Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Running Agribusinesses in Myanmar (eWomen)

Ram C. Bhujel*[1], E. Pantanella[2], G. Colla[2], W. Myint[3], and C. Cindy[3]

[1]Aqua-Centre, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Thailand

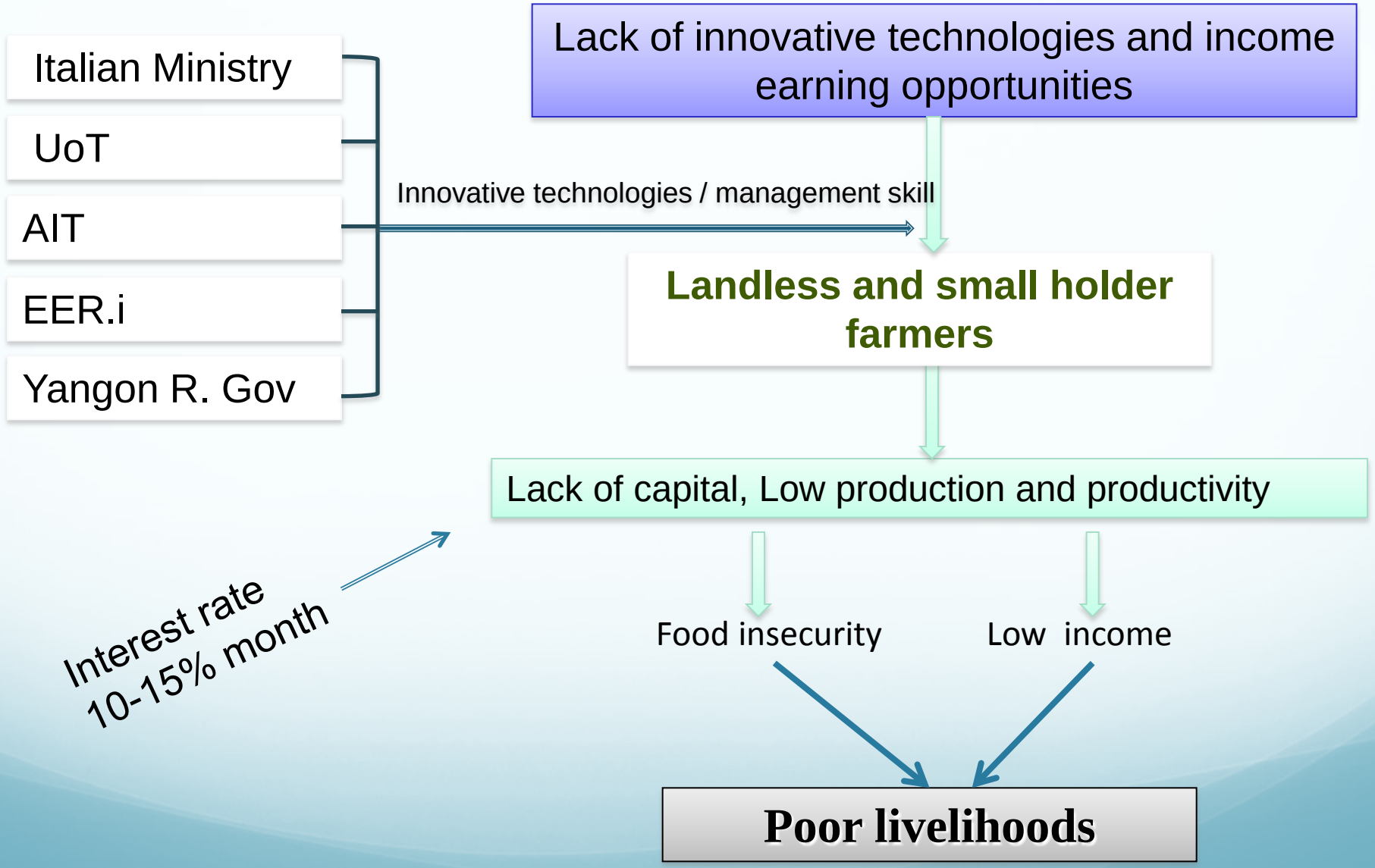
[2]Department of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, University of Tuscia (UoT), Italy

