

ACTION-RESEARCH project proposal

Comparing “agro-ecology” with industrial agribusiness. Stakeholders’ perceptions of diverse development pathways.

Action-Research in the Mekong-Region + Bhutan.

June 2013 – June 2015 (2 years)

Towards Organic Asia (TOA) partnership

School for Wellbeing Studies and Research, Bangkok/Thimphu, Thailand/Bhutan;with academic and practitioners network initiated atMaejo University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Comparing “agro-ecology” with industrial agribusiness. Stakeholders’ perceptions of diverse development pathways.

Action-research in the Mekong-region + Bhutan.

The Green Market Network in Bangkok – initiated by SuanNguenMee Ma social enterprise – and its partners all over Thailand represent a movement of food producers and consumers who aim at reducing the distances created by mass-economy and engage in direct or network partnerships supporting health, fairness, and care for ecology. Initiatives in this direction are increasingly supported by the formation of social enterprises. The actors in the network face the challenge of consumers’ education and engagement in dialogue with stakeholders representing industrial agribusiness. Scientific evidence is crucial in these educational processes and in advocacy. The “Green Market Network” has built up partnerships in the Mekong region + Bhutan while networking involves gradually partners from all over Asia. The *Towards Organic Asia* programme was established in 2011. One of its initiatives is this action-research project. Action-research is a continuous process of interaction between “communities of practice”, experimentation in the field and academic analysis; resulting in new impulses for policy development as well as for the concrete work of practitioners.

