



Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF)

1. Introduction to the Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF)

The **Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF)** is a national multi-stakeholder platform initiated by **CamboDHRRA** to promote stronger, more inclusive and market-oriented agricultural cooperatives in Cambodia. Since 2021, ACBF has brought together agricultural cooperatives, farmers, government institutions, private-sector companies, financial institutions, development partners, NGOs, research institutions and other stakeholders to exchange knowledge, share experiences, build partnerships and explore practical business opportunities. Over the years, ACBF has evolved from focusing on cooperative entrepreneurship to addressing youth participation, inclusive agribusiness partnerships, contract farming, market access and digital transformation. Through this continued evolution, ACBF aims to connect agricultural cooperatives and smallholder farmers with **markets, finance, technology, investment and supportive partnerships**, contributing to stronger agricultural value chains, sustainable rural businesses and improved livelihoods for farming communities.

2. Updated ACBF overview: 2021–2025

Date	ACBF Theme	Participants	Key Objectives
16 December, 2021	Promoting Agricultural Entrepreneurship to Support Sustainable Growth of Agricultural Cooperatives	120 (50)	- Learn and share best practices and challenges in managing their business (AC) - Strengthen leadership and management of AC - Promote inclusive 4Ps to support AC growth.
06 – 07 September 2022	Promoting Youth Participation in Leadership & Management of Agricultural Cooperative Businesses	180 (72)	- To learn and share best practices and challenges of youth participation in leading and managing agricultural cooperative business. - To learn and share about strengthening short value chain and local market systems - To identify key initiatives and find mechanisms and means to promote youth participation in leading and managing agricultural cooperative businesses.

1 December, 2023	Empowering Agricultural Cooperatives for Inclusive Agribusiness Partnership	190 (85)	• To learn and share, concept, legal framework, practical experience and challenges among key involved actors and stakeholders in inclusive agribusiness partnership in Cambodia. • To identify key initiatives and find mechanisms and means to empower AC for inclusive agribusiness partnership in Cambodia.
3 December, 2024	Promoting Local Products through Contract Farming Models and Inclusive Partnerships	246 (82)	• Promote local agricultural products and strengthen their market presence through the establishment and expansion of contract farming models that benefit both farmers and buyers. • Foster inclusive partnerships between agricultural cooperatives, private companies, and government agencies. • Enhance knowledge sharing on best practices in contract farming and sustainable production.
12-13 November, 2025	Building Stronger Agricultural Cooperatives through Digital Solutions	338 (161)	• To increase understanding and adoption among ACs and stakeholders (Government, NGOs, farmer organizations, private sectors, and academia) about digital technologies that can transform agricultural cooperative business models and improve value chain efficiency. • To showcase best practices and successful experiences and innovations in digital marketing, digital supply chain management, traceability, agri-tech solutions, and fintech. • To facilitate partnerships between agricultural cooperatives, buyers, digital agri-tech, and financial service providers through matchmaking and business networking sessions.

			To identify policy and capacity development needs to enable inclusive and sustainable digital transformation in the agricultural sector.
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3. Why Should Partners Support the ACBF?

Supporting ACBF is therefore not simply supporting a one-day or annual event; it is an investment in an ongoing platform that connects agricultural cooperatives and smallholder farmers with markets, finance, technology, government, private-sector investment and development partners. Through ACBF, partners can contribute to strengthening cooperative businesses, creating market opportunities, promoting inclusive agribusiness partnerships, supporting women and youth participation, sharing innovative solutions and influencing practical approaches to agricultural value-chain development. The evolution of ACBF from its focus on agricultural entrepreneurship in 2021, through youth leadership in 2022, inclusive agribusiness partnerships in 2023, contract farming and local products in 2024, and digital solutions in 2025, demonstrates its ability to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities in Cambodia's agricultural sector. This track record provides a strong foundation for partners to support the continued development of ACBF as a national platform for building stronger, more inclusive, market-oriented and sustainable agricultural cooperative businesses and improving opportunities for smallholder farmers.

2.1 ACBF provides a unique multi-stakeholder platform

The Agricultural Cooperative Business Forum (ACBF) provides a unique national platform that brings together stakeholders who often operate across different sectors and institutions, including agricultural cooperatives, farmer organizations, government ministries and institutions, private-sector companies, financial institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, research institutions and academia. By bringing these actors together in one forum, ACBF creates opportunities for dialogue, knowledge exchange, networking and collaboration around common challenges facing agricultural cooperatives and smallholder farmers. This multi-stakeholder approach is particularly important because challenges related to agricultural production, market access, finance, technology, value chains and rural business development cannot be addressed effectively by one organization or sector alone. ACBF therefore complements CamboDHRRRA's broader role in facilitating dialogue, collaboration, public-private partnerships and market-system solutions through its agricultural cooperative and agribusiness platforms.