[3]Environmental Economics Research institute (EERi), Yangon, Myanmar

Outline

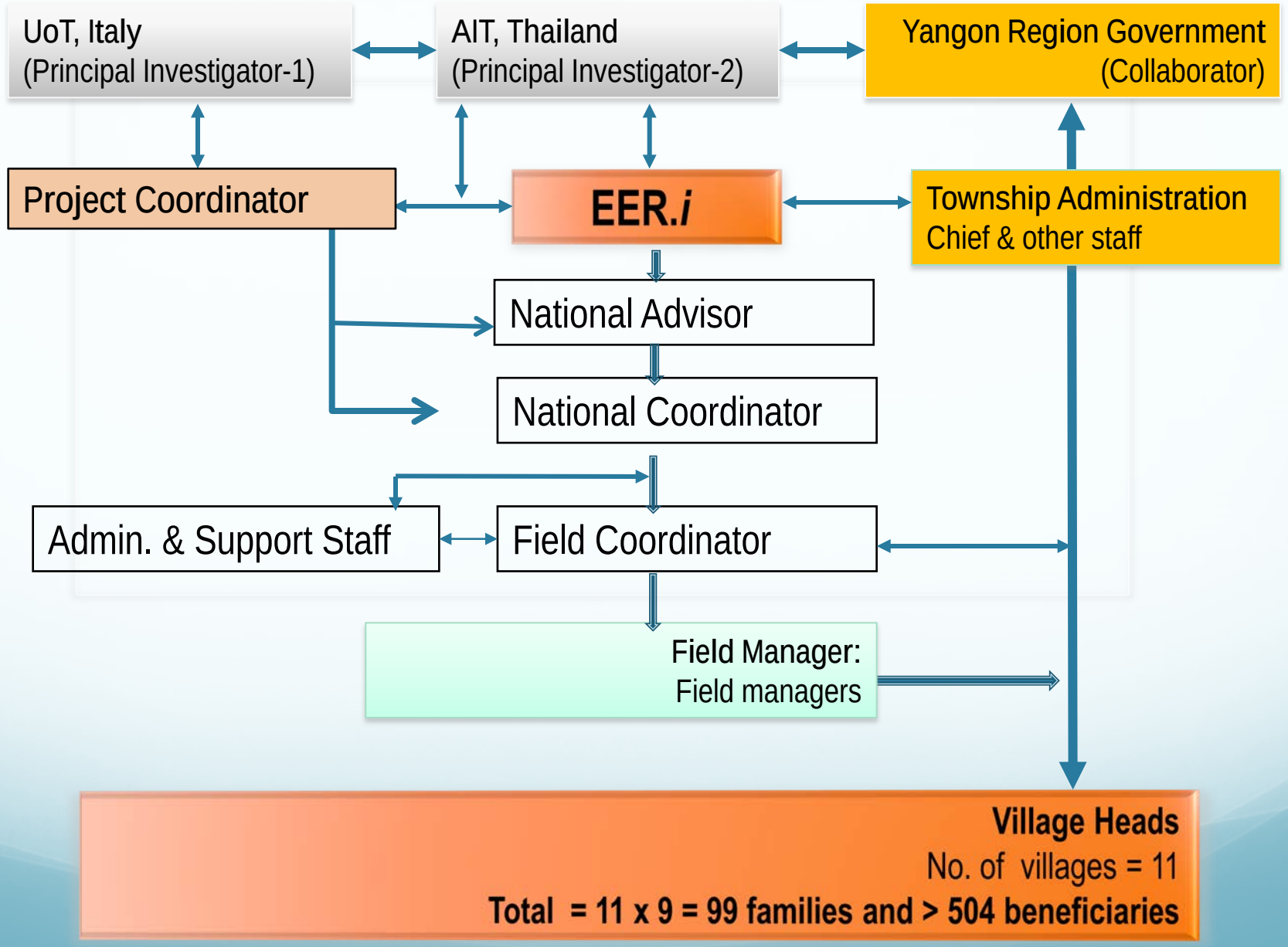
1. Project design and initiation
2. Field visit and problem identification
3. Planning and inception
4. Implementation –
   - Group formation
   - Training (abroad and in-country)
   - Monitoring
5. Results and evaluation
6. Conclusion and recommendations

