

## Guidelines for Developing the Potential of Farmer Organizations for Sustainable Self-Reliance\*



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### Abstract

Farmer organizations serve as vital pillars in advancing and sustaining agricultural practices, particularly in fostering autonomy within farming communities. This mixed research endeavor adopts a comprehensive approach to address the pressing issue of agricultural household indebtedness and evaluate the effectiveness of the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project. The study aims to achieve objectives: 1). to scrutinize the status of farmers' household debt and assess the outcomes of the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project; 2). to analyze the data and impacts stemming from the rehabilitation initiative on farmers; and 3). to provide recommendations for enhancing community organizations' capacity for sustainable self-sufficiency. The quantitative dimension of the study encompasses 3,587 members of farmer associations and stakeholders spanning 77 provinces, with a purposive sample size of 2,788 individuals.

The outcomes portray a worrisome situation, emphasizing a persistent increase in debt levels within Thai farmer associations. However, inherent capabilities are apparent among the farmer collectives, establishing the foundation for possible progress. A total of four main tactics are specified for fostering this potential: 1) Leadership Development: Empowering individuals within farmer groups with the necessary skills and expertise to effectively address challenges. 2) Farmer Group Potential Development: Fostering the inherent potential of farmer groups through capacity development and resource allocation. 3) Social Networking Development: Cultivating strong networks and partnerships to facilitate knowledge sharing, cooperation, and assistance. 4) Development of Modern Information Technology: Embracing technological progress to streamline processes, access markets, and enhance decision-making. As Thailand plans its trajectory for the ensuing two decades, this strategic blueprint acts as a guide, directing policymakers, stakeholders, and farmer communities toward a future characterized by resilience, prosperity, and sustainable agricultural progress.

The quest for sustainable self-reliance in agriculture necessitates a multifaceted approach, as delineated through the objectives of this study. By delving into the realms of household debt, project evaluation, and community organization development, a holistic framework emerges, poised to guide farmer organizations toward sustainable growth and resilience. Through concerted efforts guided by these principles, farmer organizations can

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\*Received March 29, 2024; Revised April 28, 2024; Accepted April 30, 2024

emerge as vanguards of agricultural sustainability, empowering farming communities to thrive amidst the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Development Competency; Farmer Organization; Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund; Self-reliance

## Introduction

Given Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy (2018-2037) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), farmer organizations are increasingly acknowledged as pivotal actors in propelling the nation's agricultural development agenda and accomplishing global sustainability objectives (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018). These entities assume a central role in fostering rural development, poverty alleviation, and food security, closely aligning with the overarching aims delineated in both the national strategy and the SDGs (Sathapatyanon et al., 2018). Agriculture, a prominent profession with a lineage spanning millennia, caters to the essential human need for sustenance. The progression in Thailand's agricultural sector is noteworthy, transitioning from subsistence farming to commercial agricultural practices. Despite the presumed financial prosperity associated with agricultural pursuits due to the universal demand for agricultural commodities, Thai farmers face escalating debts and financial challenges. Research conducted by the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) in 2014, commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, delved into the debt burdens of farmers and strategies to enhance financial efficacy. The findings revealed a staggering total debt of 1.32 trillion baht, significantly impacting various facets of livelihood such as nutrition, healthcare, education, and overall consumer access.

Despite the notable contributions made, farmer organizations in Thailand frequently encounter barriers hindering their sustainable self-sufficiency, such as resource limitations, restricted market entry, and dependence on external support systems (Rodthong et al., 2020). Acknowledging the necessity of tackling these hurdles, the objective of this article is to offer customized recommendations to enhance the sustainable self-sufficiency of farmer organizations within the Thai context.

Under Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy and the SDGs, the suggested recommendations underscore the significance of fostering economic stability, independence, market penetration, and resilience among farmer organizations (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018). Through addressing these fundamental aspects, farmer organizations can not only contribute to national development goals but also propel advancements towards the SDGs, particularly those of poverty eradication (SDG 1), sustainable agriculture (SDG 2), and rural development (SDG 9) (Asim et al, 2024).