2. ACBF converts dialogue into practical business opportunities

A key strength of ACBF is that it goes beyond policy dialogue and knowledge sharing by creating opportunities for practical business engagement among agricultural cooperatives and market actors. Through networking, business matching, panel discussions and partnership-building activities, the forum enables cooperatives to meet potential buyers, companies, financial institutions, service providers and development partners. For example, the 2023 ACBF facilitated business matching between agricultural cooperatives, companies and financial institutions, creating opportunities for stronger market and financial linkages. Continued partner support can therefore help transform discussions into concrete opportunities, including new market linkages, contract farming arrangements, supply agreements, access to finance, technical partnerships, investment opportunities and other forms of agribusiness collaboration. In this sense, supporting ACBF is an investment in creating an enabling environment for cooperative businesses to establish and strengthen commercially viable relationships.

3. ACBF directly contributes to improving opportunities for smallholder farmers

Agricultural cooperatives provide an important mechanism for smallholder farmers to work collectively and improve their position within agricultural value chains. By strengthening the capacity and business

relationships of cooperatives, ACBF indirectly contributes to improving farmers' ability to aggregate and market their products, meet buyers' quantity and quality requirements, negotiate better with market actors, access finance and agricultural services, reduce transaction costs and participate in higher-value markets. This approach is closely aligned with CamboDHRRA's broader mission of strengthening agricultural value chains and contributing to sustainable improvements in farmers' incomes and rural livelihoods. Partner support for ACBF can therefore generate benefits beyond the forum itself by helping create stronger cooperative businesses and more effective market systems that serve smallholder farmers.

4. ACBF promotes inclusive and equitable agricultural development

ACBF increasingly places emphasis on inclusive agricultural development by recognizing the important roles of women, youth, smallholder farmers, indigenous people and other traditionally underrepresented groups in agricultural businesses and cooperative development. The 2022 ACBF, for example, specifically focused on promoting youth participation in the leadership and management of agricultural cooperative businesses and highlighted practical approaches such as internships, mentoring, leadership opportunities and mechanisms for increasing youth engagement in cooperative decision-making and business activities. This inclusive approach provides partners with an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment not only to agricultural and economic development, but also to youth empowerment, women's participation, smallholder development, cooperative strengthening and inclusive business. Consequently, partner support to ACBF can contribute to broader development objectives while creating opportunities for diverse groups to participate more meaningfully in agricultural value chains and rural economic development.

5. ACBF provides partners with an opportunity to influence and contribute to practical solutions

ACBF provides a valuable space for partners to bring their knowledge, evidence, innovations, experiences and technical expertise directly to stakeholders who are involved in implementing agricultural and rural development solutions. Government institutions can better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by agricultural cooperatives, farmers and private-sector actors; companies can identify potential suppliers and business partners; financial institutions can gain a better understanding of the financing needs and potential of agricultural cooperatives; NGOs and civil society organizations can identify areas requiring technical or organizational support; and development partners can identify opportunities for investment, innovation and collaboration. At the same time, agricultural cooperatives can learn from successful business models, technologies and experiences from other stakeholders. Through this exchange, ACBF can help bridge the gap between policy, practice and investment and support the development of solutions that are more responsive to the real needs of farmers and cooperative businesses.

6. ACBF has demonstrated growing reach, relevance and credibility

The continued growth of ACBF demonstrates increasing stakeholder interest and recognition of the forum as an important platform for agricultural cooperative and agribusiness development. Participation increased from 120 in 2021, more than 180 participants in 2022, to 185 participants in 2023, more than 250 participants in 2024, and more than 350 participants in 2025. Based on the reported minimum figures, participation increased by at least 94% between 2022 and 2025, demonstrating significant growth in the reach of the forum. The increasing diversity of participants and partners also demonstrates that ACBF is evolving beyond a conventional annual conference into a broader multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue, networking, business development, knowledge exchange and partnership building. The involvement of government institutions, agricultural cooperatives, private companies, financial institutions, civil society organizations and development partners further strengthens the credibility and relevance of the forum.

“We acknowledge and value the partners who have accompanied ACBF’s journey, and we invite new partners to join us in shaping its next chapter. Together, we can transform ACBF from a successful annual forum into a sustained platform that connects farmers and cooperatives with markets, finance, technology, investment and practical solutions for inclusive and sustainable agricultural development”.

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