Five-Year Project on Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for
Innovation and Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in
the Lower Mekong River Basin

A regional project on “Sustaining and Enhancing the Momentum for Innovation and
Learning around the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Lower Mekong River Basin”
proposed by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok to the European
Community (EC) for financing was approved during September 2011 for
implementation in rainfed areas of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam. The grant
period is for five years and the amount provided is 2.88 million euros.

The proposal was prepared in response to a EuropeAid Call for Proposals, entitled
“2009-2010 Global Programme on Agricultural Research for Development - Component
1: Research and Technology.” The project concept was based on recommendations
emanating from a regional workshop in 2009 organized by AIT with the World Bank
Institute (WBI) (http://www.ait.ac.th/research/workshop-reports/AIT-WBI-
Workshop-Report.pdf). This workshop involved various government, non-government,
academic and UN partners that are working in the Southeast Asian region and are
concerned with sustainable intensification of agriculture, especially in rainfed areas.

The chief recommendation from the workshop was for the development of adaptive
measures to protect against climate change so as to address the food security and
livelihood issues of smallholding farmers in Lower Mekong River Basin (LMB) countries.
The strategy was to set up local, national, regional and international ‘innovation
platforms’ for joint initiatives and coordinated actions. This project will develop and
strengthen north-south and south-south collaboration to address local, regional and
global challenges of water scarcity, food security, and climate change.

The proposal developed by Dr. Abha Mishra and her colleagues at AIT grew out of
working partnerships since 2005 with various national and international institutions
including relevant ministries of LMB countries. Funding support for these collaborative
activities has come from various organizations including the Food and Agriculture
Organization, World Bank, World Bank Institute, United Nation Environment
Programme, and with collaboration from some Consultative Group of International
Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centers.

The main project partners are the FAO Regional IPM Programme, Oxfam America, and
the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, UK. Project associates
include the Cornell International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development
(CIIFAD) in USA and the University of Queensland in Australia.

The project goal is to enhance the resilience of rainfed smallholder farmers and their
farming communities as they deal with climate change and other challenges in the four
countries. The project partners will stimulate and support local innovation through
farmers’ participatory action research (FPAR) and collaboration among agricultural
sector professionals and organizations for enhancing food security.

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