

Diversification of Periurban Agriculture Project



Report on Farmer Organizations assessment

Julie LOGEL, March 2014.

1. Introduction

The project has been supporting the creation of Farmer Organizations (FO) since September 2011. FOs are developed with the objective to sustain project activities by empowering farmers and by providing collective services to support agricultural production in the long-run.

In the target area 8 FOs (one per target village) have been created grouping all beneficiaries supported in each village.

Since 2011, several activities were implemented to support FO development:

- Establishment of FO official document : internal rules, statutes, financial management tools,
- Provision of stationary equipment,
- Collect of membership fees,
- Setting-up of a saving-credit activity,
- Capacity-building for leaders and treasurers,
- Organization of General meeting and election of leaders.

2. Evaluation objectives

After 2 years of support, the project implemented an evaluation (February 2014) in order to :

- Measure the level of development of each FO,
- Identify the strengths and weakness of each FO,
- Identify the kind of support to provide to each FO to improve their development,
- Set up the activity planning to plan the activities to implement to support FO development in 2014.

3. Methodology

First of all, an evaluation grid has been created with 5 main points to assess:

- FO structure
- FO management
- FO financial management
- FO Activities
- FO Visibility and communication

See annex 1: FO evaluation grid

Then, based on this grid the assessment was conducted combining three methods to collect the information:

- Direct Observation during monthly FO meeting: behavior of leaders, members, keeping of FO management tools.
- Interview of the 3 leaders of each FO
- Individual interview of 5 FO members

--> Importance of triangulation of information sources.

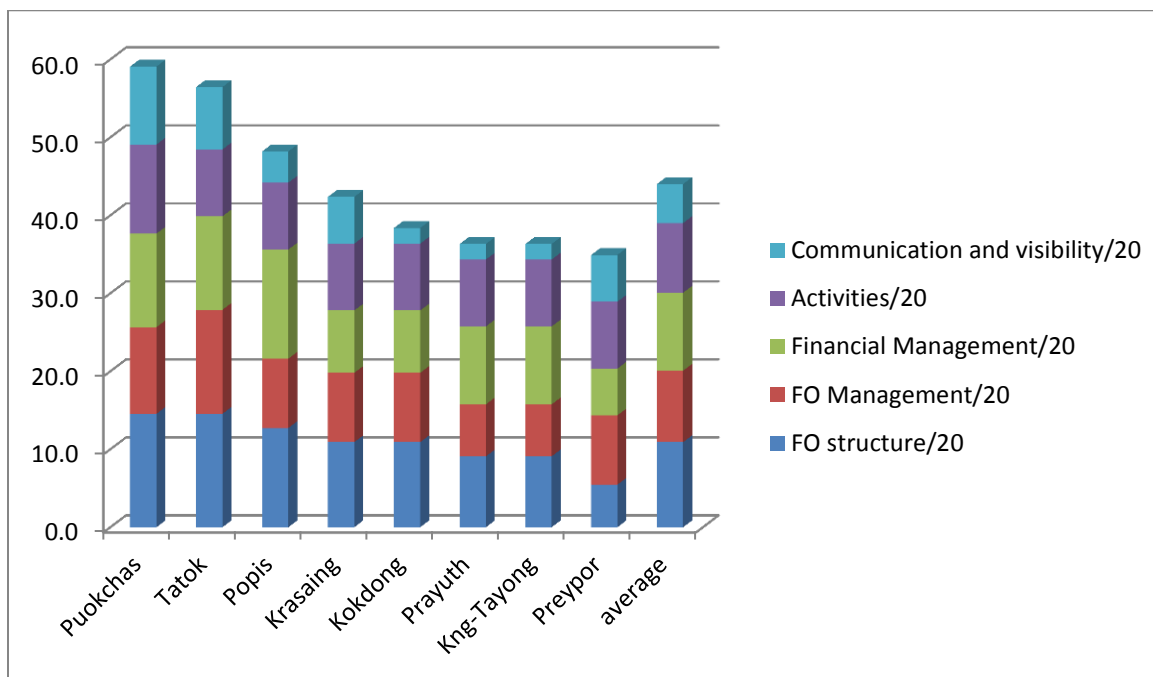
The next step was to pool all the information collected in order to score each FO according to established criteria grid.

The following part of this report is dedicated to the presentation of results and their analysis to set up activity planning to support FOs development for 2014. It formulates also recommendations to improve the efficiency and dynamism of FOs in the following year of project implementation.

4. FO Assessment Results and analysis:

Although all FOs were initiated at the same time, today, there are disparities in the degree of development of each FO. This is explained by the social cohesion existing in the village, the capacity of leaders to federate their members and to bring motivation and dynamism and finally the willingness and commitment of the members to participate in the FO's activities.

