



## **Draft Proposal for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) Project**

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### **1. Background**

The ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS) Project is an ASEAN and Japan initiative with participation open to China and the Republic of Korea. The overall objectives of AFSIS include facilitating food security planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in ASEAN through the systematic collection, organization, management, analysis and dissemination of food security data and information. The AFSIS project is a five-year undertaking, from January 2003 to December 2007. The Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Thailand is the executing agency. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan is the donor through ASEAN trust funds.

The main activities of the Project are concerned with the construction of information network system and human resource development. At present, the Project is providing food security related information gathered from member countries to public through its own created database and website. Member countries have been provided with some amount of network equipment to set up their respective national information network systems and for the connection with regional system of the Project. Many activities in human resource development i.e. trainings, workshops and seminars as well as the organization of annual Project Focal Point Meetings and the Meetings of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN + 3 Countries are regularly implemented under Project scheme. These activities are expected to help increase capacity of member countries in provision of required information and in the analysis and planning for food security.

In the Fifth Meeting of the ASEAN Agriculture and Forestry Ministers and the Ministers of the People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea (5th AMAF Plus Three) on 30 September 2005 in the Philippines, the Ministers expressed their recognition of the contribution of AFSIS Project with respect to promoting the concept of regional food security and the importance of continued improvement in the details of food security data and information among ASEAN Member Countries and in the region. Capacity building activities throughout the region has improved cooperation in this area. The Ministers also agreed with the necessity to continue the Project after the implementation period.

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## **2. Objectives**

The second phase of the Project will aim to maintain and improve Project's main activities in providing food security information and increasing capacity of member countries in relation to Project implementation.

The overall objective of the second phase of the Project is to strengthen food security in ASEAN + 3 region through the systematic collection, organization, management, analysis and dissemination of food security information.

The specific objectives of the Project are:

- 1) To improve AFSIS information network system in providing necessary information required for the analysis and planning for food security in ASEAN + 3 region
- 2) To improve the capacity of each member country in providing required information at the same standard.
- 3) To improve the capacity of each member country in food security analysis

## **3. Project Strategies**

To achieve the objectives, the Project will continue with the two components of activities as in the first phase which are *Information Network System Development* and *Human Resource Development*.

In Information Network System Development, the Project will emphasize on the database enhancement and data analysis. The *Early Warning Information System* will be added in the system while the preparation of *Commodity Outlook Reports* will be introduced for monitoring and analysis of food security situation in the region.

The Human Resource Development component will ensure that all member countries will be capable to implement Project's activities especially in data collection and analysis competently and at the same standard. Under this component, besides the provision of basic and advanced knowledge in agricultural statistics, information technology and analysis of food security through various human resource development activities, the Project will promote the *Mutual Technical Cooperation* among member countries. Through the mutual cooperation, the more advanced countries will help to improve the capacity of the others as necessary for the implementation of Project' activities.

## **4. Activities**

### **4.1 Information Network System Development**

The activities under information network system development consist of two components which are *information system development* and *physical network system development*. The activities under each component are as follows:

1) Information System Development: This component is dealing with the management and administration in data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination. The activities under this component include:

a) Improvement of AFSIS website and database:

AFSIS website and database will be reviewed and improved to provide users with all information required for the assessment of food security situation and policy planning in the region.

b) Development of *Early Warning Information System (EWIS)*:

The Early Warning Information System (EWIS) will be introduced to the system. It includes the report of the information related to the production of major food crops during current growing season. The information would cover the following items:

- i. Forecasted planted/harvested area, production and yields.
- ii. Crop growing condition
- iii. Damages by natural calamities, outbreaks of pests and diseases, etc.