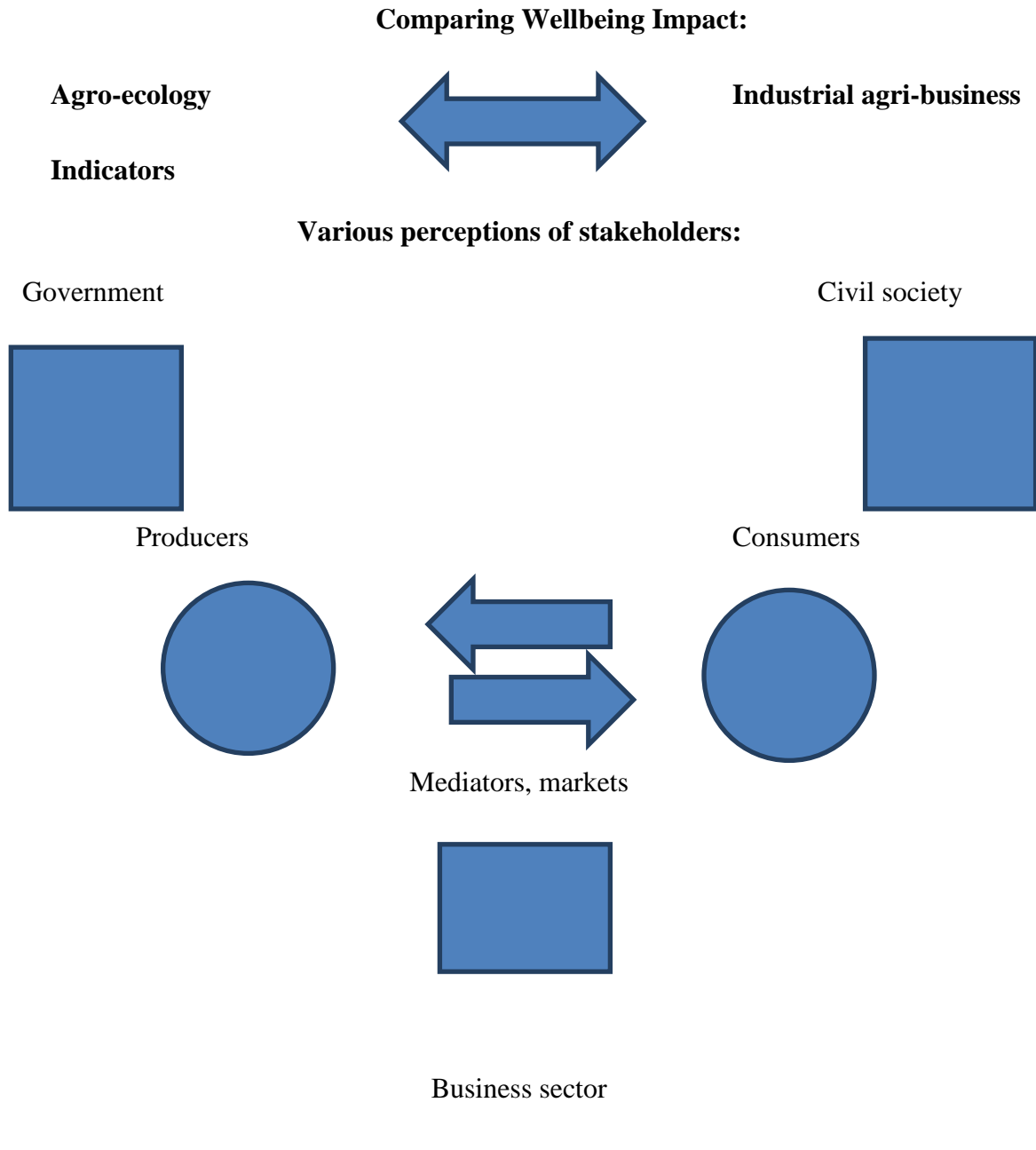
1. Aim and objectives

- a. To advance the understanding and analysis of **perceptions of stakeholders** – in the context of social, political, cultural, economic and ecological diversity of the Mekong region + Bhutan and taking into account underlying world-views – of policy dilemmas and decision-making in favour of ‘agro-ecology’ **or** industrial agri-business.
- b. To collect, synthesize and experiment recommendations on how public policy development **debates and dialogue** on “agro-ecology in comparison with industrial agri-business” can be shaped in countries and at the level of regional cooperation in the Mekong region + Bhutan¹, within an Asian perspective (including ASEAN and SAARC networks);
- c. for this purpose: to **articulate the wellbeing impacts** of development pathways with focus on the agriculture sector and food security; wellbeing impacts in particular resulting from diverse models of **market dynamics between producers, distributors and consumers of food**;
- d. To develop an **inter-disciplinary academic framework** that enables fair comparison and does justice to various angles of perception;

¹ Like most Asian major rivers, the Mekong River springs from the Tibetan Plateau. Bhutan plays an active role in promoting conservation of the glaciers of the Himalayan and Tibetan Plateau eco-system. Therefore Bhutan is a natural partner of the Mekong countries.

- e. including reflections on the diversity of scientific approaches (for example “reductionist” **in contrast with** “holistic” science);
- f. To explore how perceptions of various development pathways and contrasting approaches to food security co-relate to findings from the Bhutan-initiated global search for **a new development paradigm**.

2. Outline of “research landscape”:



The purpose of the interviews and dialogues with stakeholders regarding their perception on wellbeing impacts of agro-ecology in comparison with industrial agri-business is to select the core issues and indicators for further comparative action-research leading to strategic policy development initiatives and recommendations.

The ultimate aim and proposed outcome of the 2-years action-research project is a **strategic plan Towards Organic Asia “TOA beyond 2015” for research & development, public dialogue and social innovation in order to shape effective food security policies supporting sustainable development in the Mekong region and Asia.**

As an intermediate outcome a Towards Organic Asia (TOA) publication is planned to be presented at the IFOAM³ 18th Organic World Congress, October 2014, Turkey; and at other relevant platforms.

It is essential that this 2-years exercise will be driven by young people, given the need to counter the decrease of interest in agriculture *practice* among young people. The power of change being in the hands of the new generation⁴.

3. Introduction: Wellbeing Impact

This action-research project emerged from exchanges between the key partners of the *Towards Organic Asia programme* (TOA), the major project of the **School for Wellbeing Studies and Research**⁵. The TOA programme, initiated in 2011, is co-sponsored by CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France. One of the four focal areas⁶ of TOA is action-research & advocacy: improving participatory public policy conditions for small-scale organic farmers and ‘mindful markets’, in order to strengthen food security and food sovereignty.

The aim of the action-research in this context is to support policy debates with scientific evidence derived from open and un-biased dialogue among stakeholders. Although the researchers in this project are engaged with communities of practice that are clearly positioned in the organic movement, the challenge is to arrive at evidence-based consensus – or well defined different views – among stakeholders regarding the **wellbeing impact** of various development pathways in agriculture.

Point of departure

² This refers to the UN “MDG’s Beyond 2015” Commission (MDG = Millennium Development Goal).

³ International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.

⁴ See *Occupy Your Life* Manifesto, Young Organic Farmers’ gathering, Paksé, PDR Laos, presented during the TOA workshop at the Asia Europe Peoples’ Forum (AEPF) in Vientiane, 18 October 2012.

