



**Organization:** HEKS Cambodia

**Location:** Preah Vihear, Kampong Thom and Battambang Provinces, Cambodia

**Solution:** Empowers smallholder farmers, particularly women, by scaling up the use of cover crops to improve soil health, increase farm profits & reduce greenhouse gas emissions

**Factsheet Period:** First round of UNDP-AFCIA funding (18 months);  
Second round of UNDP AFCIA funding (12 months)



**Training session for small farmers on using cover crops to enhance soil health @ HEKS Cambodia**

Unfettered climate change could lower Cambodia's GDP by 3-9% by 2050, affecting key crops such as rice, maize, cassava and cashew ([World Bank, 2023](#)). These adverse impacts will disproportionately impact smallholders, as well as women and individuals with disabilities who have less access to adaptation solutions. HEKS Cambodia is introducing a regenerative agriculture initiative, aiming to scale the use of cover crops for vital staple crops, increasing farmer profits, enhancing cropping system resilience, reducing food production emissions, and building supply chains for agroecological products. Key outcomes include training 1,000 farmers and improving access to cheaper, high-quality farming inputs, which will enable long-term, self-sustaining efforts for locally-led climate adaptation.



## Key achievements

- Trained 3,854 farmers (60% female) in cover crops and agroecology
- Enabled 749 farmers to adopt new agricultural practices
- Established 1,487 hectares under regenerative agriculture
- Produced and sold 154 tons of cover crop seeds
- Supported more than 1,000 farmers to adopt cover-crop practices, improving yields and farm incomes
- Trained and positioned 6 agricultural cooperatives across 5 provinces to promote and supply cover-crop practices to farmers, establishing a sustainable seed supply chain supported by incentives including 1,000 Riel per kilogram of seed sold and a 20% seed grant tied to sales targets, reaching thousands of farmers
- Reached 1,800 farmers/households through sensitization events, leading 500 farmers to begin planting cover crops and supporting expansion into cassava, cashew and paddy farms
- Expanded cover-crop seed production to 49 farmer producers ( % 44 women), covering over 84 hectares and generating an estimated 42 tons of seed for local communities
- Provided financial incentives, seed subsidies and contract-farming schemes to help farmers and cooperatives overcome economic and climate-related barriers, particularly in border and flood-affected areas



### Social impact

- Empowers women, youth, people with disabilities, and Indigenous farmers with sustainable and profitable agriculture practices. These boost their farming yields, expand market access and improve their food security in the longer-term.



