



Term of Reference

Desk Review of agricultural value chains assessment and agroecological opportunities

1. Background

Cambodia's agriculture sector has experienced a remarkable increase in the early period of 2026, with key export commodities showcasing significant growth. The main products Cambodia exported included strategic agricultural products such as rice, cassava, cashew nuts, and rubber and fresh fruits, bananas, mangoes, and pepper. From January to May, the country earned \$190 million from milled rice exports, a year-on-year increase of 17.5 percent from \$161 million, and \$376 million from cassava, up 16 percent from \$323 million, according to a report issued recently by the Ministry of Commerce.

However, agricultural systems in Cambodia continue to face challenges related to climate change, environmental degradation, market volatility, limited access to services, and unequal participation of smallholder farmers in agriculture's value chains.

Agroecology has increasingly been recognized as an approach that promotes sustainable agricultural production by integrating ecological principles, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and social equity. At the same time, agricultural value chain development remains an important strategy for improving market access, productivity, income generation, and competitiveness of smallholder farmers.

CRS Cambodia is exploring opportunities to strengthen its agriculture, livelihoods, resilience, and climate adaptation programming through investments in agricultural value chains and agroecological approaches. Given changing market dynamics, climate risks, environmental degradation, and evolving donor priorities, CRS Cambodia seeks to identify agricultural commodities and value chains that offer the greatest potential for improving smallholder farmer incomes, food security, climate resilience, and sustainable natural resource management.

To support evidence-based program development, CRS Cambodia is looking for a consultant/firm to undertake a desk review to assess agricultural value chains and agroecological opportunities and identify priority commodities and intervention areas where CRS Cambodia can achieve the greatest impact. The review will provide strategic recommendations on which commodities and value chains CRS should focus on, based on market potential, inclusiveness, environmental sustainability, resilience, and alignment with CRS comparative advantages.

To inform future programming and strategic investments, a desk review will be conducted to assess the current status, opportunities, constraints, and evidence related to agricultural value chains and agroecological approaches. The review will generate recommendations for integrating agroecological principles into value chain development interventions and identify opportunities for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient agricultural growth.

2. Objectives:

The purpose of this desk review is to identify and prioritize agroforestry production systems and value chains that offer the strongest opportunities for CRS Cambodia investment and programming, while assessing how agroecological approaches can strengthen productivity, market competitiveness, farmers resilience and landscape restoration through livelihoods and sustainability. The specific objectives of this consultancy are:

- (i) Identify and prioritize agricultural commodities and value chains with strong market potential, sustainability, and opportunities for smallholder farmer engagement.
- (ii) Deepen understanding on government and donor priorities and identify key private companies and their approaches to sustainable sourcing and market development in agroforestry and agricultural value chains.
- (iii) Assess the feasibility and benefits of agroecological approaches to enhance productivity, resilience, environmental sustainability, and inclusion within selected value chains.
- (iv) Identify key constraints of key value chains and market systems development, productivity, resilience, and inclusion.
- (v) Recommend strategic entry points for CRS programming by identifying investment opportunities, partnerships, and interventions that leverage CRS's comparative advantage in market systems, resilience, and agroecology.

3. Expected Outputs

The expected outputs for this assignment will be:

1. The review should produce priority commodity list including its market opportunities, productivity improvements, improve incomes potential, sustainability) and ranking of recommended commodities for CRS Cambodia
2. Value chain selection matrix by comparing commodities against agreed criteria.
3. Agroecology opportunity analysis that identifying agroecological entry points including market opportunities from upstream to downstream supply chain for each priority commodity.
4. Strategic recommendations on priority commodities, targeted geographies, market opportunities, partnership opportunities with private sector, agroecological approaches, and future investments.

4. Key Review Questions:

Strategic Prioritization

- Which agricultural commodities have the greatest potential for income generation among smallholder farmers?
- Which commodities demonstrate strong domestic, regional, or export market demand?
- Which commodities are most resilient to climate and environmental risks?
- Which crops provide opportunities for landscape restoration?
- Which crops provide opportunities for private sector engagement?
- Which value chains have gaps that CRS could help to upgrade?
- What are government, private sector and donors' priorities?
- What are the key policies and emerging programs with different value chains?
- Who are the peers/competitors are doing in these spaces?

Value Chain Analysis

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of each value chain?
- What are the key bottlenecks related to production, aggregation, processing, finance, logistics, and market access?
- Who are the major actors within the value chains?
- What constraints of major actors are facing in their business models?
- What opportunities exist for upgrading and value addition?

Agroecology Assessment

- Which commodities are most suitable for agroecological production systems?
- What agroecological practices are currently promoted and adopted?
- How can agroecological approaches improve productivity, soil health, biodiversity, climate resilience, and profitability?
- What barriers limit agroecological adoption?

Inclusion and Sustainability

- What are the inclusive barriers for each value chain?
- What environmental risks are associated with each value chain?
- Which value chains have the greatest potential for long-term sustainability and resilience?