⁵ The School for Wellbeing Studies and Research was established as a follow-up to the 3rd International Conference on Gross National Happiness, Nongkhai and Bangkok, November, 2007.

⁶ 1. Capacity building & Youth; 2. technical support; 3. action-research and advocacy; 4. marketing development.

The action-research initiative was discussed in particular during the annual School for Wellbeing **study-visit to Bhutan, 1-11 May 2012**. The Mekong-region delegation to Bhutan included TOA partners from Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Delegation leader was Dr. Sisaliao Svengsuksa, President of Association for the Development of Peasant Societies (ASDSP) and Member of Parliament, PDR Laos. The Thai participants included the President of Maejo University, Chiang Mai, Thailand, Dr. Chamnian Yosraj.

During an audience with the former (2008-2013) **Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Jigmi Y. Thinley**, the Patron of the School for Wellbeing, the “100% organic country”-policy of Bhutan was discussed. Considerations were exchanged from the global perspective evolving from the high-level meeting at the New York UN headquarters, convened by Bhutan, 2 April 2012⁷. The high-level meeting was co-organized by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, partner of the School for Wellbeing and TOA project.

Discussions resulted in the common inspiration to propose a project, by which means **young researchers** from the Mekong region + Bhutan will be given an opportunity to practice action-research, and co-design of participatory policies towards sustainable development. Focal point will be the agriculture sector.

4. Clarification of terms

a. Organic agriculture, “agro-ecology”, sustainable farming

Organic agriculture and related concepts are used here in a broad sense and not limited to “certified organic”. A broad approach to organic agriculture, including small-scale farming, care for eco-systems, quality of life and equitable economic development, is now commonly indicated by the term “agro-ecology”⁸.

“Agro-ecology” is being used more frequently as a common denominator for various practices and is connected with the notion of “food sovereignty”.

Our approach encompasses all efforts towards realizing the four principles formulated by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFAOM)⁹:

The principle of **health**

The principle of **ecology**

The principle of **fairness**

The principle of **care**

⁷ See: www.2apr.gov.bt and “Bhutan Initiative” page

⁸ Miguel Altieri.

⁹ www.ifoam.org founded in Versailles, France, in 1972.

IFOAM values quality support and control guided by its “family of standards” including “participatory guarantee systems”.

Special attention is given to strengthening traditional farm practices by organic innovation in the Mekong region + Bhutan from the perspective of the IFOAM principles.

Sustainable farming is a more general, cross-cutting, term.

b. Industrial agri-business

Industrial agribusiness is an approach to agriculture driven by a free-market business paradigm implying maximum efficiency in extracting benefit and profit from natural and human resources at minimum cost and effort. Modern science (approaching ‘nature’ as matter) is applied to achieve efficiency towards this goal and technology is seen as the major driver of solutions for an increased demand for food due to population growth. Food Security is formulated from this perspective and justifies interventions by big corporations and their rights.

5. Project partners

School for Wellbeing Studies and Research¹⁰

The School for Wellbeing Studies and Research was established in August 2009 – within the context of Gross National Happiness conferences in Bhutan (2004 and 2008), Canada (2005), Thailand¹¹ (2007), Brazil (2009) and USA (2010) – by three founding partners:

- **Chulalongkorn University, Thailand**
- **Centre for Bhutan Studies (CBS), Bhutan**
- **Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation¹² (SNF), Thailand**

The “school”, an independent think-tank, has been active in diverse ways. Public lectures, dialogue and debate were organized, among others, with Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz, physicist and ecology activist **Vandana Shiva**¹³ author of *Earth Democracy*, and Helena Norberg-Hodge who launched her film *The Economics of Happiness*. Workshops were held with Ven. Matthieu Ricard, author of *Happiness. Life’s Most Important Skill*, Nic Marks, New Economics Foundation (nef), psychologist Robert Biswas-Diener and a range of Thai academics, practitioners and policy makers. In January 2012 Arthur Zajonc, President of the Mind and Life Institute joined the series of dialogues on science and spirituality.

¹⁰ www.schoolforwellbeing.org

¹¹ The conference in Nongkhai and Bangkok, Thailand, November 2007, was titled *World Views Make A Difference. Towards Global Transformation*.

¹² Founded by SulakSivaraksa in 1968.

¹³ Vandana Shiva encouraged us to start the *Towards Organic Asia* project.