By executing these recommendations, aligned with Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy and the SDGs, farmer organizations can evolve into resilient, self-sufficient entities capable of instigating transformative changes within the agricultural domain while supporting broader sustainable development targets. Through fostering cooperation among policymakers,

development practitioners, and stakeholders, we can collaboratively strive towards realizing the vision of a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future for Thailand.

In response to the prevalent issue of farmer indebtedness, an organization specializing in farmer rehabilitation and development has been established to mitigate the financial burdens faced by agricultural communities. As of May 2022, data from the Office of the Farmers Development and Rehabilitation Fund website disclosed the existence of 55,958 registered farmers' organizations, comprising a cumulative membership of 5,707,021 individuals. Access to the fund is contingent upon the submission of a rehabilitation and development proposal by farmers' organizations. Upon approval, the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund undertakes the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating the outcomes associated with the rehabilitation efforts, with a focus on improving livelihoods and fostering agricultural knowledge among farmer groups. Reportedly, a total of 11,361 projects have received support from the fund, amounting to 1,194,992,422 baht. This allocation is distributed among 1,803 projects in the form of loans, totaling 787,135,058 baht, and 9,558 projects receiving subsidies, amounting to 407,857,364 baht. However, a mere 248 projects exhibited the potential to fully repay their debts, constituting approximately 13% of the total loan projects, with a combined sum of 80,824,791 baht. Consequently, there persists a deficit of approximately 706,310,267 baht, underscoring a notable deficiency in the self-sustainability of farmer organizations (Office of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund, 2019). Given the substantial proportion of the national populace engaged in agriculture, as evidenced by Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (2022) data indicating 9,202,664 individuals out of a total population of 66,171,439 (Forecast Statistics Division, National Statistical Office, 2021), representing approximately 13.907% of the overall population, it is imperative to bolster the capacities of farmer organizations. Addressing this imperative necessitates strategic interventions aimed at enhancing the financial resilience and operational efficacy of farmer groups, thereby fostering their long-term viability and contribution to national agricultural development.

In the pursuit of sustainable agricultural development, the potential of farmer organizations to foster self-reliance among farming communities has emerged as a critical area of inquiry. Chantararat et al. (2023) illuminate the intricate dynamics of debt cycles among Thai agricultural households, underscoring the challenges posed to economic resilience. Abraham et al. (2022) offer insights into aggregation models and their implications for small farm commercialization on a global scale, shedding light on strategies for enhancing market access and economic viability. Abraham et al. (2022) advocate for inclusive agribusiness models as catalysts for transforming food systems towards sustainability, emphasizing the potential of farmer organizations to drive environmental stewardship and social inclusion within agricultural value chains. Complementing these perspectives, it provides nuanced evidence on the efficacy of farmer organizations in improving livelihoods, particularly focusing on the Thai rice sector. These papers lay the groundwork for exploring guidelines aimed at harnessing the potential of farmer organizations for sustainable self-reliance.

For these rationales, researchers examined the research on "Guidelines for developing the potential of farmer organizations for sustainable self-reliance" to investigate the farmer household debt situation and assess the effectiveness of the farmer rehabilitation and development project. The aim was to scrutinize the implementation of the rehabilitation project and the consequences of executing the farmer rehabilitation and development project, as well as to propose guidelines for developing the potential of farmer organizations for sustainable self-reliance.

### **Objectives of the Research**

1. To study the situation of farmers' household debt and to monitor and evaluate the results of the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project.
2. To study and analyze Information from the implementation of the rehabilitation project and Impacts from the implementation of the rehabilitation and development of farmers
3. To present guidelines for developing the potential of community organizations for sustainable self-reliance

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Population and Sample is Purposive Sampling**

The population in the research was 9,588 organizations from 4 regions, 11 groups, and 77 provinces across the country according to the order of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund No. 1/2564 on December 4, 2021.

