

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Adopting new agricultural technologies

Associate Professor Samsul Huda of the School of Science and Health has been supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) to undertake a research and development activity that will look into the reasons why small farmers in Cambodia do not adopt new technologies which could improve their agricultural practices. Other members of the Australian research team will include Dr Roger Packham, an Adjunct Associate Professor at UWS, and contracted specialists, Mr Terry O'Sullivan, Mr Noel Vock, and Dr Kep Coughlan. Dr Seng Vang, the Deputy Director of the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) will facilitate the Cambodian activities.

'Rice is Cambodia's primary agricultural crop, occupying over 70% of the total crop area,' says Dr Huda. 'Despite doubling production over the last five years, and significant technical advances in tillage, direct seeding, use of better quality seed, increased fertiliser and agro-chemical use, not to mention mechanical harvesting, the industry compares unfavourably with the world rice export leaders, Thailand and Vietnam, and there are inefficiencies occurring at all stages of the production cycle. The reasons for the inability of rice farmers to adopt new and proven practices are complex and form the basis for this inquiry. This project will identify strategies for improving the adoption of technology within the Cambodian rice industry.'

This project involves undertaking an analysis of rice industry technologies and adoption issues from the perspectives of three different stakeholders: government research, development and extension agencies involved in providing services nationally to the rice industry; organisations at the extension interface with rice farmers such as input suppliers, millers and exporters; and farmers and farmer organisations. The study will also review and



document lessons learnt from past and present international projects that throw light on Cambodia's recent production systems.

Opportunities for improving adoption of technology will be identified at a stakeholder workshop. The results of this project will help facilitate behavioural changes in the industry and the realisation of the Cambodian Government's rice export policy goal of fivefold growth by 2015. It will thus significantly contribute to the country's social and economic development.

Project Title: Better understanding constraints to smallholder adoption of agricultural technologies from the perspective of knowledge providers in Cambodia

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