4.1 Global Results



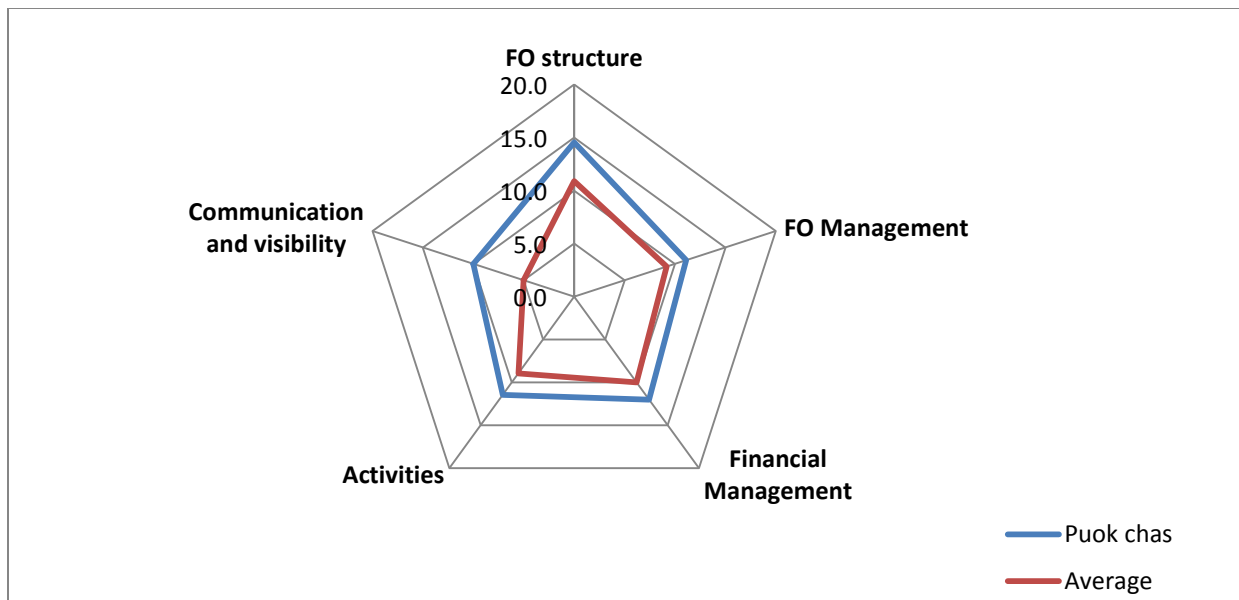
For each indicator the score was re-calculated on 20. Thus each FO was scored on 100.

Looking to this graph, we can identify 3 groups of FO:

- the most developed ones : Puok Chas (11.8/20), Ta Tok (11,3/20) and Popis (9.3/20)
- the ones with a medium level of development: Krasaing (8,5/20) and Kok Dong (7.7/20).
- the latest developed ones : Pra Yuth (7.3/20), Kampong Tayong (7.3/20) and Prey Po (7.0/20).

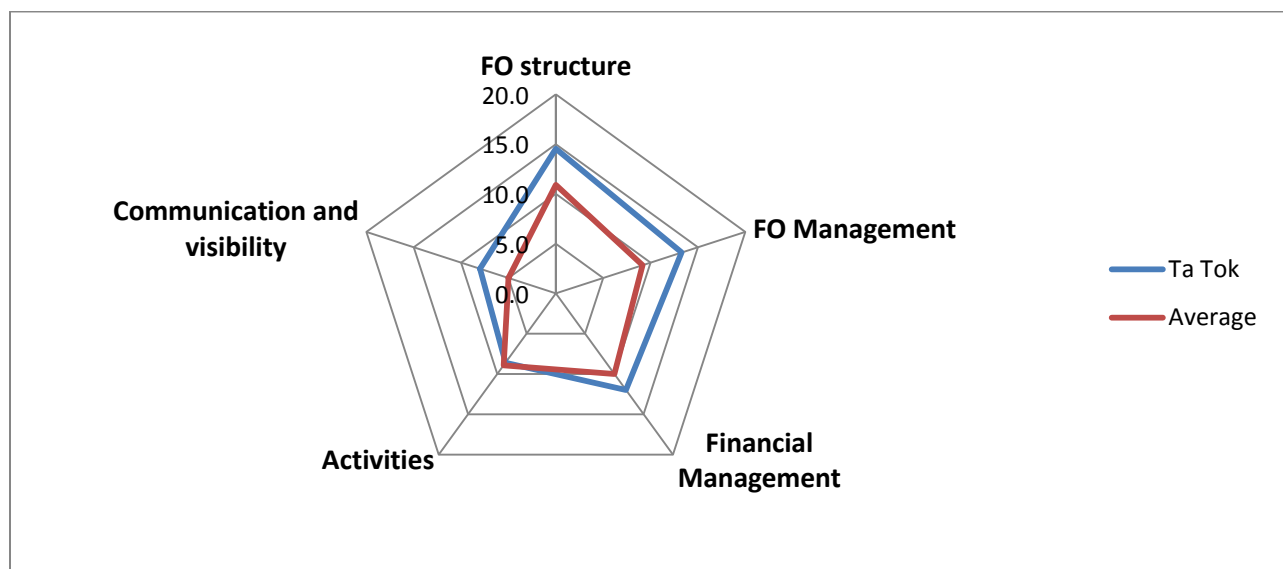
4.2 Graph of FO individual results :