The sample group was divided into Farmers' Organization Members, and stakeholders from the work of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund as follows:

#### **Qualitative data**

1. Representatives from organizations that have approved loans, are divided into 2 groups: those who have fully repaid their loans, 248 projects, and those who are in the process of 877 projects, totaling 1,125 people.
2. Sub-committee of the Provincial Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund, all 77 provinces, a total of 16 x 77 provinces, a total of 1,232 people.
3. Employees and contracted employees from branch offices and provincial branches in all 77 provinces, in total 406 people.
4. Rehabilitation office staff (Director, Deputy, Section Head, employees, and contracted employees), a total of 23 people.
5. Fund Office Executives (General Secretary /Deputy), total 2 people

The total key informants were 2,788 people

#### **Quantitative data**

Members of farmer organizations that have been approved for loans in 45 sets x 77 provinces = 3,465 people (according to the contract criteria) but the actual data collection is 3,587 people.

### Research tools

Tools were used to collect data divided into 2 categories as follows:

The questionnaire is a tool for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund which is used to measure the level of strength and readiness of farmer organizations, it is divided into 3 parts: Part 1. General information Part 2. Monitoring and evaluation in 5 aspects: 1. Strength or readiness of farmer organizations 2. Plan implementation or farmer rehabilitation and development projects 3. Regulations and laws that support operations for farmer rehabilitation and development projects 4. Personnel and structures both quantitatively and qualitatively (knowledge and skills) 5. Economic benefits of the farmer rehabilitation and development project in terms of cost reduction, income increase, ability to manage debt of farmers, efficiency of project implementation, and part 3. Additional suggestions.

The interview form is a tool for conducting in-depth interviews with key informants. It is divided into 3 parts, where the questionnaire is a tool to measure the level of strength and readiness of farmer organizations, in 5 aspects: 1. Strength or readiness of farmer organizations 2. Plan implementation or farmer rehabilitation and development projects 3. Regulations and laws that support operations for farmer rehabilitation and development projects 4. Personnel and structures both quantitatively and qualitatively (knowledge and skills) 5. Economic benefits of the farmer rehabilitation and development project in terms of cost reduction, income increase, and ability to manage the debt of farmers, the efficiency of project implementation.

### Data analysis

Analytical method

a. The study employs Likert's 5-level scale to quantitatively evaluate the strength and readiness levels of farmer organizations, comparing them with the performance of the Office of the Farmer's Rehabilitation and Development Fund. Mean ( $\mu$ ) and standard deviation ( $\sigma$ ) are computed across five aspects. The Likert scale, ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, delineates distinct levels of strength and readiness within farmer organizations (Likert, 1961).

b. Interview form (Qualitative data) The researcher will use the data from the key informant to summarize the issues by Content Analysis which covers all 5 aspects under the framework of the CIPP Model analysis, including various suggestions and presenting as narrative discussion.

c. Focus group meetings, presenting research results as a reflecting process to listen to suggestions and feedback information from the meeting participants.

### Research Results

**The 1<sup>st</sup> objective:** From studying the situation of farmers' household debt and monitoring and evaluating the results of the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project found that:

### 1) Farmer's household debt situation

At present, there are 8,037,932 farmers in Thailand, 9,202,664 farmers registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, 4,437,527 crop farmers, 783,353 animal husbandry farmers, 47,627 aquaculture farmers, and 2,331,568 households of animal husbandry and crop farmers 214,741 households of crop farmers and aquaculture, 15,408 households of animal farmers and aquaculture, 207,708 mixed farms (Office of Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, 2022). Although agricultural occupations can generate constant income for farmers during the year 2019, it was found that farmers have decreased in debt from 2013, from 70.3% to 62.8 % in 2019, and is likely to continue to decline. Moreover, it is found that the debt value of agricultural households tends to increase progressively due to the value of exports decreasing, causing farmers to sell more domestic products. As a result, agricultural products are oversupply in the market, which causes product prices to continue declining. Therefore, farmers have insufficient income to cover their high expenses. And the farmers have to borrow money to invest in the production process. According to the consumption report in 2019, there was an export value of 675,198 million baht, but farmers had a debt value of agricultural households as high as 253,295 million baht, representing 37.5% of total income. (National Statistical Office, 2021)

