

Project Introduction Workshop in Ratanakiri Province

February 17-19, 2010

From 17-19 February 2010, CEDAC, ETEA Foundation and DPA conducted a workshop in Banlung to discuss both projects. The purpose of the workshop was: 1) to identify the impacts and lessons learned from the first project; 2) to clarify the purposes and activities of the new project; 3) to reach agreement about cooperation and synergies among the participating organizations; 4) to explain AECID's operational regulations and any other issues that might be difficult to understand; and 5) to chart future cooperation between project partners and local authorities.

The first and second days of meetings were held at the CEDAC/ETEA Foundation office with 22 participants (including 6 women) representing the 3 partner organizations (14 attendees) and beneficiaries (8 attendees). The last day of the workshop was held at Build Bright University Meeting Hall, with 9 more participants coming from the Department of Planning, Department of Agriculture, Local Administration Unit, Commune/Sangkat Association, as well as commune council representatives and district officers from Oyada, Lumphat, Veun Say, and Ochum. ETEA Foundation was the key institution to present information about the new project activities and AECID staff covered the regulations and rules and facilitated the group discussions.

After the workshop, the participants had gained important insights into some of the challenges and difficulties in the first phase of the project through their sharing of experiences and lesson learned. These included issues related to staff capacity development, project monitoring improvement, strengthening information dissemination to DPA and CEDAC target areas, and methods for organizing shops or producer groups. Secondly, the participant were able to understand each activity in the new project on strengthening and improving capacities of productive community-based organizations (CBOs), capacities of local authorities in the planning process and improving cooperation between CBOs and local authorities in decision-making. Thirdly, PoLA and provincial departments related to Decentralization and Deconcentration gave some fruitful comments about the activities on supporting district authorities and civil society organization participation in the planning process in new target areas in Lumphat and Ochum district. Finally, the three partners were able to identify possible areas of cooperation in the new project and next steps.