4.2.1 Puok Chas:



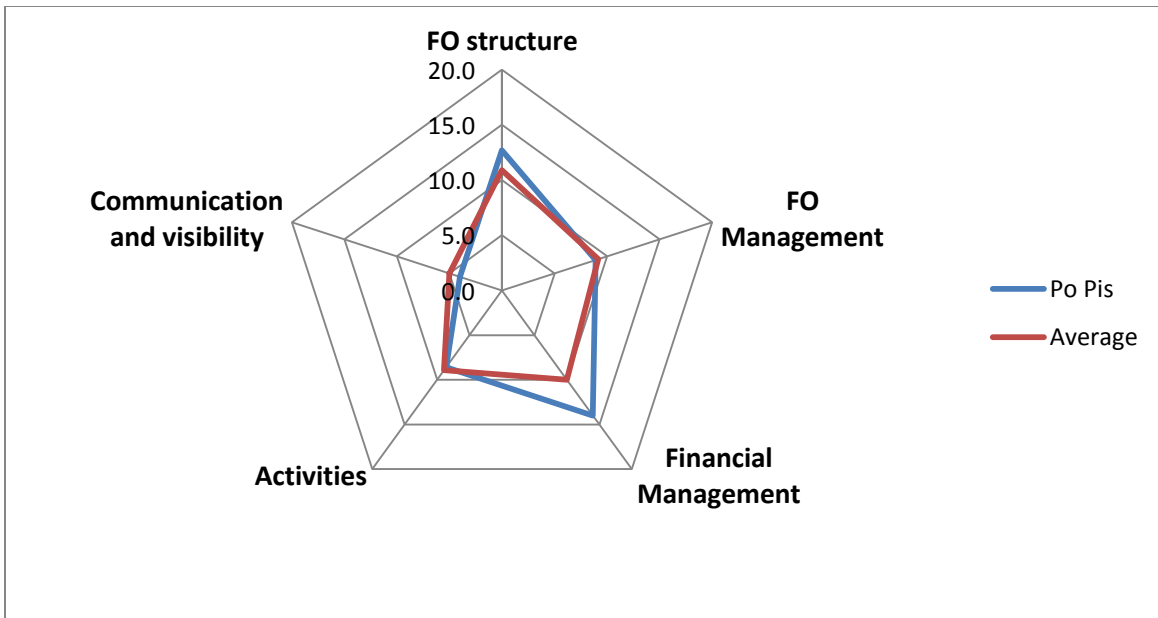
Puok Chas FO is the most advanced FO. The organizational structure is clearly established but need to be more accessible to members. Leaders are active and members commit to participate in the group activities. However leaders lack of capacities in the management of the group such as setting-up action plan, financial programming and meeting organization and leading. Visibility and both internal and external communication should also to be improved.