The School for Wellbeing implemented an action-research project *Wellbeing Society scenario design* supported by Thailand Research Fund, and organized an international exchange- platform *Re-thinking Property. Pathway to a Wellbeing Society scenario?*¹⁴ staging independent academics and practitioners, among others: Dasho Karma Ura (CBS), Nicanor Perlas, founder of the Centre for Alternative Development Initiatives (CADI), Philippines, and Silke Helfrich, Commons Strategy Group, Germany. Affiliates of the School for Wellbeing participated in international conferences, in particular a series in Bhutan organized by the Centre for Bhutan Studies, while contributing occasional papers and articles in diverse publications.

In 2011 a pioneering group started with a pilot year of the *Towards Organic Asia programme* (TOA) and the School for Wellbeing became a formal partner of CCFD-Terre Solidaire, a French NGO, which supports the TOA programme.

The *Towards Organic Asia* programme was launched at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, during the annual Green Fair and Symposium, February 2012. The annual Green Fair, a platform for farmers, social entrepreneurs and mindful consumers, is organized by the Green Market Network¹⁵, the Thai primary partner in the TOA programme.

By now the TOA programme is being shaped by a network of partners from Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam; supported by a growing network of allies in Asia. The launching in January 2012 was marked by an international academic Symposium on Food Security, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

The participants of the Symposium stated that enormous differences in agriculture approaches divide Food Security policies: at one hand the “agro-ecology” approach and at the other extreme “industrial farming”. Leading participants expressed the intention to undertake comparative research and to provide a platform for dialogue and debate between all stakeholders involved in policy development regarding the agriculture sector.

The industrial farming sector is well-organized and its world-view directs most agriculture universities and research agencies. In order to cope with the requirements of a proper debate benefiting the common good, the “agro-ecology” movement needs to be strengthened and be given **equal opportunities to conduct research & development**.

In this light, MJU, the School for Wellbeing and its TOA network of partners intend to build an **action-research platform** together with academic organizations and practitioners in the Mekong region + Bhutan, Asia & Pacific, as well as Europe and North America.

¹⁴ At Chulalongkorn University, 25-27 August 2012, co-sponsored by Thailand Research Fund, Chula Global Network, The Japan Foundation, Chula Global Network, SciencesPo Paris, Heinrich Boell Foundation, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

¹⁵ Initiated and managed by SuanNgunMee Ma social enterprise, Bangkok, affiliated with SNF.

The ultimate aim and proposed outcome of the 3-years project is a **strategic plan for research & development, public dialogue and social innovation in order to shape food security and food sovereignty policies towards sustainable development in the region.**

Maejo University (MJU)

Maejo University (MJU) was established in 1934 and is Thailand's oldest agricultural institution. At present it caters for nearly 20,000 students. It has 12 faculties/schools with 56 B.S./B.A., 22 M.S./M.A. and 4 Ph.D. programmes. MJU's main campus is located in Sansai District, Chiang Mai Province and it has 2 more campuses and a farm of 427 ha. The direct partners for this project are the **School of Administrative Studies** and the **organic agriculture programme** (in development).

The philosophy of MJU is: focus on the development of graduates who bear wisdom, persistence, perseverance and moral integrity towards the prosperity of the Thai people in an agriculture-based society.

MJU has the ambition to become a **regional international “hub” for organic agriculture.** It has developed institutional linkages with universities in PDR Lao, Cambodia, Vietnam as well as in the Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America.

TOA Mekong region + Bhutan partnership

See full list of partners TOA brochure, version mid-2012 and www.schoolforwellbeing.org

6. Global perspective: The “Bhutan Initiative”

As a courageous player in the global arena, the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan, which promotes a “100% organic country” policy, proposed a Resolution on “Happiness: Towards a holistic approach to development” to the United Nations. **Resolution65/309** was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly. Consequently the Royal Bhutanese Government, in collaboration with the Centre for Bhutan Studies, convened a High-Level Meeting at the UN Headquarters, New York, 2nd April 2012, unexpectedly attended by more than 700 participants.

Simultaneously the Bhutanese government launched, as an input for the draft outcome document for RIO+20, an appeal titled *Time for a Sustainable Economic Paradigm*. It proposes to re-think the Bretton Woods agreements of 1944 which still determine the world economy, including emphasis on GDP as the leading indicator of progress.

A regional action-research platform

The School for Wellbeing Studies and Research intends to support, within its limitations, the process which is now emerging from the global “Bhutan Initiative”.