Problems


Lack of innovative technologies and income earning opportunities
Italian Ministry
UoT
AIT
EER.i
Yangon R. Gov
Innovative technologies / management skill
Landless and small holder farmers
Lack of capital, Low production and productivity
Interest rate 10-15% month
Food insecurity
Low income
Poor livelihoods

Strategic objective/ goal:	Improved food security and farmer's livelihood through technology transfer
Purpose:	a) Increased farmers' income b) Improved farm productivity c) Women's empowerment
Outcome:	a) Application of most profitable agri-businesses b) Revolving fund
Outputs:	a) No. of women farmers trained b) No. of models & demonstration farms established c) No. of most profitable agricultural technology packages developed and disseminated d) No. of functional women's groups formed

Organizational structure



ASIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
1959
UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DELLA
Tuscia
Ministero degli Affari Esteri
EER.i
THE INCEPTION WORKSHOP
FOR

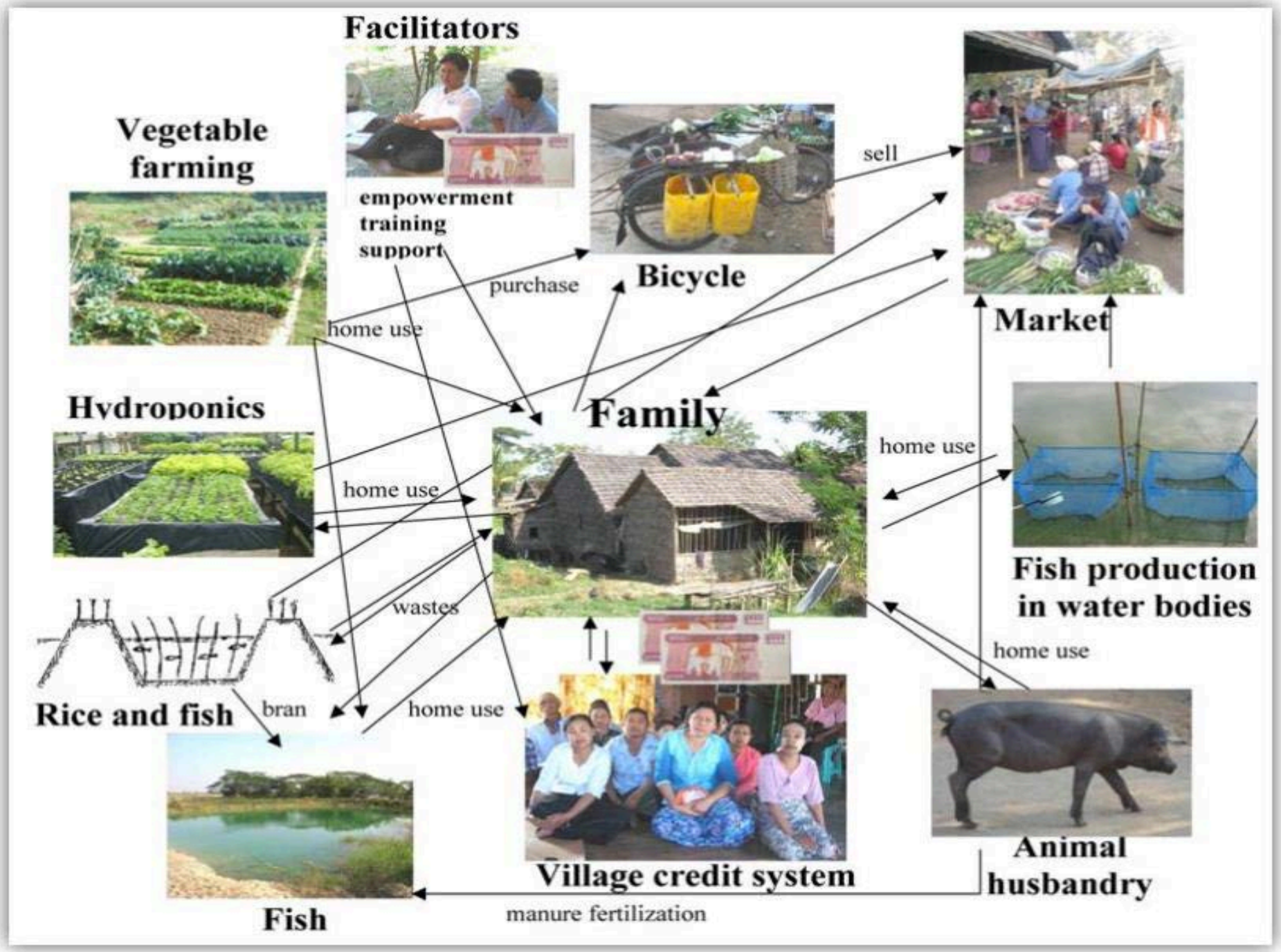
Inception workshop

Objectives

1. To improve food security (vegetables, fish, meat etc.)
2. Increase income of rural households
3. Empower women => self-help group
4. Revolving fund => source of investment

