

Preface

Laos is an inland country in which approximately 70% of population (ca. 6.9 million in 2018) practices agriculture and its related industries. This country has shown remarkable economic development with high GDP growth (6-7%/year) in recent decade, but has remained as a least developed country (LDC) with low GDP/capita/year (ca. 2,500 USD in 2017), placing 133rd in GDP ranking among 190 countries. Although Laos has been self-sufficient in terms of rice production since 2000, an increase in food production is still required due to the high rate of increase in national population (1.45%/year). Moreover, deficient animal protein intake (14g/day/capita) is another concern that might have led to a high undernourished population rate (21%) over the country particularly in rural areas, indicating the great need to increase the animal protein supply.

In the context of the above, the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) has implemented various research activities in partnership with the National Agriculture & Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) and the National University of Laos (NUoL) since 2016 under JIRCAS's "Value-adding technology" research program comprising four projects, namely, "Multiple use of regional resources in semi-mountainous villages", "Food value chain", "Higher value forestry", and "Aquatic production in tropical areas".

Through our vigorous activities, various technical and informative achievements have been attained, and they have contributed greatly to the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in Laos. These achievements were disseminated as applicable farming techniques, as useful references for central and local administrators, and as assets for scientific research. To summarize the achievements and share the information among researchers and relevant central and regional stakeholders, and to discuss their practical applications in the future, JIRCAS held a workshop entitled "Technical achievements of the projects and their applications - Potential and efficiency of underused agricultural and fishery resources in Laos –" on October 30, 2019 in Vientiane. Ten (10) research topics relevant to lowland/upland rice production and evaluation, agricultural management in mountainous slope areas by tropical fruits and teak, informative research on nutritional conditions in rural villages, and aquaculture of indigenous fish and shrimps, were provided to workshop participants. This Working Report consists of these representative achievements presented in the above workshop and some supplemental outputs. We do hope that this Working Report can provide useful insights from various practices and contribute to their wider application in Laos.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to JICA and the Japanese Embassy in Laos as well as various local agencies, for their considerable support to our research activities. To end, I would like to thank all the contributors for making this Working Report possible.

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