Research done so far by the school (both conceptual research, and action-research undertaken with the Green Market Network in Thailand as its “community of practice”) points at the agriculture sector as a fundamental and decisive area where policy development dilemmas at

diverse scales, once well understood, cast a new light on economic challenges at the macro-economic level. **A holistic approach to developing the agriculture sector and Food Security policies, possibly holds the key to the much needed paradigm shift towards sustainable development involving all economic areas, other sectors, and the shaping of a new “global architecture” guiding economics.** Understanding this social innovative role of the organic agriculture sector, in contrast to urban-driven technological determinism, needs insight generated from the full diversity of academic disciplines. Comparative research between “agro-ecology” and industrial farming, including dialogue and debate between stakeholders, will reveal the impact of (options for) policy decisions on the wellbeing of local and global citizens. The leading assumption of this proposal to establish an action-research platform is that cross-cultural comparative research concerning various agriculture practices, embedded in development pathways and underlying world-views, will contribute to enabling the *constitution of a sustainable economic paradigm and its broad implementation.*

7. Conceptual framework

Comparison between agriculture systems will have to be undertaken in a “multi-perspective” conceptual framework.

In order to explore fully the “holistic approach to development” mentioned in the UN Resolution proposed by Bhutan and adopted by the GA, reflections on science will be inevitable. Holistic science has not been developed and accepted to the same fabulous heights as conventional (“reductionist”) science and debate is needed to identify space for alternative knowledge systems. Differences on alternative definitions of “evidence” will have to be mediated.

At another level the four pillars of GNH: promotion of culture; good governance; equitable socio-economic development; environmental conservation and rehabilitation, offer a window to understanding holistic development, in particular once placed “into perspective”.

In the recent research work undertaken by the School for Wellbeing, a “New Third Way”¹⁶ has been explored: a “new generation” alternative development path in between neo-liberalism and communism. This path would be characterized by community-based security, common property, and altruism; in contrast with wealth-based security, private property and “happiness as satisfaction of individual needs”, at one hand (neo-liberalism); and at the other hand state-guaranteed security, public property, and contentment as basic mode of happiness, ideally underpinning the socialist “welfare state”.

Quality of life can be generated from transcending conflict of interest between the three above “models” – rather than seeking compromise – through holistic interaction, bringing to the forefront the best qualities from each of them. This dynamic “synthesis” can be called the Wellbeing Society.

¹⁶ Following Anthony Giddens’ publications and advice to the Tony Blair and Bill Clinton governments.

A tentative roadmap to Wellbeing Societies

A strategic roadmap towards the Wellbeing Society – shaped in diverse modes within various socio-geographic and cultural contexts – has been drafted, including three steps (which can be undertaken simultaneously) and addressing three dimensions of security:

- **Food Security and Food Sovereignty**
 - Determining “agro-ecology” as the leading principle for agriculture-, health- and economic- policies; this would include bridging the urban-rural divide (in other words: strengthening rural based culture and economies to counter urban bias).
- **Social security**
 - Translating the right of “education for all” into a common responsibility towards shaping “transformative education”, including the empowerment of communities (enabled by national governments) towards care for the social security of its members.
- **Human Security**
 - Developing a holistic approach to security, enabled by “consensus building leadership”.

8. Wellbeing Impact Assessment

In order to be able to compare various systems and practices, an “instrumentarium” will have to be developed that clarifies criteria and indicators for various impacts.

In the first place existing criteria for **Environmental and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA)** can be applied to the comparison of agriculture systems.

However, this assessment should be complemented with application of the **GNH Index**:

- Nine domains: psychological wellbeing, health, education, time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards.
- The assessment methodology as practiced in the Gross National Happiness Commission of Bhutan.

Appropriate economic indicators should be selected as part of the assessment instrumentarium. This should include among others indicators for long term employment prospects, (hidden) costs of industrial production and transport, peak oil perspectives and equality indicators.

And **specific agricultural indicators** should be selected:

- Soil fertility
- Seeds sovereignty and resilience
- Food quality and impacts of health-supporting food
- Bio-diversity
- Land tenure

Other indicators should include **impact of food systems on the expenses of public health systems**. Human Security related projections of costs of climate change, social unrest, un-sustainable development should be taken into account leading to “**full cost National Accounts**”¹⁷.

For debates among stakeholders of “agro-ecology” as well as industrial farming, some degree of consensus should be reached regarding the indicators underlying the comparison. Reaching consensus may seem to be illusive, but a sincere attempt should be made and remaining differences clearly identified.

9. Action-research

“Action research can be described as a family of research methodologies which pursue action (or change) and research (or understanding) at the same time. In most of its forms it does this

- by using a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection
- and, in the later cycles, continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles.