4.2.2 Ta Tok:



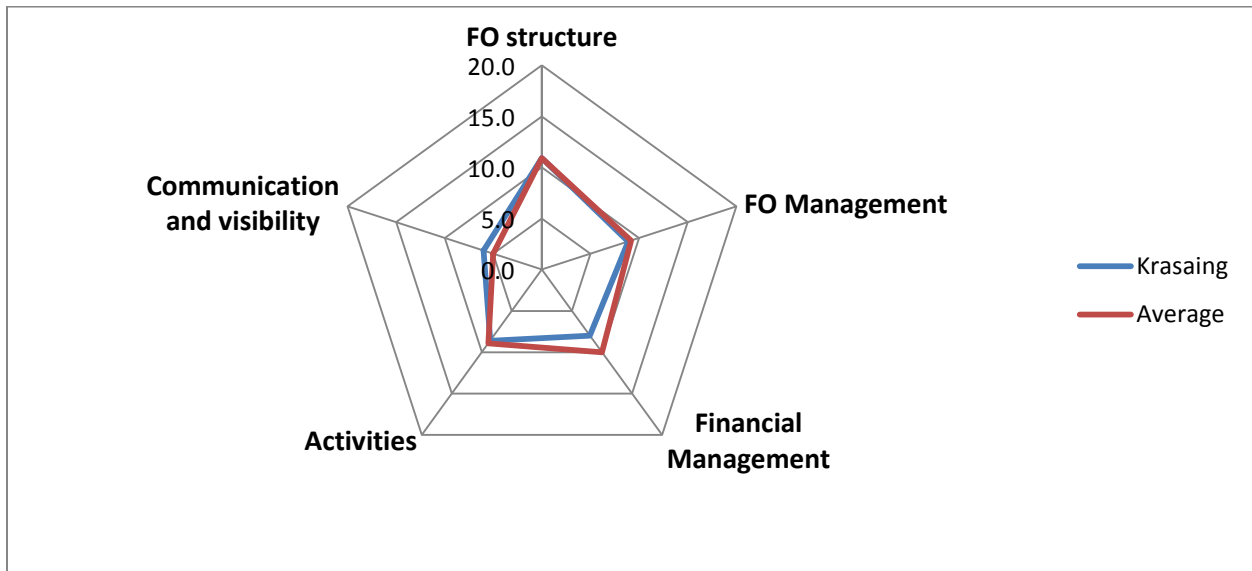
Ta Tok FO is well-structured however the organizational structure and group regulations are not clear for all members. Leaders are active but they lack of leadership to federate better their members. There is a need to improve communication between leaders and members and to build leaders capacity in terms of group management. Beside credit and saving, there is a need to develop new activities within the FO that may enhance the participation and commitment of members.

4.2.3 Po Pis:



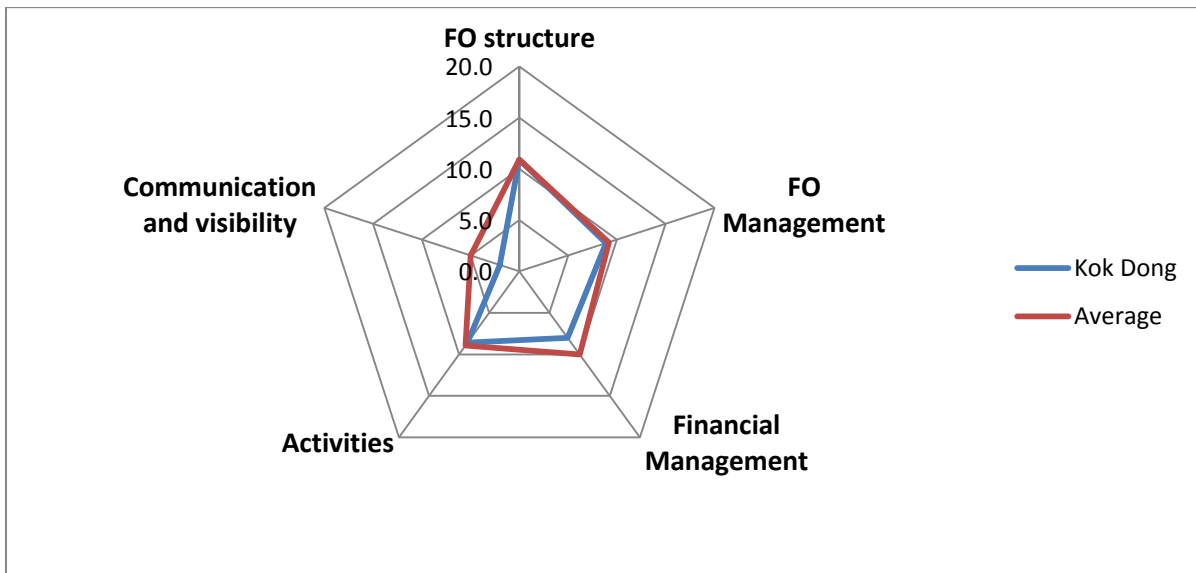
Po Pis FO is quite well structured but it seems that most of members are not well aware about the organizational structure and the duties of the committee. Leaders collaborate well together but their capacity to lead the members and facilitate meeting is quite low. Leaders are not able yet to set up activities and budget plan. However the financial management of the FO is secured with the use of a bank account. The saving-credit service works well and they have set up a system of guarantees for the loans. As most of the other FO internal and external communication is not well developed as well as visibility.