### 2) Performance of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund

The work of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund from 2012 to 2021, has the main objective of solving the debt problem of farmers groups and strengthening farmer development through farmers groups by approving the farmer rehabilitation and development project for a group of farmer organizations across the country. It was found that during that year, a group of farmers' organizations registered to the funds in a total of 56,284 organizations and 5,670,659 farmers as members, representing 61.19% of the total number of farmers in the country. A total of 11,361 projects for the rehabilitation and development of farmers have been approved, with a total of 557,408 farmers receiving benefits, in a total amount of 1,194,992,422 baht divided into subsidies (i.e., grants to strengthen and support the strength of farmers) in the amount of 9,558 projects, around 407,857,364 baht, and 1,803 loan projects, as of 787,135,364 baht.

### 3) Results of monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund in 77 provinces.

aspect 1; Strength or readiness of farmer organizations **with a total mean of 4.06**, for example, farmers have established a management committee or a group/organizational working group structure. There is a clear scope of work, practical, group work has clear goals by allowing members to participate in every step, members of the group have learned more new knowledge to develop the group to be stronger, the group/organization has leaders or potential practitioners who are ready to lead the group well, the operation of the group has clear disclosure of financial and resource expenditure that is transparent and verifiable,

aspect 2: Implementation of plans or projects for rehabilitation and development of farmers. **The overall average was 3.95**, namely groups/organizations had a systematic work

plan before implementation, groups/organizations had allocated budget, resources, manpower, and equipment, groups/organizations had performance monitoring since the start, group members are more learning in new knowledge to develop the group to be stronger, the group/organization has a leader or potential practitioner ready to lead the group well, the group/organization has monitoring and evaluation of the work during implementing and ending process, the work performed by the group is efficient and effectiveness clearly under the action plan and objectives of the group/organization,

aspect 3: Regulations and laws that are tools to support operations in the rehabilitation project and develop farmers, **The total average was 3.88**, through requesting for registration of farmer organizations in term of request subsidies or support which is not complicated and convenient, form for proposing plans and rehabilitation projects that are easy to understand and convenient for preparing budget proposals for groups of farmers, regulations and the law is promoted for supporting and facilitating the work of farmers groups and agricultural career development of farmers in effectively, Criteria for approval of rehabilitation plans and projects are in line with the real needs of farmers, consideration and process for approving is not complicated and convenient, the process of reporting results is not complicated, regulations and practices in term of finance is support and assist the work of farmers groups efficiently, budget regulations for procurement and equipment also practical and efficiently,

aspect 4: Personnel potential and structure, both quantitatively and qualitatively found that **the total mean was 3.91**, namely groups/organizations that created values, goals and guidelines for the organization's operations. concretely, having vision, and being able to control the operations of the group Effectively, farmers' groups/organizations have potential members, who can learn and develop themselves regularly, farmers' have members who are honest, disciplined, moral, and ethical in their work, The group has a meeting to share knowledge and listen to group members for suggestions to resolve problems. For the self-potential development of group members, the group has guidelines for a sustainable quality of life development of members by organizing a welfare system for members such as medical welfare benefits. Loan welfare, etc., Group members are proud which makes the operation more efficient,

aspect 5; economic benefits of the farmer rehabilitation and development project on farmers in terms of reducing costs, increasing income, and being able to manage farmer debt. **The total mean was 3.94**, groups/organizations to be supported, promoted, or facilitated by various funds to make groups/organizations gaining economic security benefits, groups/organizations Supported, promoted, or facilitated in Capital can result in reductions in production costs, groups/organizations have been supported, promoted or facilitated by various funds resulting in strengthening the income of farmers groups more concretely, the group/organization has been supported, promoted or facilitated by various funds enabling farmers to effectively resolve debt problems, groups/organizations have been supported, promoted or facilitated by various capitals to expand the economic opportunities of the farmers' group concretely. It was concluded that overall, the strength or readiness of farmers'

organizations in all aspects had an **average of 5 aspects at 3.94**, which is interpreted as a **high level** in all aspects.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> objective:** From a qualitative study, combine the answers from the key informants and analyze the data by aspects (with CIPP MODEL in terms of context or environment, Input (primary factor), Process, Product) to compare successful farmer organizations with farmer organizations that still need to be developed to conclude.