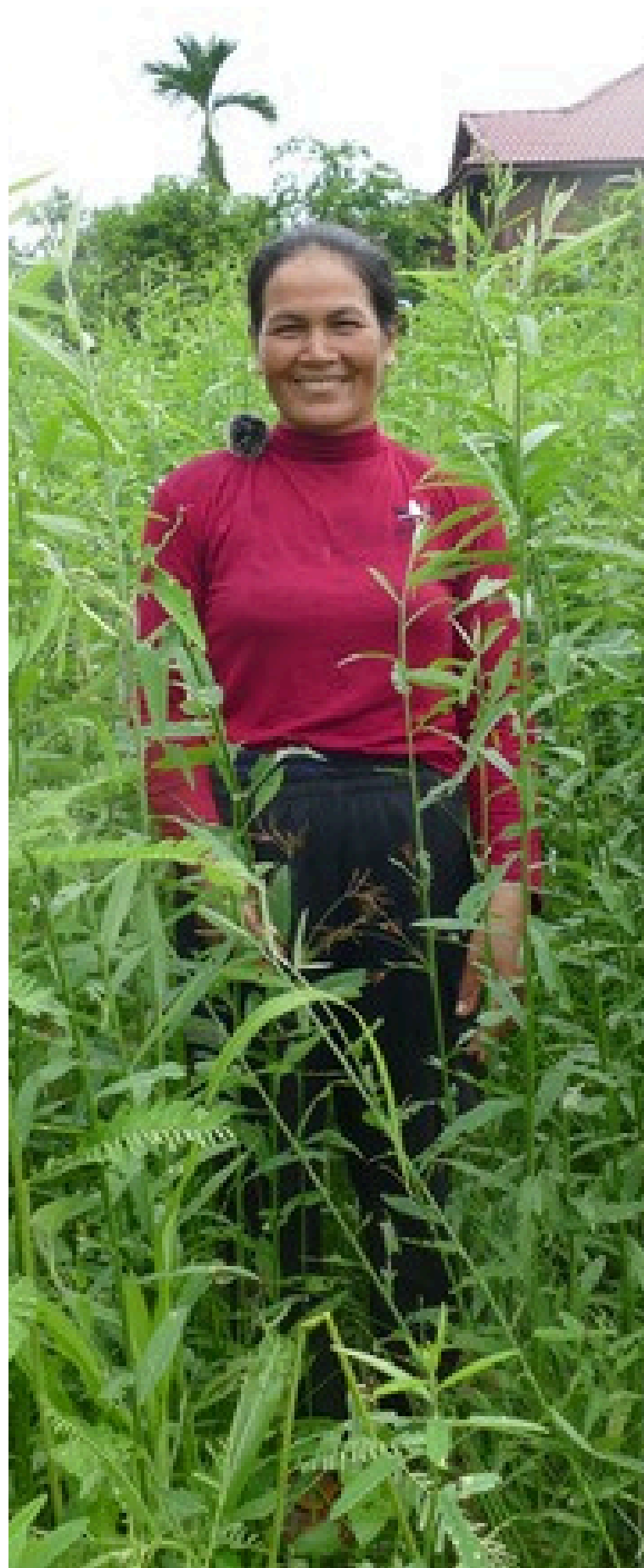
### Adaptation benefits

- Enhances water retention and boosts resilience against droughts and floods
- Captures carbon in the soil, mitigating agricultural contributions to climate change
- Improves soil fertility, reducing the need for costly inputs while boosting agricultural productivity



### Innovation

- Combines regenerative practices with market development
- Empowers women farmers and strengthens food security
- Overcomes cover crop adoption challenges via targeted behaviour change





### Replication potential

- Focusing on using easily accessible cover crops and customised seed mixes, making it adaptable to different types of farming systems.
- Training programs and behaviour change initiatives developed can be replicated and adapted in other regions.
- Market development strategy is a model for integrating regenerative agriculture into existing supply chains.
- A subscription-based discount scheme encourages smallholders to adopt new practices by offering lower rates initially, which helps boost both adoption and sales.

### Funding snapshot

- UNDP-AFCIA grant: US\$235,000 (initial grant: \$125,000; scaling grant: \$110,000)
- Co-financing by project implementing partner [SmartAgro](#): US\$48,920
- A crowdfunding campaign was launched to support seed access and promote the adoption of climate-resilient farming practices among 1,000 farmers

Investability	
Revenue per year	Farmers who adopted cover crops reported an average 23% increase in yields and reduced input costs, with 84% experiencing higher net farm income, saving \$45 per hectare through use of cover crops instead of chemical fertilisers.
Sustaining criteria	<p>Solution focused on farmers' behavioural change will last beyond the duration of the grant, as this directly benefits farmers' income and climate resilience.</p> <p>The strengthened market system for cover crops will boost greater competition and economic interest in this sector.</p> <p>Attempting financial sustainability through the implementing partner, <a href="#">SmartAgro</a>, an organization that seeks to develop and implement a sustainable business model for cover crop seed production with farmer networks, development of agroecological input and no-till machinery.</p> <p>2 Regenerative Agriculture &amp; Business Matching Forums connected 150+ stakeholders, leading to investment linkages with KS Seed, READA, BUAC, Agrismart, SME Bank and others, paving the way for green finance and scale-up.</p> <p>SmartAgro and ACs are embedding these business models into existing networks, making the cover crop market competitive, sustainable and investable.</p>
Financial innovation	<p>Connects farmers to markets for cover crops and agroecological products, promoting long-term economic viability.</p> <p>Reduces production costs through lower agrochemical use.</p> <p>Partnerships with SME Bank and ARDB on green loans expand access to finance for cover crop adoption.</p>



To read their story, visit [UNDP-AFCIA](#)

To watch their video, click [here](#)

To contact the initiative, visit [HEKS Cambodia](#)