4.2.4 Krasaing:



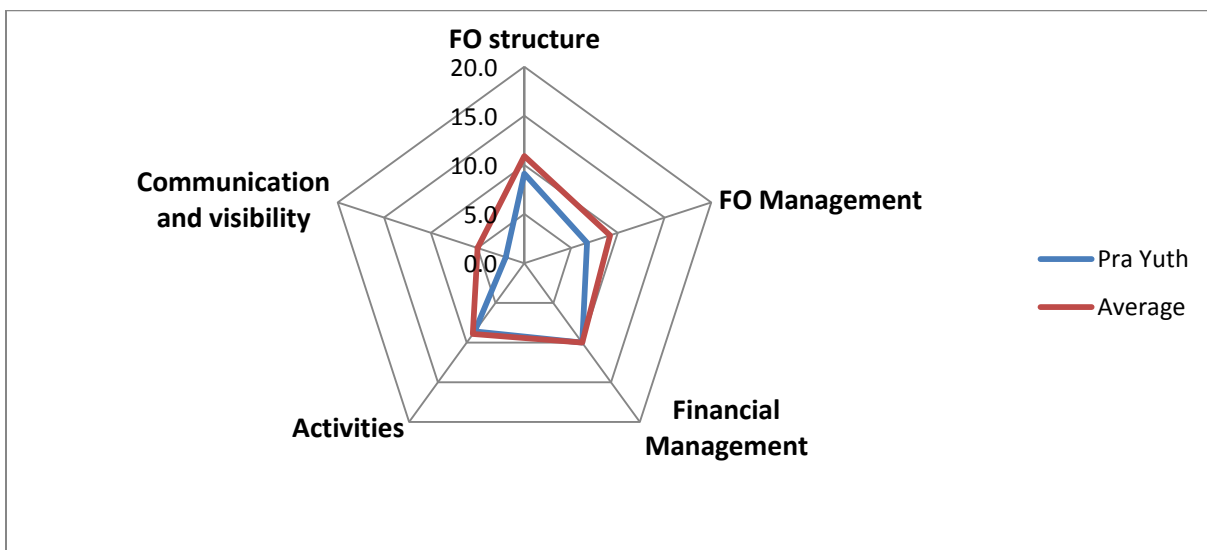
Krasaing FO has active leaders but they have very low skills to federate and lead their members. Leaders understand well their duties and collaborate well together. However the members feel not so concerned with the FO activities and objectives. The organizational structure and the rationale of the FO is not known and understood by members. The budget is well managed by the leaders however members are not well aware about the budget use. There is a strong need to build capacities of leaders on leadership, communication, meeting organization and FO management. New activities must be developed to answer better the needs of members. The saving credit services runs well. Communication and visibility should be improved as well.

4.2.5 Kok Dong:



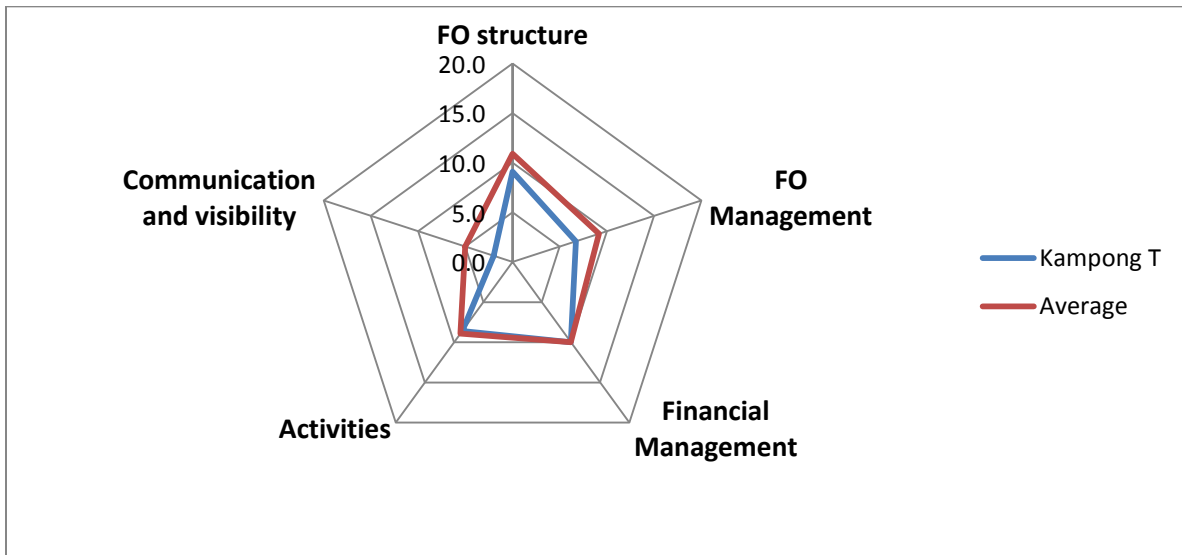
Kok Dong FO has active leaders as well, but they are unable to federate and lead their members. They are not collaborating well together and the communication and interactions with members are nearly absent. As a consequence members feel not so concerned by the FO activities and they don't have motivation to participate in the FO decision and meetings. As the management of the FO is not well ensured, leaders are not yet able to make some action and budget plan that could help to create some dynamism among members.

