

**FP214: Thai Rice: Strengthening Climate-Smart Rice Farming by GIZ**

Access the funding proposal: <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/gcf-b37-02-add05>

Civil society expresses profound concerns regarding FP214, based on our reading of the Funding Proposal (FP) and a clarifying meeting between GIZ Thailand and Climate Watch Thailand reflecting local partners' perspectives. Consultations with Thai farmers and local non-governmental organizations within the proposed project areas have raised significant apprehension about the FP. This project appears to intervene in rice farming without active farmer engagement, treating rice as a commodity and prioritizing market access and additional loans for farmers, overlooking its cultural and livelihood significance and the traditional knowledge associated with its cultivation.

Traditional rice farming practices in Thailand have been deeply ingrained for over a century, yet this FP inadvertently perpetuates industrial farming technologies that have made farmers more vulnerable to climate change and the loss of rich knowledge systems attached to agriculture.

Key concerns and feedback from Thai farmers and local NGOs can be summarized as follows:

First, lack of innovation. This project offers little innovation for Thai rice farming, as the proposed "smart technologies" have been in use for three decades, and with negative impact. These technologies were introduced to boost rice production for export, leading to farmer indebtedness. The FP's failure to learn from past experiences and the perpetuation of export-oriented policies is concerning.

Second, the proposal perpetuates an export-oriented approach to rice farming that has increased Thailand's methane emissions and exacerbated smallholder farmers' debt burdens. Corporate rice farming has disproportionately benefited agricultural commodity companies and rice-importing developing countries, with smallholder farmers systematically disadvantaged as they are expected to reduce emissions when larger entities should bear more responsibility. This approach runs against principles of climate and economic justice.

Third, on biodiversity and inclusivity: The proposed smart technologies, like Laser Land Leveling (LLL), endanger the biodiversity of Thai rice farms, which traditionally also grow crops other than rice. The potential exclusion of non-land-owning farmers could lead to further marginalization. This FP fails to prioritize adaptation that empowers all farmers, regardless of land ownership.

Furthermore, this proposal emphasizes market strengthening over farmers' ability to produce rice for their own consumption, favoring the private sector in governance and potentially leading to unfair farming practices.

In conclusion, FP214's approach threatens the cultural and economic significance of rice for smallholder farmers in Thailand as well as food sovereignty. This proposal does not fully align with the interests of local farmers, and fails to address the challenges of export-oriented agricultural policies. The FP relies on GCF funding which in turn will be increasing farmers' already extreme financial burdens. The rushed and incomplete consultation process shortchanges the needed more comprehensive civil society engagement.

We urge the Accredited Entity to revise this FP to reflect smallholder farmers' realities, and stand in solidarity with Thai farmers and local NGOs in requesting that the Board not approve this proposal until their concerns are comprehensively addressed. If approved, we can work to share technical recommendations with the AE.

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