Context (context or environment) found that agricultural products are still in demand in domestic and international markets together with the government's policy that wants to develop the country into a world kitchen including the factors of geography and climate of Thailand which suitable for farming. The policies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the Office of the Agricultural Development and Rehabilitation Fund have a clear goal to solve problems for farmers by promoting the strength or readiness of farmer organizations. But there is still a major problem in terms of the fluctuation of agricultural prices which directly affects the income of farmers' organizations. For successful farmers' organizations, it is found that most of them are already strong organizations and it is possible to take advantage of such opportunities in working together as a teamwork, able to build the ability to create jobs or careers which results in tangible revolving income within the group or organization. The farmers' organizations that still need to be developed are those that have been newly established and members lack organizational experience. Therefore, there is still a lack of potential to bring such opportunities to help in enhancing the potential of the group. Moreover, it was deteriorated by the price of agricultural products which can reflect the potential to repay the debt. However, the success of farmers' organizations also depends on visionary Leadership potential combined with the environment and readiness.

**Input (primary factor)** The assessment of input factors various resources such as laws, manpower, technology, and budgets found that although the input is still very limited, successful farmers' organizations have the potential to follow regulations and adopt the laws to support the work very well, because of member participation and strong leadership. the farmer's organization still needs to be developed is still a lack of knowledge and understanding of various systems in the work. The members are not a serious grouping, but a grouping according to regulations to access the project budget, when the project has been approved, they will depart for their own business without participation in the development of the organization. Moreover, the leader still lacks leadership, causing the development of the organization in terms of lack of the potential for continuous working, while the human resources for the funds are still insufficient to provide mentors or coaching to farmers' organizations due to limited budget and lack of technology experts to help support the work to be more flexible.

**Process:** found that successful farmer organizations have a structured system for management and work procedures in line with the project plan proposed to the funds. Role and responsibility are shared among members and it works in a network with outsiders including efficient resource allocation according to the plan while farmer organizations that

still need to be developed, it still depends on many other factors. This is because most farmers' organization members tend to be the elderly who are traditional farmers. Organizational leaders lack leadership skills which causes limitations in building a learning and development process. Members of the organization still do not understand the system or the funds regulation nor project plans that request support and subsidies especially the paperwork according to various government regulations is a very effective obstacle.

**Product:** the operations of the funds are affected by cost reductions, increase in income, and increasing the farmers' ability to repay debts. It was found that successful farmers' organizations can use economic benefits in terms of reducing costs, increasing income, and farmers' ability to pay debts. The data is consistent with the quantitative study data that affects the level of strength and readiness of farmer organizations in the operation of the Office of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund at a high level while farmers' organizations that still need to be developed found that they are still unable to fully utilize the support because their operations do not in line with plan. Also, the abandonment of the group during the operation and the death of the organization's leader cause the organization to be in a state of weakness as well as a lack of new generation members to continue learning and developing.

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative research underscore the critical role of competent organizational leadership and vision in the success of farmer organizations. Additionally, fostering the potential of organization members through continuous learning of new technologies is identified as another key success factor, given the interconnected nature of farmer organizations within society. Moreover, the need to establish robust social networks to fortify organizational strength is highlighted. However, a notable challenge arises from the predominance of elderly members within farmer organizations, leading to a weakness in adapting to modern technology. Addressing this technological gap emerges as a crucial success factor for organizational development. Consequently, the research points towards the necessity of formulating guidelines for community organization self-management, which will be addressed in Objective 3 of the study.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> objective:** The research delineates a developmental framework for farmer organizations, contrasting successful and unsuccessful paradigms, which culminates in the formulation of a structured guideline termed the "LAMS Model." This model comprises four essential components; 1) *Leadership Development*: Effective organizational leadership is pivotal for success. Prioritizing the cultivation of leadership skills among leaders is paramount, constituting the foundational step for any community organization. 2) *Potential Development*: The formation of cohesive farmer teams, composed of members from diverse backgrounds, is essential. However, ensuring the continuous development of members' skills and potential to enhance efficiency is equally critical. 3) *Network Development*: Coexistence within society necessitates the establishment of robust social networks. Given the evolving social landscape, continuous development and engagement with other societal groups are imperative. Leveraging the cognitive strength of external social networks augments the resilience and

potential of farmer groups. 4) *Technology Development*: Embracing and integrating information technology systems into organizational operations enhances efficiency. As technology becomes increasingly pervasive, its adoption represents a strategic imperative for organizational advancement.