4.2.6 Pra Yuth:



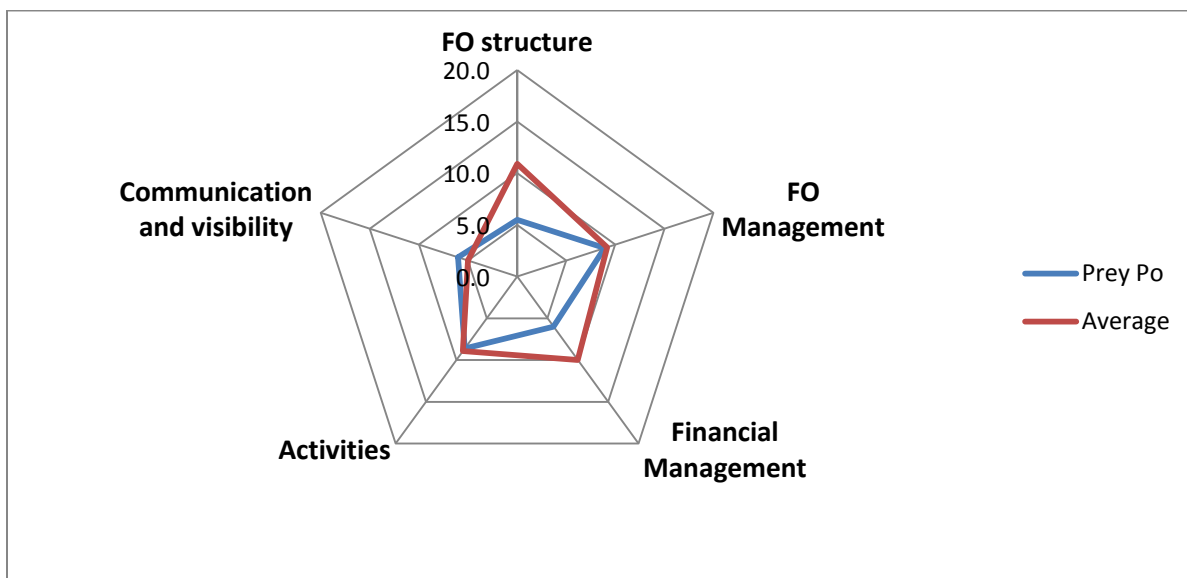
Pra Yuth FO is one of the less structured FO. Leaders are not really committed and they do not collaborate well together. As a consequence members are not really involved in the group activities. There is a strong need to validate with leaders their commitment and then to build their own leadership, communication, meeting organization and FO management. New activities must be developed to answer better the needs of members.

4.2.7 Kampong Tayong:



Kampong Tayong FO is also one of the less structured FO. The leaders are active and motivated but they have low capacities to federate and lead their members. There is need to update the FO member list in order to pursue the development of FO activity only with the motivated members. Based on members needs an action plan and new activities should be developed. Leaders must be strengthened in leadership, communication and group management. The financial management of the saving credit service is well ensured and a bank account has been opened to ensure the safety of FO money.

4.2.8 Prey Po:



Prey Po is the weakest FO. It seems that leaders have grudgingly accepted their election. It was difficult to find motivated people to assume the responsibilities of leaders. As leaders do not fulfill their role, group coherence is low and the members are not very involved in the activities of the group. There are also latent conflicts between some members that slow down FO activities development. In order to decide on the pursuing of the FO activities the project will help to assess the willingness and the motivation of FO members to be part of a group and support them to overcome obstacles and create ownership. Then, the decision to pursue FO activities will be taken together with members and leaders.