5. Scope of Work:

Agricultural Sector Overview

The desk review will begin with an analysis of high value cash crops in agroforestry system from farm to fork, examining national and sub-national trends that influence agricultural production, livelihoods, and market development. The review will assess high value cash crop types in an agroforestry system and farming practices, government priorities and policies for the agriculture sector, and emerging challenges and opportunities. Attention will be given to climate and environmental factors affecting agricultural productivity and sustainability, as well as food security, nutrition and market systems considerations that may influence future programming priorities and investments.

Commodity Screening and Prioritization

The consultant will identify and assess potential agricultural commodities and value chains using a set of strategic selection criteria. The assessment will consider market potential, including current and projected demand, price competitiveness, presence of private companies and opportunities within both domestic and export markets. Economic viability will be evaluated through an analysis of profitability, production costs, and potential returns on investment for smallholder farmers. The review will also examine the inclusion potential of each commodity, assessing opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable households to participate and benefit throughout the value chain. Climate resilience considerations will be incorporated by evaluating the capacity of commodities to withstand climate-related shocks, adapt to changing weather patterns, and respond to water availability constraints.

In addition, the assessment will examine the compatibility of commodities with agroecological approaches, including their suitability for diversified farming systems, contribution to environmental sustainability, and potential for integration within regenerative and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Finally, commodities will be assessed against CRS's comparative advantages, including existing organizational experience, potential partnerships, alignment with donor priorities, and relevance to target geographic areas.

Value Chain Analysis

Each shortlisted commodity (between 3-5 commodities), the consultant will conduct a comprehensive value chain analysis to identify opportunities and constraints across the market system. The analysis will examine input supply mechanisms, production practices, aggregation and collection systems, processing and value-addition opportunities, and end-market channels. The review will also assess the availability and effectiveness of supporting services, including extension services, market information systems, and access to finance. Furthermore, it will analyze governance structures, stakeholder coordination mechanisms, and the roles and relationships among value chain actors to identify bottlenecks, leverage points, and opportunities for sustainable market development.

Agroecology Assessment

The review will assess the status of farmers' application on agroecological approaches within selected value chains. This will include an examination of existing agroecology initiatives, regenerative agriculture practices, and integrated farming systems being implemented by government agencies, development partners, private-sector actors, and farming communities. The assessment will also analyze sustainable land management practices, soil fertility improvement strategies, water resource management approaches, biodiversity conservation measures, and integrated pest management practices. Particular attention will be given to identifying opportunities for promoting climate-smart and agroecological production systems that enhance productivity, resilience, environmental sustainability, and long-term livelihood outcomes for smallholder farmers.

6. Methodology

The desk review will primarily rely on secondary data and literature from a wide range of sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the agricultural sector, value chain opportunities, and agroecological potential. The review will examine relevant government policies, strategies, agricultural census data, and national statistics, as well as existing value chain analyses, market assessments, research publications, and reports produced by development partners, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The consultant will also review climate vulnerability assessments and studies related to agroecology, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable food systems to identify emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges relevant to CRS programming.

7. Expected Deliverables:

- Deliverable 1: Inception report that includes detailed methodology, work plan, commodity prioritization framework, document review matrix.
- Deliverable 2: Draft desk Review report consists of executive summary, agricultural sector overview, commodity prioritization assessment with a ranking of potential commodities based on agreed criteria and shortlisted commodities.
- Deliverable 3: Value chain analysis agreed upon, priority commodities and their associated value chains, agroecology assessment for potential entry point for interventions, CRS strategic position and recommendations with priority commodities, geographies, and intervention areas.
- Deliverable 4: Final Report
- Deliverable 5: A presentation summarizing key findings and recommendations.

8. Suggested Analytical Framework

A scoring matrix may be used to evaluate commodities against the following criteria:

Criteria	Weight (%)
Market Demand (private sector engagement)	15
Farmer Profitability	15
Governments' Priorities	15
Donors' priorities	15
Climate Resilience & Inclusiveness	10
Agroecology Potential	10
Potential for employment creation	10
CRS Comparative Advantage	10

9. Duration of the consultancy

Activity	Duration
Inception and planning (Deliverable 1)	2 days
Draft report (Deliverable 2)	5 days
Shortlisted priority commodities & their value chains analysis (Deliverable 3)	6 days
Finalization and submission of final report (Deliverable 4)	6 days
Presentation of key findings & recommendations (Deliverable 5)	1 day

Total Duration: 20 days

10. Consultant Qualifications

The consultant/team should have:

- Advanced degrees in Agriculture, Agricultural Economics, Agroecology, Rural Development, or related fields.
- Minimum 10 years of experience in agricultural value chain development.
- Proven experience in market systems analysis and agroecology.
- Familiarity with climate-resilient and regenerative agriculture approaches.
- Experience working with NGOs, government agencies, and private sector actors.
- Strong facilitation, analytical, and report-writing skills.

11. Key Working Relationships/Organizations to Meet

- **Internal:** Country representative, Head of Program, Deputy Head of Program, regional technical advisors (climate change adaptation and agriculture & livelihoods).