It is thus an **emergent** process which takes shape as understanding increases; it is an **iterative**¹⁸ process which converges towards a better understanding of what happens.

In most of its forms it is also participative (among other reasons, change is usually easier to achieve when those affected by the change are involved) and qualitative.

For action researchers, theory informs practice, practice refines theory, in a continuous transformation. The two are intertwined aspects of a single change process. It is up to the researchers to make explicit the theoretical justifications for the actions, and to question the bases of those justifications. The ensuing practical applications that follow are subjected to further analysis, in a transformative cycle that continuously alternates emphasis between theory and practice”¹⁹.

¹⁷ A concept pioneered by GPIAtlantic in Canada and tentatively implemented in Bhutan.

¹⁸ **Iteration** means the act of repeating a process usually with the aim of approaching a desired goal or target or result. Each repetition of the process is also called an "iteration," and the results of one iteration are used as the starting point for the next iteration.

¹⁹ *An Action Research Perspective*, presentation by Séan Mac Dermott and Dr. Kaye Scholfield, RMIT University.

10. Project design

- **Participants:** academic experts and practitioners (rural producers, urban consumer groups, social entrepreneurs – the three stakeholders in the Green Market Network) in dialogue with policy development experts in government agencies, NGO’s and the business sector
- **Objectives:** mapping eco-systems (soil, water, climate, bio-diversity), agriculture production and practices, property regimes, economic streams and income patterns, employment and education trends, social movements and (in-)equality etc.
- **Methodology:** developing a “wellbeing impact assessment” set of indicators and mediate debate.
- **Aim:** comparing the wellbeing impact of “agro-ecology” and industrial farming scenarios at various levels and in various local situations

TOWARDS ORGANIC ASIA programme Action-research project 2012-2014



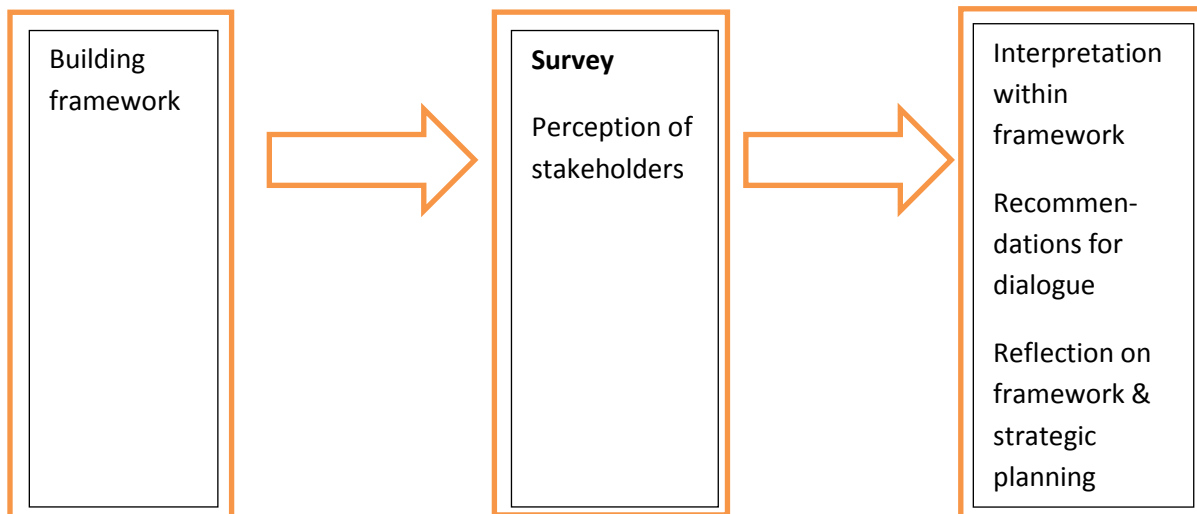
Proposed Action-Research Team: each Mekong country + Bhutan appoints:

- One **university** (possibly coordinating a national academic network) and one **academic supervisor** to form the academic platform.
- One **NGO or social enterprise (TOA partner)** and a coordinating **practitioner** per country. They together form the action-research practitioners’ platform.

- A **research student/research assistant** (graduates, M.A. or post M.A.) who will serve 9 months: 3 months (full-time) rotating in partner countries and 6 months (2 x 3 months part-time) in their own country to conduct the research project as an international team of 6 research students/assistants. They work closely together with students' teams in their country.
- **All together they form the action-research platform.**
- In addition some (not more than 3) research students/assistants from Asia, Europe, North America can join the project if institutional support can be secured.
- **The research assistants will cover a diversity of disciplines, directly or indirectly related to organic agriculture.**

The action-research team will consist of a self-organizing group of 'research assistants' or '(junior) researchers' and 'practitioners' guided by an Advisory Group of senior researchers and wisdom leaders.