4.3 *Synthesis and the main weaknesses identified :*

_Axis	Criteria	Negative points
FO structure	Members commitment	The members do not have strong willingness to join FO activities
		Low commitment
	FO statute and internal regulation	The organizational structure of FO is not always clear for members
		Low understanding and visibility about leaders role and duty
Leadership	Lack of collaboration between leaders to share tasks	
FO management	Meeting Organization	Low leadership capacities to lead and federate the members
		Lack of capacities from leaders for meeting organization and group management.
		Members feel not concerned with FO budget management
	Financial Programing	FO do not have financial programing
	Financial Management	Financial management tools are not always well filled
Some FO do not have bank account and guarantor for loans to ensure security of the group money.		
FO activities	Services to members	FO do not provided a lot of services to respond to farmers needs
		The animals health service do not run well
	Implementation of the action plan	Leaders have no skills to set up annual action plan and budget plan.
Visibility and communication	Problems and Conflict Solving	No capacities to solve the problem inside FO
	FO Goals	No goals clearly formulated
	Identity-Visibility	No visibility (logo, poster, name...)
	Communication	Low communication between members, and professional environment

4.4 *Restitution to leaders and feedback*

On March 26, 2014 a meeting was organized with all FOs leaders to report on the evaluation results. This meeting was an opportunity to get the feedback from leaders and to encourage them to pursue the leading and management of their respective FO.

Moreover, leaders committed to quickly resolve some malfunction:

- Update the list of members and pursue activities only with active members,
- Share tasks between leaders to facilitate collaboration,
- Improve the information of members on the day of the meeting.

They also requested the support of the technical team to strengthen their skills on different topics:

- Ability to speak,
- Organization and facilitation of meetings and reporting,
- Book-keeping,
- Communication within an organization.

5. Planning of activities to support FO development for project phase 4

5.1 Identification of the capacities building module to implement:

According to the identified weaknesses and the suggestions from leaders, 8 modules were identified to strengthen the leaders, the group cohesion and support the development of FO activities:

Annex 1: FO Evaluation Grid

Evaluation Grid, Farmer Organization

Staffs :

Date :

Village :

Name of persons interviewed:

Criteria	Indicators	Scoring	Method and tools to check - Comments	
1. FO structure	Presence of an organizational structure	<i>FO doesn't have any existing organizational structure</i>	0	<i>Ask directly to members and leaders if the FO has an organizational structure and if yes, they can describe it.</i>
		<i>FO has an organizational structure but few members know about, and it is not respected</i>	1	
		<i>FO has an organizational structure, most of the members knows about, and it is respected</i>	2	
	FO statute and internal regulations	<i>FO doesn't have any existing statute and internal regulation</i>	0	<i>Ask leaders to show the FO statute and regulations and to explain them. Ask also to members.</i>
		<i>FO has statute and internal regulation but few people knows about, and it is not respected</i>	1	
		<i>FO has statute and internal regulation that most members know and respect</i>	2	
	Leadership	<i>The FO leaders are not active</i>	0	<i>Observe the leaders behavior during FO meeting. Ask to members their feelings about the behavior of FO leaders.</i>
		<i>The leaders are active but they do not communicate well with the members</i>	1	
		<i>The leaders are active, they communicate well with members and they are able to manage well the FO</i>	2	
	Members commitment	<i>Members do not know the interest (objective) of the FO</i>	0	<i>Ask the members what are the interests for them to be member of the FO.</i>
		<i>Members know the interest of the FO but they are not really convinced (committed)</i>	1	
		<i>Members know the interest of the FO and they are convinced</i>	2	
	Official recognition	<i>FO is not officially recognized and local authorities are not aware about the existence of the FO</i>	0	<i>Check with the leaders if the FO is officially recognized at the local or provincial level.</i>
		<i>Local authorities (village, commune) are aware about the existence of the FO but there is no official recognition</i>	1	
		<i>FO is officially recognized at the local authorities level (commune)</i>	2	
		<i>FO is officially recognized at the local authorities level (commune)and at the provincial level (PDA)</i>	3	

