



CONCEPT NOTE

Wild-Honey Production Association Development



WILD-HONEY PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT

1. Goal:

To increase total honey production in Xiengkhouang province by strengthening the network of beekeepers, technical assistance, honey quality and linkages with potential high-value chain actors/markets.

2. Introduction:

In Xiengkhouang province, the “wild honey” produced by the *Apis Cerena* bee species is natural wild honey that has traditionally been harvested from both the wild forest and by beekeepers in village wild honey production groups. Traditionally they have managed wild queen bees in hives made of hollow tree stumps and wooden boxes. Those bees gather nectars directly from flowers in natural forest areas and organically managed fruit tree gardens for producing honey, therefore the wild honey is considered as an organic product without chemical contamination that is considered the best for health benefits and with excellent taste qualities. Importantly, bees are pollinators and facilitate plant reproduction, with more than 30% of all food crops being dependent on bees for pollination.



3. Background:

The village wild honey production groups, where The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative has provided support to beekeepers in three districts (Pek, Phoukoud and Khoue), consist of more than 145 households that TABI has worked with in 3 districts. They currently come together as a network with many stakeholders in the area, they produced honey yearly at about 2,500 kg, without quality assurance the local selling price is 50,000 kip/kg. After filtered (extraction) to remove impurities, then conditioning to decrease moisture down to 12%, and packaging (sealing with brand name), such good honey was delivered to sell with approximately 3 times higher price in many local shops and in Vientiane as well. In addition to the benefits from honey, there is also the potential for bees-wax as raw product that generates additional benefit to farmers.

Currently, in Xiengkhouang Province, it is estimated that there are 38,050 bee hives in 3,805 km² Protected Forest areas that producing 114,150 Kg (114 tons) of honey per year and worth 3.99 Billion Kip/USD 481,100. Given the availability of flowers for honey production, the potential for honey production could be more than 5 times of the current

production levels. Also, honey quality improvements will ensure a price premium of VVV% over current prices.

But there are constraints to realizing this potential. Based on the “Honey Regional Workshop” in XKH (21-24 May, 2018), it was found that there is (i) a limited knowledge of bee rearing and biology of bees by bee-keepers, (ii) few women and youth involved, (iii) traditional processing practiced by individual households resulting in low quality honey with few examples beyond projects of group level processing, (iv) a lack of incentives to safeguard bee population via a pesticide reduction policy, (v) no certification standard (phytosanitary and brand) for quality assurance, and finally (vi) a need to create a strong honey network and establishment of local beekeeper groups.

4. Listing of key Activities:

- Expand and upgrade honey processing capacities and facilities to overcome both quality and quantity constraints.
- Expand the number of beekeepers in the province, by creating a strong network of beekeepers, increasing the number of youth and women in beekeeping, establishing a strong technical advisory mechanism that connects expert farmers, government and private sector players.
- Establish a participatory guarantee system for certification standards (phytosanitary and brand name);
- Upgrade production group into association and networking support that focus on specialty and high-value markets.
- Protect/conservate natural forest areas and extend fruit tree plantations for increasing flowers. Increase the number of fruit orchards and protect field margins and other habitats which currently represent a wealth of plant flowers for producing nectar and pollen that are required for expanding bee-keeping for wild-honey production.



5. Expected Opportunity Results or Outputs:

- Significantly increase the number of beekeepers who are rearing queen bees and hives for expanding the bee population to increase honey production province-wide
- Increased the number of women and youth involved in bee-keeping by building capacity and responsibilities;
- Xiengkhouang wild honey products are registered, branded and certified based on quality that meet standards and aspirations of consumers;
- Good quality wild honey products are sold at a higher better price as well as value added products that directly provide benefits and higher profits to producers, the honey value chain and ensures that consumers are healthy and satisfied;

- Bee-keeper groups are upgraded and officially recognized as a "Wild Bee-Honey Network" with a high reputation and capacity to deal with niche markets outside the local region and country;
 - Increase in the number of partnerships or other honey networks (e.g. GoL Sectors, Donor Projects, NPAs, NGOs and Private Investors);
 - Marketing and information products are produced and disseminated to producers, private sector and consumers to generate enthusiasm for wild honey, bee-wax and bee-pollen products;
 - Complementary wins for natural forest conservation, other natural habitats for bees, increases in agricultural and fruit tree plantations and vegetable production via increased pollination by bees, and increase in the abundance and diversity of vegetation associated with fruit growing areas that serve to create continuous flowering to lengthen the period of nectar and pollen feed for bees.
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Note: More detail can be provided if the organization/investor is interesting and Proposal Documentation can be developed for further consideration (if required).