Project methodology

- **Participatory bottom-up approach**
- ***"Help people to help themselves"***
  - **Listen** to people problems and needs
  - See **what people want**
  - Think at **solutions together**
  - Find how **help** can be given
  - Find ways on how to **empower** singles/families/communities and create a security network
  - Work in **synergy** with institutions
  - Identify issues that need to be addressed at **governance** level


Facilitators
empowerment
training
support
Vegetable
farming
Bicycle
sell
Market
purchase
home use
Hydroponics
Family
home use
home use
Fish production
in water bodies
wastes
home use
Rice and fish
bran
home use
Village credit system
Animal
husbandry
Fish
manure fertilization

Explore income potential of other options compare, for examples

Goat:

Total no. = 10 goats
If 1 goat = 90,000 Kyat
Income = 90,000 x 10 = 900,000 Kyat

Monosex tilapia:

1 acre= 8,000 fish
If production = 4,000 kg
Income = 1,500 x 4,000 = 6,000,000 Kyat

Prawn, pig, tomato, Potato, Carrot, Cauliflower, Cabbages???

Formation of women's group

- 11 groups in 11 villages of Twante (about 60 km south of Yangon)
- 99 women, 9 members per group
- Group meetings / activities
- Revolving fund (women collected 1,000 kyat per month and project provided $1,000/group as seed money)
- Business plan – make profit => increase income

Training of Trainers at AIT

In-country training and Empowerment

1. **Individual skill:**

- Farming methods: goat, pig, fish / prawn and vegetables

- Keeping records of inputs and outputs and analyze which one gives the **best profit**

Share, compare & choose the most profitable one

Comparison among the businesses

	Ladies Finger	Cucumber	Goat	Fish	Others
A. Income	50,300	50,500	244,000	600,000	
B. Total cost	35,700	49,200	203,000	393,000	
C. Net profit/loss	**14,600**	**1,300**	**41,000**	**207,000**	**-**

Which one you choose?

Ladies Finger	Cucumber	Goat	Fish	Others
3	4	2	1	

Group meeting

- Women Leaders' role
- Contact each woman and ask how are they doing weekly basis
- Ask if anyone has any problem
- If there are problems, make that an 'agenda' for discussion for that month's meeting
- Gather to share any good / success stories

Meetings

- **Regular meeting**: e.g. every month
  - e.g. 1st day of each month
  - 5th of each month

- **Urgent / emergency meeting**:
  - If goats / pigs are sick
  - If farmers facing any problem

Decision / Minutes

1. In general, majority women's are doing fine except a goat farmer.
2. The group felt that goat mortality (Mrs A) is serious' it may transmit to others, Therefore, decided to request a veterinarian
3. The agreed to accept the application of Mrs A as a group member from January 2014.
4. We agreed to take active part in religious festival
5. The group selected the business plans submitted by Ms B & Mrs C but with the reduced amount i. 100,000 Kyat and 90,000 Kyats respectively
6. Next meeting will be on December 1, 2013