Through the implementation of the LAMS Model, farmer organizations can navigate the intricacies of development, fostering resilience, efficiency, and adaptability in an ever-evolving agricultural landscape.

### The New Body of Knowledge

The innovative LAMS Model presents a holistic and all-encompassing strategy that intricately navigates the intricate path of fostering the growth and evolution of farmer associations. This unique model astutely acknowledges and values the pivotal role played by effective leadership, untapped potential, interwoven networks, and cutting-edge technology in propelling and attaining prosperity and progress in the realm of agricultural societies. (as figure 1)

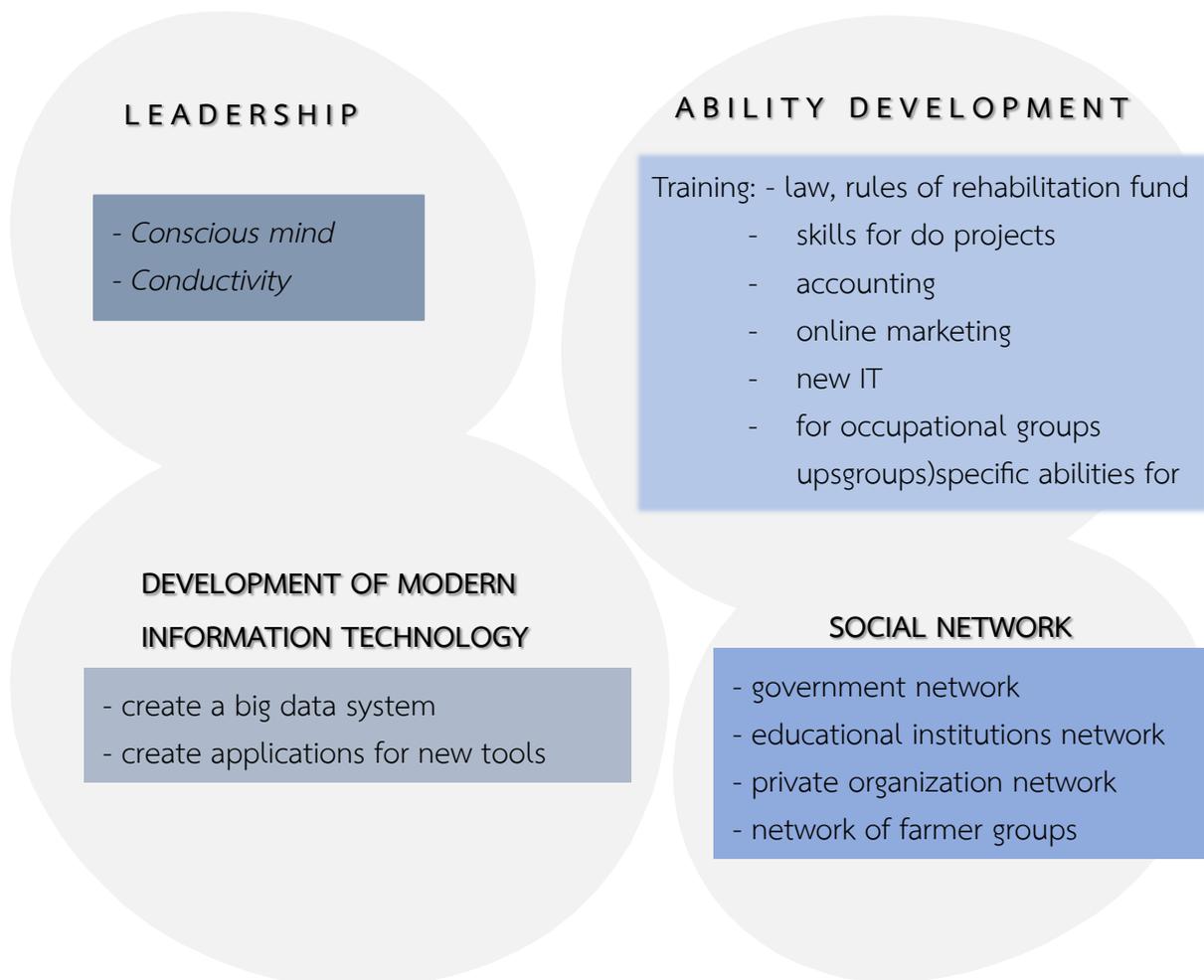


Figure 1 “LAMS MODEL”

The LAMS Model, an acronym for Leadership, Associations, Networks, and Technology, represents an innovative approach designed to holistically address the challenges and opportunities facing farmer associations. This model emphasizes the critical importance of effective leadership within these associations, recognizing that strong and visionary leadership is essential for guiding the organization toward its goals. Additionally, the LAMS Model highlights the significance of fostering and nurturing farmer associations, recognizing them as crucial vehicles for collective action and empowerment within agricultural societies. By emphasizing the need to strengthen interwoven networks, the model acknowledges the value of collaboration and partnerships in maximizing impact and reaching broader objectives. Furthermore, the integration of cutting-edge technology is a central tenet of the LAMS Model, recognizing its potential to enhance efficiency, productivity, and access to markets and information for farmer associations. Overall, the LAMS Model presents a comprehensive and forward-thinking strategy for fostering the growth and evolution of farmer associations, ultimately contributing to the prosperity and progress of agricultural communities.

### Discussion of Research Results

The research findings from the first objective underscore the critical issue of farmer's household debt in Thailand, significantly impacting the socioeconomic well-being of rural communities. Promkhambut et al. (2023) offer a nuanced examination of the agrarian transition in Southeast Asia, providing context to the challenges confronting Thai farmers and emphasizing the significance of initiatives like the Rehabilitation and Development Fund. Conversely, Ratanavararak and Chantararat (2022) shed light on the intricate nature of addressing farmers' financial vulnerabilities, underscoring the necessity for effective interventions like the fund. Through such integration of research outcomes and practical data, policymakers can devise targeted strategies to address the multifaceted challenges faced by farmers, thereby fostering sustainable development and resilience within rural communities.