11. Flow chart



12. Financial requirements

Various options are possible depending on own contributions from universities and NGO's; weight of supervisory and senior research tasks; participation from Asia, Europe, North America at research assistant as well as supervisory and research levels. Partial implementation by module and gradual extension is possible. See proposed Budget (28 May 2013) in appendix.

13. Towards Organic Asia action-research team

The initial body for starting-up this process will be the existing TOA action-research team, to be gradually extended with temporarily and permanent TOA action-research working group

members, including from Maejo University and its *Asia Today* academic and practitioners network as well as from Mekong region + Bhutan TOA partners.

Partners volunteering since first TOA partner meeting 2011, Ashram Wongsanit, Thailand

- **PayongSrithong**, *Agro-Ecology Thailand*
- **NakornLimpakubtathavon**, City-farm network, Bangkok, Thailand
 - Mekong region partners volunteering following *Asia Today* conference and TOA partner meeting 17 December 2012:
- **Dr. SomkidKaewthip / Dr. ChomchuanBoonrahong**, Maejo University, Chiang Mai, Thailand
- **Dr. DusitAthinuwat**, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand
- **HeanSavandara**, TDSP, Cambodia
- **KhinMaung Latt**, Metta Development Foundation, Myanmar
 - **TOA Steering Committee members (International Forum on Innovating Alternative Markets, Bangkok, 7 May 2013):**
- **Sai Sam Kham**, Metta Development Foundation, Myanmar
- **Tshering Phuntsho**, Centre for Bhutan Studies, Bhutan
- **Duong QuangChau**, SPERI, Vietnam
- **KolakaBouanedaoheuang / ChantalangsySisouvanh**, PADETC, Laos
- **KaemMakarady**, CEDAC, Cambodia
- **Supa Yaimuang**, Alternative Agriculture Network, Thailand
- **Wallapa van Willenswaard**, SuanNguenMee Ma social enterprise / Green Market Network, Thailand
- **SomboonChungprampree**, SEM, Thailand (Advisor)
 - TOA team at School for Wellbeing secretariat
- **Thanapol Kheolamai**, Coordinator TOA- programme
- **Dusita Krawanchid**, TOA Action-research Coordinator
- **Hans van Willenswaard**, Advisor TOA action-research & advocacy working group, School for Wellbeing Studies and Research
- **Vin Loc Van**, intern until 10 June 2013, Vietnam; contact person Young Organic Farmers (YOF)
- **Academic Advisors (proposed – to be approached formally – list to be completed):**
 - **Prof. SurichaiWung’gao**, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, **Thailand**
 - **Dasho Karma Ura**, Centre for Bhutan Studies, **Bhutan**
 - **Dr. Lanh Thi Tran**, Center for Human Ecology Study of Highlands (CHESH), **Vietnam**
 - **Dr. UnchaleeSanguanpong**, Organic Agriculture Innovation Network (OAIN), **Thailand**
 - **Others**

TOA Action-Research

Proposed WORKPLAN June 2013 – May 2015

1. PREPARATORY STAGE January 2012 – May 2013 (realized)

2012

| Month | TOA Activity | ACTION RESEARCH | Country |
|-------------|---|---|-----------------|
| Jan - March | TOA launching Symposium at Chulalongkorn University | Initial discussions and writing first draft proposal | Thailand |
| April | Study visit to Bhutan | Discussion of first draft project proposal | Bhutan |
| June | Preparatory visit to Laos | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with SombathSomphone on “Wisdom box” action-research approach | Laos |
| October | Young Organic Farmers’ gathering at Tha Tang farm; TOA presentation and workshop at AEPF, Vientiane | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Wisdom box” action-research workshop | Laos |
| Dec | Excursions Chiang Mai region. Maejo conference <i>Asia Today. Organic Agriculture, Politics and Wellbeing; Partner Meeting 2012</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on action-research with conference participants moderated by Dr. UnchaleeSanguanpong • Action-Research Planning with TOA partners | Thailand |