The Project will make a list of required information for member countries to collect from regional offices and other sources available in their respective countries. Member countries will send information to AFSIT Center for compilation and dissemination through Website. The EWIS will be used in monitoring of food security situation in the region. If there is any foreseen difficulties in production of major food crops that will affect food security, the project will inform the concerned agencies to be aware of the possible problems in advance.

c) Preparation of *Commodity Outlook Reports*:

The Project will make analysis of all relevant information in AFSIS database and from other sources such as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) to make Outlook Reports of major food commodities. The report will analyze and present the current and projected situation in various aspects of each major food commodity in the region for example: production, consumption, demand and supplies, trade etc. This will help the concerned agencies in assessment of food security in the region. The Reports are planned to be published twice a year in April and October.

The Project will set up a working group at AFSIT Center to implement this activity with technical support from Japan. For administration purpose, the Commodity Outlook Committee will be appointed to scrutinize the Reports before

publication. The Committee will consist of experts nominated and appointed by member countries.

- 2) Physical network system improvement: The Project will help to improve the physical network system in the countries that do not have adequate network equipment in order to strengthen their national network systems. The improvement will also ensure the efficient connection between national networks and Project's regional network. In this regard, the Project will allocate some budget for provision of additional network equipment and internet connection costs as needed by the countries. The countries that require additional network equipment will be asked to make requests by explaining their needs and submit to the Focal Point Meeting for consideration. The meeting will allocate the budget to requesting countries in accordance with the necessity.

## **4.2 Human Resource Development**

The activities under human resource development component are as follows:

- 1) Organization of Training Courses: The training program will emphasize on the topics that directly related to the project implementation such as the knowledge required in the collection and analysis of food security information and information network technology. The Project will make use of expertise from other organizations such as ASEAN Secretariat, FAO, Japan and from member countries which have more advanced knowledge and technology. The Project will set up a regular training program and request support from advanced countries in organizing additional courses.
- 2) Promotion of Mutual Technical Cooperation: This component will be introduced and replace the national seminar activities. The objective is to share the knowledge and skills in statistics and information technology among member countries. The weak points of in each member country will be identified. The more advanced countries are expected to assist in improving the capacity of the others by providing them with the experts, advice and training or official visit. The knowledgeable personnel from more advanced countries will help in organizing the capability building activities such as training courses, on the job training and workshop for the countries that need and request for assistance. The activities can be organized at target countries or at ASEAN Food Security Information and Training Center (AFSIT Center) as considered appropriate.

The activities include:

- a) identification of needs for technical assistance in each of member countries
- b) planning for provision of assistance including identification of appropriate resource persons and approaches
- c) preparation for training manuals

- d) organization of planned activities for technical assistance such as training courses, technical visit, workshops and others
- 3) Organization of Regional Workshops: The regional workshop can be organized whenever it considers necessary for the Project implementation. In the first year, it is necessary to organize regional workshop to prepare the guidelines or implementation plans for the Early Warning Information System Development, mutual technical cooperation and regional training programs.

The organization of regional workshops will be discuss and set by the annual Focal Point Meeting.

## **5. Duration of the Project**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Project will have the implementation period of five years starting from January 2008 and will end in December 2012.

## **6. Expected Outputs**

The implementation of the Project will help member countries to provide accurate, reliable and timely food security information required for the construction of regional information at the same standard. The Project will be able to provide complete information needed for planning and implementation of food security policy in the region.

The Development of Commodity Outlook Reports and Early Warning Information (EWI) system will facilitate the management of food security policies and programs. These activities will help to assess food security situation in the region and identify the areas where food insecurity is likely to occur as well as the degree of seriousness. This will enable the responsible agencies to be aware of the problem before its happening and have enough time for the preparation of necessary actions. The affected people will receive better responses and support to release their difficulties.

## **7. Institution Framework**

The Focal Points of the first phase of the Project will be responsible for managing and assisting in carrying out the activities of the second phase. The Focal Point Meeting (FPM) will be the decision-making mechanism of the Project and will be held at least once a year.

The ASEAN Food Security Information and Training (AFSIT) Center at the Office of Agricultural Economics (OAE), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Thailand will continue its function as a secretariat of AFSIS FPM, as a center for regional training and as a hub of information on food security for participating member countries.