

# Success stories of CHAIN Project in Cambodia, May 2019

By SDC CHAIN Project Cambodia



**[The Cambodia Horticulture Advancing Income and Nutrition project \(CHAIN\)](#)** is a project mandated by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), in consortium with Swisscontact, leads the implementation of ‘CHAIN 2’ – the second phase of the project (1.11.2017–31.12.2020). The overall duration of the CHAIN project is eight years: December 2014 to December 31, 2022. CHAIN facilitates the improvement of an inclusive market system in the horticulture sector (vegetables), promoting climate smart year-round production in Oddar Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Stung Treng and Kratie provinces, with public-private partnership arrangements for improved inclusive services, market access and women’s economic empowerment.

CHAIN 1 proved that there is a viable market for locally produced vegetables in the local and regional markets in the project area, as well as opportunities for boosting household food security, resilience and nutrition. Most of the 6,000 semi-commercial and home gardeners reached in phase I have become more confident and skilful, having increased their incomes by adopting improved production practices and obtaining access to markets. CHAIN 1 followed a systemic development approach and was successful in working with and through local service providers, including the government, the private sector, and NGOs.

## **Approach and expected results CHAIN 2**

CHAIN 2, similarly to the first phase, started in November 2017 and aims to facilitate an inclusive and sustainable increase in income for rural women and men (including indigenous people, where present) in the targeted provinces. However, it has a stronger emphasis on strengthening the market system of local safe vegetables. It is envisioned that an increased

interest and investment by the private sector, as well as an increased collaboration and competition between many stakeholders (input companies, local input dealers, traders, buyers, forward markets, financial institutions, and irrigation and water access technology companies), will create a dynamic and growing market. This will increasingly enable farmers to find solutions to their needs in furthering their horticulture entrepreneurship.

**Coping with drought and low income - a success story from a CHAIN beneficiary**

Mr. Try Chork, 57, has seven family members and is a commercial farmer growing vegetables in Chh'aeub village, Samroang commune, Samroang district. Due to the El Niño-inspired drought in Cambodia, Mr. Try Chork's farm in Chh'aeub village was completely dry and had very limited access to water. Consequently, he had to find an alternative area for growing vegetables, which he found in Kakse-Tepporthivong village. This village was able to access water from a reservoir. In March 2018 Mr. Try Chork joined CHAIN, since then he has received coaching on new agricultural techniques such as land preparation, seed selection, seedling production, crop mulching, drip irrigation, trellising net, fertilizer, and pesticide application. Through using these technologies, he has increased productivity and now earns around 3 million riels (about 700 USD) annually. In comparison, before joining CHAIN Mr. Try Chork earned approximately 1 million riels (about 250 USD). He grows cucumber, yard long bean, choy sum, curly mustard, wax gourd and luffa.

CHAIN 2 facilitates public-private partnership collaboration, initiating a cluster approach to reduce transaction costs and supporting traders by coaching them to expand their markets. The project and its partners make use of the growing preference for safe food by providing a competitive advantage for local vegetables over imports.

To further the continued inclusive and sustainable growth of the horticulture sector in the four selected provinces of the first phase, the second phase supports the enabling environment at provincial and national level through assisting the local stakeholders and partners to collect evidence, contribute to (national) policy dialogues, support in roll out of policies and in sharing best practices through knowledge sharing and development.

The collaboration and sharing of experiences with other programmes are important to increase synergies, improve and be more effective in tackling challenges in the horticulture sector. Of particular interest is the formulation of the Horticulture Policy, the implementation of CAMGAP and CAMOrganic standards, the Bio Control Agents (BCA) for organic pest and disease control, and the roll out of the Extension Policy. For the CHAIN project the focus of attention lies on: smallholders, gender, safe food, synergy and collaboration between the public and private sector, and overall sector coordination.

CHAIN 2 continues with the elaborate Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) project strategy of phase I, based on an analysis of the additional needs and constraints women face in ensuring horticulture production, nutrition and marketing. The project promotes balancing of benefits, a stronger cooperation between men and women, especially in decision-making processes and a more balanced sharing of roles and responsibilities related to household chores, on- and off-farm work.