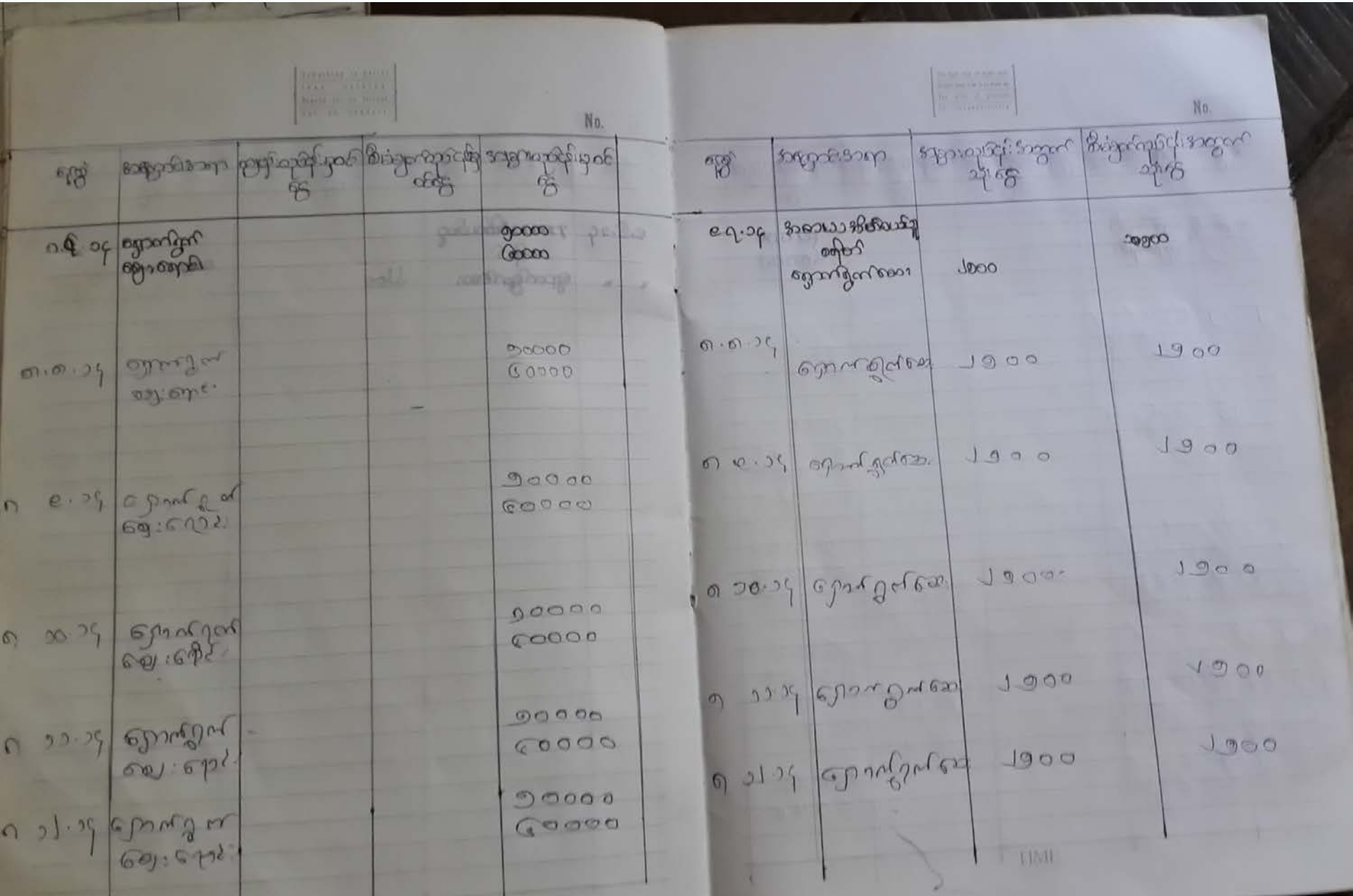
Agenda

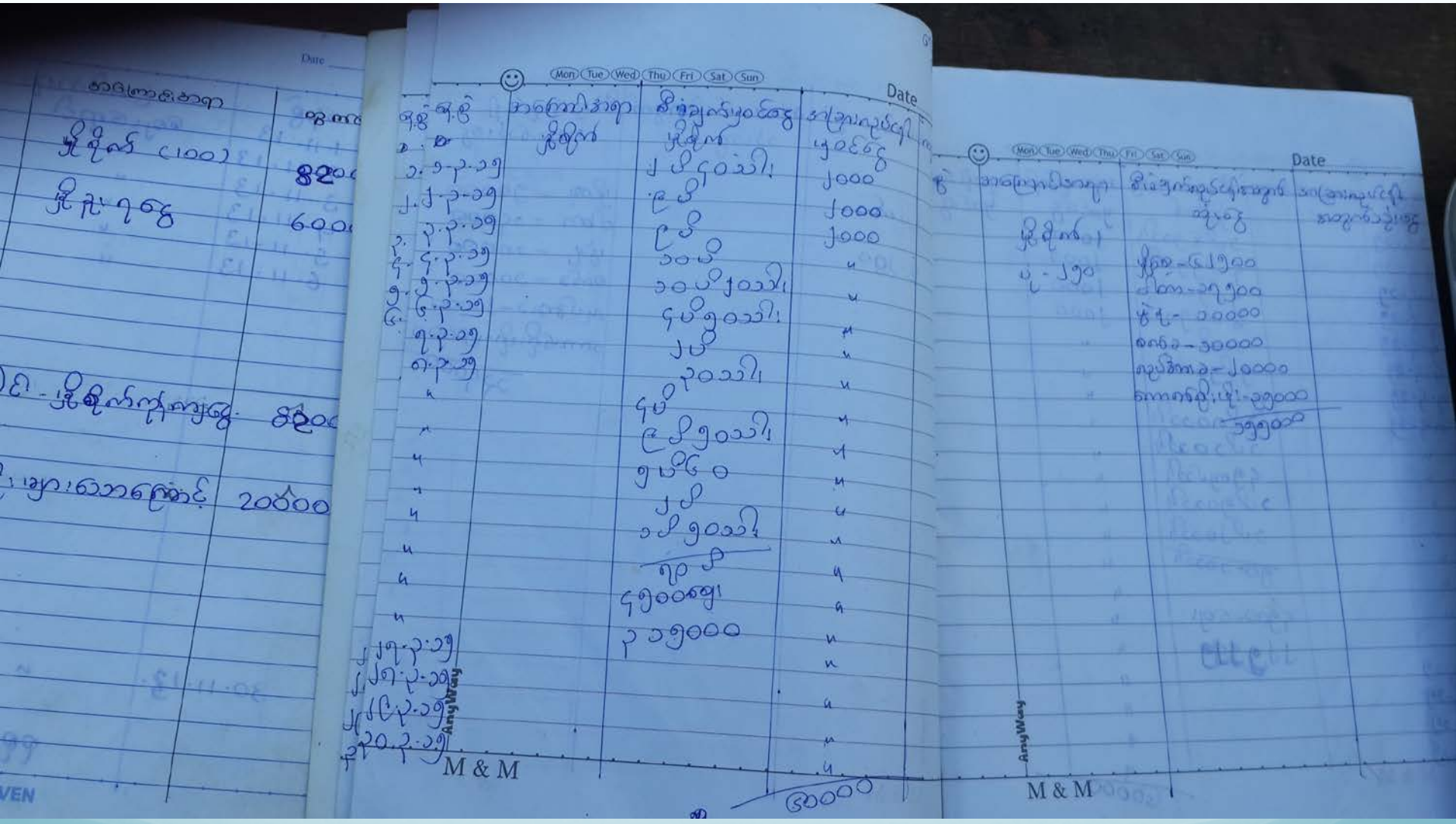
1. Each member’s performance – how each person is doing
2. Problems e.g. goat died
3. Planning – new member’s applications
4. Upcoming activities
5. Farmer / business proposal selection

Results & Evaluation

- Partial data
- Need more time to compile
- Compare among groups
- Compare among businesses