The findings of the second objective highlight the interconnected themes of leadership, network dynamics, and technological adaptation in addressing access-related challenges within the global agricultural landscape. Wang (2024), presents a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between leadership, network dynamics, and technological advancements. Wang's study, which specifically delves into rice farming in rural Thailand, underscores the pivotal role of effective leadership in navigating the structural barriers that impede farmers' access to crucial markets and resources. Within farmer organizations, adept leadership is deemed indispensable for orchestrating collective action, advocating for policy reforms, and fostering collaboration with external stakeholders, thereby surmounting barriers to market entry and resource allocation. Moreover, Tansuchat et al.'s (2022) investigation into the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on sustainable agricultural value chains in Thailand further elucidates the importance of resilient networks in mitigating vulnerabilities and adapting to external disruptions. The research underscores the indispensable role played by robust social networks among farmers, government agencies, NGOs, and other pertinent

actors in disseminating critical information, sharing essential resources, and mobilizing support during periods of crisis. Within these networks, effective leadership is crucial for facilitating coordination, fostering trust, and mobilizing collective responses to emergent challenges, such as those precipitated by the pandemic. The amalgamation of insights derived from Wang's analysis of access-related challenges, Tansuchat et al.'s examination of pandemic impacts on agricultural value chains, and empirical data pertinent to the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project culminates in a nuanced understanding of strategies aimed at strengthening farmer organizations, fostering resilient networks, and harnessing technology to enhance the efficacy of development interventions. This interdisciplinary approach holds promise for promoting sustainable agricultural livelihoods and advancing rural development initiatives in Thailand.

