groups in Cambodia and Myanmar had to be rescheduled and will be held by December.

In their welcoming remarks, Dr. Thatheva Saphanthong, Director of the Department of Agriculture Land Management (DALaM), stressed that *“ASSET regional project was built on the results of the [ACTAE](#) project that have been developed to embed agroecological research outputs into the regional context and that now need to be mainstreamed, broadened in scope by integrating food system concerns”*. Mrs Julie Gabet-Ouahoune, from the [French Development Agency](#) (AFD),

emphasized that “An enabling environment needs to be created, including the right policies, public investments, institutions and research priorities.”

Representatives of Vietnamese, Lao PDR, Cambodian, Myanmar, European and international research organizations, United Nations agencies, and NGOs partners to the project exchanged views and ideas about how successfully implement the ASSET project, with specific focus on the potential flagship territories in which the project will support and learn from agroecological and safe food system innovations and on the common methodological framework.



Funded by the French Development Agency and the European Union, ASSET is being implemented by GRET and [CIRAD](#), and mobilizes the expertise of 27 national, European and international partners including the Ministries of Agriculture of the four countries, FAO and UNESCAP. This 5-year project aims to make agricultural and food systems in South-East Asia more sustainable, safer and more inclusive, by tapping into the potential of agroecology. “ [The ASSET project] clearly falls into this green priority commitment for our external action. AFD and its implementing partners, including GRET and CIRAD, have a long and strong experience in agriculture research and capacity strengthening, so I have no doubt that they will reach the intended objectives, in very close cooperation with all the stakeholders in the partners countries of this project.” explained Mr. Vincent Vire, from the Delegation of the European Union in Lao PDR.

On behalf of GRET and CIRAD, Mr Damien Thibault and Dr Philippe Girard reminded in their concluding remarks all the participants that ASSET is a very innovative and ambitious initiative, therefore the active involvement of all partners is crucial.

[For more information on the project](#)

[The project factsheet](#)

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