2013

| | | | |
|-------|---|--|--------------------|
| Jan | | | |
| Feb | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-research consultations: revision of draft | Thailand |
| March | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCFD study visit to France, Thanapol Kheolamai • <i>Asia Today</i> planning meeting (including action-research), Maejo University, Chiang Mai | France Thailand |
| April | | | |
| May | 7 - 12 May INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOA Steering Committee meeting - Discussion on Action-Research | Thailand |

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| | INNOVATING ALTERNATIVE MARKETS | | |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seed funding by CCFD- Terre Solidaire | |

2. First Stage IMPLEMENTATION June – December 2013

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| June – July | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements part-time Action-Research Coordinator (initially part-time). Start fund-raising and co-funding campaign with partners and universities | Thailand |
| August | Young Organic Farmers’ gathering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on curriculum development and “credit points scheme” | Consultation on Action-Research and inter-university network Mekong region + Bhutan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design workshop “Right Livelihood Summer School” | Vietnam Thailand |
| Sept - Dec | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature research • Initial contacts with universities by TOA partners and exploration of formation (Young) Researchers’ Team | Thailand; Mekong + Bhutan |
| 24 Oct – 5 Nov (to be con- firmed) | Study-visit to Bhutan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings on action-research with: CBS, NOP and Lobesa College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan | Bhutan |
| In week 18 - 23 Nov | Survey and Methodology Design Workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to design Action-Research manual for TOA partners + production “source book” | METTA, Myanmar |
| Idem | Annual Partner Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-research working group session | METTA, Myanmar |
| 28 – 30 Nov | Asia-Pacific Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (AP-SAFE) conference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School for Wellbeing / TOA paper | Chulalongkorn University |
| 2 Dec | Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Lecture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satish Kumar <i>Gandhian Vision for Our Time: Soil, Soul and Society.</i> | Chulalongkorn University |
| 2 – 4 Dec | Asia-Pacific Regional Symposium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Organic Farming</i> | IFOAM, FAO, AFMA, APRACA |

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---------------------|
| 12 – 14 Dec | Asia Today conference at Maejo University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including Workshop on Action-Research | Chiangmai, Thailand |
| 2014 | Launching “source book” on Action Research in the Mekong region + Bhutan | | |

3. Second Stage IMPLEMENTATION January – August 2014

Profile researchers:

- Senior students or freshly graduates
- Assumption: can self-organize to cover their own expenses with help of partners and universities and TOA (depending on results fund raising)

9 months:

- **first 3 and last 3 months researchers are available part time**
- **3 months March – May 2014: researchers are available full time**

2014

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|---|---------|--------|-------|----------|----------|-----|------|---------|------------------------|
| Jan - March | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEAM BUILDING and Training of Action-Research Team (including simulation of multi-stakeholder dialogue) Activating survey (+ questionnaire) and “manual” Data collection for country and region reports | Two trainings in Mekong region + homework | | | | | | | | | |
| March – May | | <p>Implementing Multi-stakeholder Survey’s (in groups of 3 researchers including 1 from host country) in two parallel countries each one month</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>Myanmar</td> <td>Bhutan</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>Thailand</td> <td>Cambodia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>Laos</td> <td>Vietnam</td> </tr> </table> | March | Myanmar | Bhutan | April | Thailand | Cambodia | May | Laos | Vietnam | Mekong region + Bhutan |
| March | Myanmar | Bhutan | | | | | | | | | | |
| April | Thailand | Cambodia | | | | | | | | | | |
| May | Laos | Vietnam | | | | | | | | | | |
| June - August | | Analysis of survey; pilot international stakeholder dialogue ; preparing publication including country and regional strategy reports; | Two meetings in Mekong region + homework | | | | | | | | | |

4. DISSEMINATION September – December 2014

| | | | |
|------|--|--|----------|
| Sept | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing presentation at IFOAM World Organic Congress + strategy reports | Thailand |
|------|--|--|----------|

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|-----------|---|---|------------------------|
| Oct | IFOAM World Organic Congress • TOA Mekong region + Bhutan workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation first TOA publication; multi-stakeholder simulation game at WOC | Turkey |
| Nov - Dec | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of publications and collecting responses • Preparing Multi-stakeholder dialogues • Evaluation and Synthesis | Mekong region + Bhutan |

5. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES & Analysis

2015

| | | | |
|--------------|--|--|------------------------|
| Jan – March | | Organization of country dialogues by partners and one international MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE | Mekong region + Bhutan |
| April – June | | Evaluation, analysis and submission of progress proposals | Thailand |

TOWARDS ORGANIC ASIA (TOA)

ACTION-RESEARCH

TEAM STRUCTURE