The findings from the investigation of the third objective reveal that the assessment and monitoring of the Farmer's Rehabilitation and Development Fund in various provinces of Thailand provide valuable perspectives on regional efficacy. Through data analysis, nuances and obstacles are identified to reducing debts, generating income, and levels of participation. Such analysis aids in pinpointing exemplary approaches and areas necessitating enhancement to establish precise interventions. Discrepancies in the fund's impacts across regions contribute to devising resource distribution strategies for farmers facing vulnerabilities. This aligns with the scholarly work of Chantarasombat (2021) and Agsonsua (2022), which delves into the realm of knowledge management and participatory action research to cultivate self-reliance and sustainable progress within Thai communities. Their work furnishes recommendations for fortifying community entities by utilizing the sufficiency economy philosophy and innovative methodologies. Furthermore, the study conducted by Prabripu (2023) focusing on small-scale farming households offers suggestions for enhancing the resilience of rural communities. By amalgamating insights from these inquiries and the Farmer Rehabilitation and Development Project, it is plausible to steer grassroots empowerment and sustainable rural advancement in Thai society. This amalgamation of research endeavors aids in formulating evidence-driven approaches to foster socio-economic welfare and resilience among rural populations.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the complexity of farmer indebtedness is influenced by a myriad of factors, encompassing both external market dynamics and internal organizational capabilities within farmers' organizations. While external factors such as market conditions and interventions play a significant role, internal factors relating to leadership, knowledge base, group dynamics, and technological integration within farmers' organizations are equally crucial. Despite the challenges, monitoring and evaluation data indicate that farmers' organizations excel in key areas, paving the way for categorized groupings based on the CIPP Model. Robust organizations exhibit strong membership, potential for advancement, and a proactive approach to development, while others are still in the process of unlocking their full potential. Drawing from research insights, a comprehensive guideline for nurturing the potential of farmer

organizations emerges, encapsulated within the “LAMS Model.” This model underscores the importance of Leadership Development, Potential Development, Network Development, and Technology Development as key dimensions for organizational growth and resilience. By focusing on these dimensions, farmers’ organizations can enhance their capacity, foster sustainable agricultural practices, and effectively address the challenges posed by farmer indebtedness. Through strategic interventions and collaborative efforts, stakeholders can support the development of farmers’ organizations, thereby promoting inclusive growth, resilience, and sustainable agricultural practices in Thailand and beyond.

## Suggestions

From the study, the researcher has the following suggestions:

### 1. The suggestions from the research

The recommendations for the development of farmer organizations are focused on enhancing operational continuity, strengthening organizational capacity, and ensuring member welfare.

1.1 it is advised that farmer organizations adopt a network-based approach to facilitate knowledge transfer between generations, fostering integrated farming practices that blend traditional wisdom with modern technology.

1.2 To bolster the resilience of farmer organizations, they should transition from mere labor producers to entrepreneurial entities involved in both production and distribution, thereby reducing dependence on middlemen and stabilizing product prices.

1.3 The establishment of a "Farmer and Organization Welfare Fund" is proposed to provide financial support and welfare benefits to members, ensuring organizational sustainability.

### 2. The Suggestions for future research

For further research, it is recommended to explore factors that incentivize self-learning and self-development among farmers, promoting continuous improvement and sustainability. Additionally, investigating the beliefs, values, and actions that drive participation in group development can unlock the potential of group members for further growth. Finally, collaborative efforts between government, private, and public sectors should be studied, with a focus on implementing tangible and continuous activities in pilot areas that can be scaled up to cover broader regions, fostering holistic agricultural development.

## Acknowledgment

The researchers would like to thank gratitude towards the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund for their financial support, as well as all primary sources of information, organizational leaders, and personnel of the Provincial Office of the Farmers Rehabilitation and Development Fund for their collaboration in data gathering throughout the study. Appreciation is also extended to the research teams in various regions for their valuable assistance in quantitative data collection.

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