Very good - detailed record keeping





Many piglets from a female supported by project

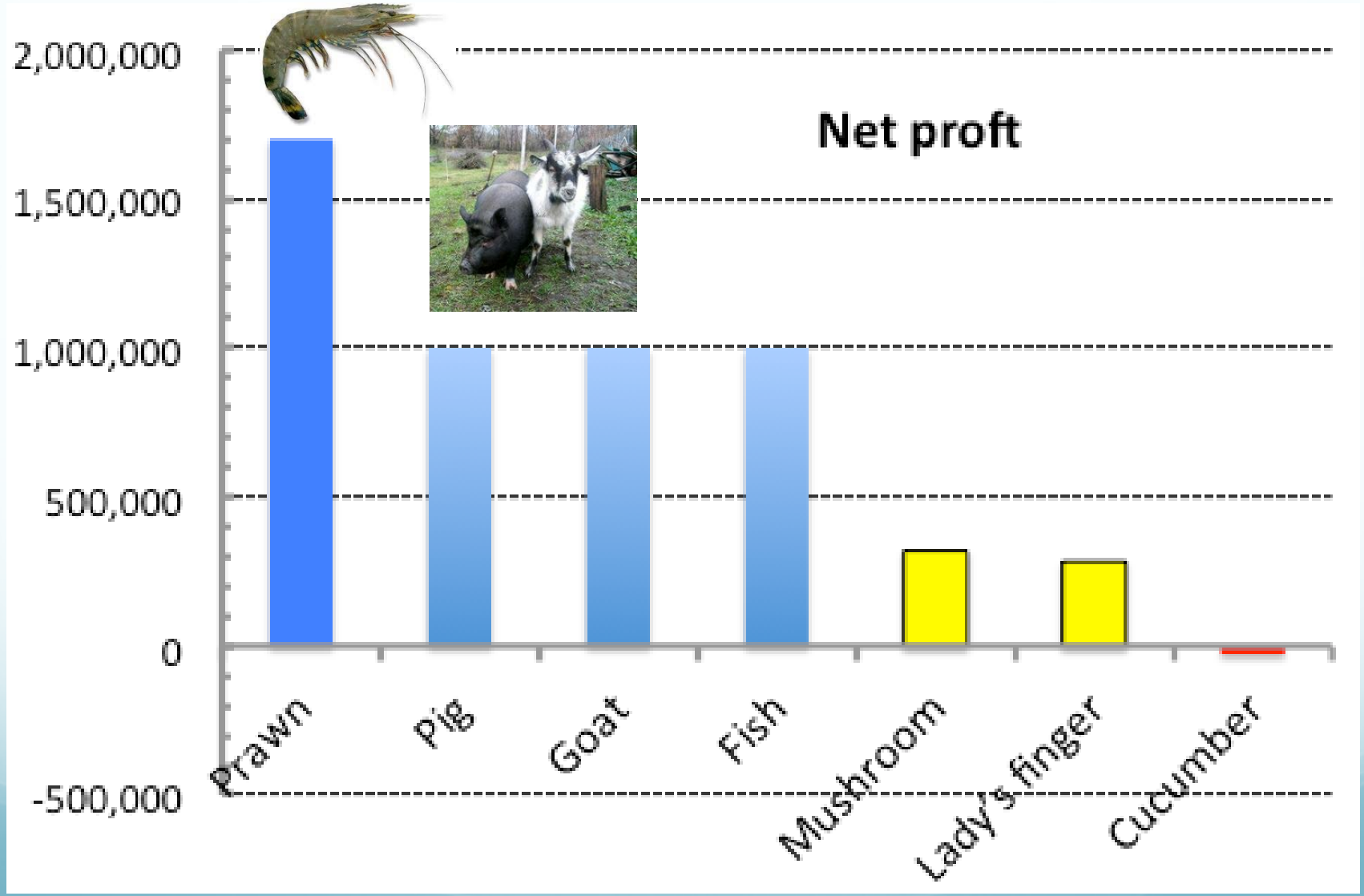
Tilapia pond – feeding rice bran

Groups

All 11 groups have bank account

Business	Cost	Revenue	Net profit	Decision
Prawn	?	?	1,700,000	✔
Pig	?	?	1,000,000	✔
Goat	?	?	1,000,000	✔
Fish	?	?	1,000,000	✔
Mushroom	542,950	862,903	319,953	✔
Lady's finger	160,000	443,975	283,975	✔
Cucumber	348,133	321,450	-26,683	**X** change

Graph


Net proft
2,000,000
1,500,000
1,000,000
500,000
0
-500,000
Prawn
Pig
Goat
Fish
Mushroom
Lady's finger
Cucumber

Conclusions

1. Prawn, goat, pig are the most profitable as farming businesses
2. Revolving fund solves the problem of lack of capital for investment
3. Successfully developed a indigenous tested model for the development of rural Myanmar

Scaling-up

- Many more are interested to join e.g. Women's Association: 300,000 members in Twante!
- Throughout the country?
- Keynote / Panelist - Myanmar Economic Forum at Yangon University of Economics

What next?

1. New projects / new areas with new donors
2. Yangon Region Government
3. Union Government
4. EERi / MCC Group
5. Business model: Loan - Finance Companies / Banks

Italian Development Cooperation
UNIVERSITÀ Tuscia
e-Women Project
Twantay Township

Thank you