2. FO Management	Presence and use of management tools (both financial tools and management tools (such as meetings minutes, attendance list...))	<i>FO doesn't have any clear management tools to follow-up activities</i>	0	<i>Observe during the FO meeting the tools that they are used (both financial and management tools. Check if these tools are updated or not</i>
		<i>FO has management tools, but inadequate and not well filled by leaders</i>	1	
		<i>FO has adapted management tools , filled properly by leaders but not regularly updated and not controlled by members</i>	2	
		<i>FO has its own tools to manage each activity and all of them are well filled, regularly updated and controlled by members</i>	3	
	Meetings organization	<i>FO doesn't organize regular meetings</i>	0	<i>Observe the participation of members during FO meeting and the meeting progress (the way the meeting is conducted. How leaders they have prepared? Ask to members if they join regularly FO meetings and if it fits with their expectations.</i>
		<i>FO organizes regular meetings but only few members join</i>	1	
		<i>FO organizes regular meetings and most of the members join but the agenda is not well prepared</i>	2	
		<i>FO organizes regular meetings and most of the members join, the agenda is well prepared by leaders and meets the members' expectations (satisfaction of members).</i>	3	
	General meeting	<i>FO does not organize general meeting</i>	0	<i>Ask to leaders and members if general meeting is organized once a year, if the FO as an annual report and action plan.</i>
		<i>FO holds general meeting but the annual report (activities and finance) is not complete</i>	1	
		<i>FO holds general meeting with a complete annual report (activities and finance) but no annual action plan set up</i>	2	
		<i>FO holds general meeting with a complete annual report (activities and finance) and a well-defined action plan</i>	3	
3. Financial management	Financial management tools	<i>FO has no financial management tools</i>	0	<i>Observe during the FO meeting the financial tools used by the FO leaders and check if they are updated.</i>
		<i>FO has financial management tools but they are regularly filled by the leaders</i>	1	
		<i>FO has financial management tools and they are regularly filled and updated by the leaders</i>	2	
	Transparency - Financial reporting	<i>Leaders do not report on budget management to members</i>	0	<i>Ask to leaders if they do budget report to members and they ask to members if they are informed and they can explain the budget situation in the FO.</i>
		<i>Leaders report on budget management to members but members do not feel concerned</i>	1	
		<i>Leaders report on budget management to member, members feel concerned and comment</i>	2	

	Financial programing	<i>FO do not develop annual financial programing</i>	0	<i>check with the leaders if the FO as financial program and if it is applied</i>	
		<i>FO develops financial programing but they do not apply it</i>	1		
		<i>FO develops financial programing and apply it</i>	2		
	Financial management	<i>There are lot of problems in the FO financial management</i>	0	<i>Ask to members and leaders if they are problems with the financial management within the FO (ask for explanations)</i>	
		<i>There are few problems in the FO financial management but they can be sold</i>	1		
		<i>The finance is well managed</i>	2		
	Financial security	<i>FO doesn't have safe cash box and bank account</i>	0	<i>Ask to leaders about the financial security (cash box and bank account)</i>	
		<i>FO has safe cash box but no bank account</i>	1		
		<i>FO has a safe cash box and bank account</i>	2		
4. Activities	Services to members	<i>FO do not provide any services for members</i>	0	<i>Ask to leaders and members the kind of services the FO suggests to members and if they are satisfied with them</i>	
		<i>FO provides just few services for members</i>	1		
		<i>FO provides several services to members</i>	2		
		<i>FO develop services for members and they are satisfied</i>	3		
	Implementation of the action plan	<i>FO does not have action plan</i>	0	<i>Ask to leaders and members if the FO has an action plan and check if they implement the activity following this actions plan.</i>	
		<i>FO has action plan but do not follow-it</i>	1		
		<i>FO implements activities following the established action plan</i>	2		
	Satisfaction of the members	<i>Members are not satisfied with the FO services and activity</i>	0	<i>Ask to members if they are satisfied with the services provided by the FO, why and if they can suggest some improvements.</i>	
		<i>Less than 50% of the members are satisfied with the FO services and activities</i>	1		
		<i>More than 50% of the members are satisfied with the FO services and activities</i>	2		
	5. FO Visibility and communication	Problems and conflicts solving	<i>There are hidden problems within FO members</i>	0	<i>Ask to both members and leaders if there are problems within the FO et how do they manage them.</i>
			<i>There are problems within FO members and they are expressed</i>	1	
<i>Problems are expressed and FO looks for solutions</i>			2		
<i>FO has the capacity to anticipate and avoid problems</i>			3		
FO Goals		<i>FO has no clearly identified goals</i>	0	<i>Ask to members and leaders to explain what are the goals of their FO</i>	
		<i>FO has identified goals but members do not know them</i>	1		

	<i>FO has identified goals, members know them, but these goals are not all followed</i>	2	
	<i>FO has identified goals, members know them, and most of these goals are followed</i>	3	
Identity - Visibility	<i>FO has no identity</i>	0	<i>Observe the identity and communication tools of the FO</i>
	<i>FO has a name but no visibility tools (logo, office, poster, name cards...)</i>	1	
	<i>FO has a name and visibility tools</i>	2	
Communication and contact with professional environment	<i>FO doesn't have any contact with its professional environment</i>	0	<i>Ask to FO leaders the relationship they have with their professional surrounding (contact with companies, purchaser, institutions, local authorities, NGOs...)</i>
	<i>FO has few contact with its professional environment</i>	1	
	<i>FO is well integrated in its professional environment</i>	2	