

ABSTRACT

Insight into how the supply chain works is essential, especially in the context of the Vietnamese Mekong Delta where understanding of the complex rice seed system remains limited. This study aims to map out the rice seed supply chain in the Mekong Delta and identify the challenges as well as opportunities and inform policies to build a sustainable rice seed supply chain in the Mekong Delta. To achieve these objectives, there are four expert interviews and three focus group discussions implemented from September 1 to September 15, 2022. The findings show that actors in Mekong Delta's seed supply systems can be classified as belonging to two major subsystems: the formal seed supply system operated by public or private sectors, and the farmers' seed supply systems including individual farmers, seed clubs, cooperatives, and farmer companies. While the private companies account for the large seed market shares, seed clubs as well as farmer-led initiatives are key players in seed production, producing seed volumes that are consistently more than twice that produced by private companies on their lands. At the same time, the seed supply system faces challenges in terms of sustainability and effectiveness related to the limitations in the country's seed laws, the restrictions in the country's Plant variety protection law, and the lack of access to genetic resources driven by widening gaps between seed systems and genebanks and intellectual property rights. Besides, the opportunities related to the sustainable seed supply chain from existing capacities including the resources for operation and production from public institutions local government, and the opportunities to utilize the support from external donors through development projects. Sustainable rice seed supply chain need the approach that led to benefits, connectivity, and incentives among all actors in the seed system is recommended optimizing resilience through developing a well-connected system between actors, minimizing risks, and strengthening the integrated seed system with the participation of national and local gene banks for sustainable development.

Keywords: Mekong Delta, Rice seeds, Supply chain, Sustainability