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Climate protection through avoided deforestation (CliPAD)

Getting Laos ready for REDD+

Background

Forests are significant carbon reservoirs. Globally, around 13 million hectares of forest are destroyed each year, releasing large quantities of greenhouse gases. Avoiding deforestation and forest degradation can make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change.

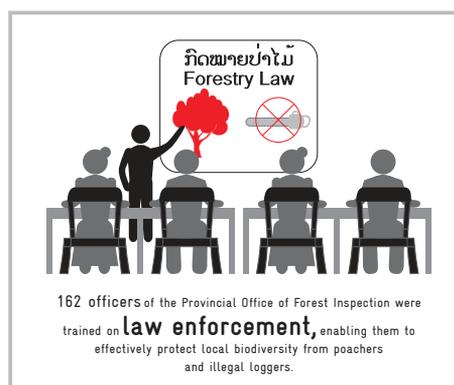
Laos is rich in natural resources such as water, minerals and forests. While it still has one of the highest rates of forest cover on the Southeast Asian mainland (47 per cent), the forests have nevertheless diminished dramatically in recent decades, having fallen from an estimated 70 per cent of the overall land surface in the mid-1960s.

Among the causes of forest loss are unsustainable logging practices, shifting cultivation and infrastructure development. Its consequences include extensive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, biodiversity loss, the lower availability of forest products and a decline in the environmental benefits that forests provide (water and soil protection, etc.). The people worst affected by these developments are those in the poorest sections of Lao society, especially women and ethnic minorities who depend on the intact forests for their livelihoods.

REDD stands for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. It is an effort to place a financial value on the carbon stored in forests, and it provides incentives for developing countries to reduce their emissions from forested lands and to invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. 'REDD+' goes further than REDD alone by including the role of conservation, the sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks. In short, it involves various activities using financial and in-kind incentives to encourage people to stop cutting down forests.

What we aim for

The project Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation was launched in 2009 to support the Lao Government in its readiness for the REDD+ process at national and sub-national levels. In the project, GIZ is providing policy advice and capacity development measures to support the creation of a national and provincial REDD+ framework, as well as REDD+ planning processes. It is testing local-level mitigation measures in two districts of Houaphan province, and is developing pro-poor REDD+ mechanisms and sustainable financing models. GIZ is cooperating closely with the financial component of the project, which is funded by the German Government through KfW development bank.



Implemented by the Lao Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the project is one of the first in Laos to introduce REDD+. While Germany is among the main providers of bilateral incentives within the context of REDD+, funds derived from results-based mechanisms are expected eventually to replace this support.



Village forest management planning in Ban Lou, Samneua District, Houaphan Province
Photo: © GIZ/ Sebastian Koch



Forest in Xieng Khouang
Photo: © GIZ/ Sebastian Koch

Gender and natural resource

In Houaphan province the Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation project supports local communities in learning to apply sustainable practices of natural resource management and in identifying alternative sources of income. In this respect there is a strong emphasis on gender equality. Mainstreaming efforts ensure that women benefit equally from the knowledge of the new practices, and they are strongly encouraged to join in the project activities. Through their involvement in sustainable forest management, for instance, women learn to collect non-timber forest products and firewood. With the close cooperation between FC and TC modules, the project also supports village development funds that can be accessed by women, for example as loans to finance activities such as weaving.

Results achieved so far

The REDD+ process requires an enormous effort at the outset to establish the necessary framework before it can start contributing to emission reductions. The GIZ project has contributed to Laos' readiness for the REDD+ mechanism in a number of ways:

- Baseline studies on the current state of forests in Laos have been completed, including an assessment of technical and financial REDD+ feasibility and a detailed study on the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in Houaphan province.
- Support was provided in the form of capacity building measures for the establishment of REDD+ institutions at both national and sub-national levels.
- The National REDD+ Taskforce, as well as the REDD+ Office and REDD+ Division have started their operations.
- Six REDD+ technical working groups have been established.
- Support was provided for the forest law revision process to establish the legal framework for REDD+. In this, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment was the lead organisation, being responsible for REDD+ and the overall policy framework.
- A needs assessment and human resource development plan have been completed in order to identify capacity requirements in the forestry sector. All the departments involved in forest-related matters (MONRE and MAF) contributed to this.
- The creation of REDD+ institutional structures in Houaphan has begun, as has the provision of special REDD+ training for the partners' staff (technical departments of MONRE and MAF).
- A provincial REDD+ Taskforce and Office have been established with the support of the project.
- The project has carried out training courses and developed concepts and procedures for the establishment of reference levels for emissions (as a baseline for REDD+). It has also developed monitoring, reporting and verification systems at national and sub-national levels.
- A base-line map of forest cover has been drawn up, and a biomass assessment was completed for the calculation of possible emission reductions from avoided deforestation in Houaphan province.
- In close cooperation with the partners, the project has developed a concept with guidelines and materials for the implementation of the FPIC (free, prior, and informed consent) approach. This will



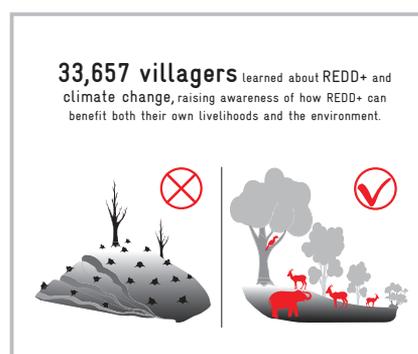
Village Consultation meeting in Lou Village, Xam Neua District, Houaphan Province
Photo: © GIZ/Sebastian Koch



Village consultation meeting in Houayma Village, Samneua District, Houaphan Province
Photo: © GIZ/Thongthip Boutdala

ensure the active participation of local communities in REDD+ mitigation measures through village forest management agreements.

- A guideline on village forest management planning has been developed with the district, province and national level government staff.
- A concept for village forest management agreements has been produced, providing the basis for sustainable management practices that will allow villagers to benefit financially from their efforts to protect the forests and reduce emissions. This takes into consideration the necessary safeguards as well as the FPIC approach.
- Mitigation activities have been introduced, such as forest law enforcement and agriculture extension measures in selected pilot villages. Meanwhile, the FPIC approach has been conducted in a number of villages, thereby ensuring that local communities are aware of the implications of REDD+ and consent to its implementation.
- In several pilot villages in the two districts of Houaphan province, village forest management plans and agreements have been completed.
- An Emission Reductions Program Idea Note (ER-PIN) has been prepared, which covers six provinces of northern Laos, including Houaphan. This has since been accepted into the pipeline of the World Bank's FCPF Carbon Fund.
- Houaphan has prepared its Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP) which outlines policies, actions and measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the sustainable management of forest carbon stocks.



GIZ Laos' engagement in sustainable climate-friendly management of the environment and of natural resources

We promote international mechanisms which tackle climate change (REDD+) and illegal timber trade (FLEGT) and pilot innovative co-management approaches for the National Protected Area in Hin Nam No. We also engage in environmental education to create awareness on environmental issues and contribute to the sustainable handling of natural resources in Laos.

We implement the following projects in the area of management of natural resources:

- Support to the Lao EU-FLEGT Process (Pro-FLEGT)
- Integrated Nature Conservation and Sustainable Resource Management in the Hin Nam No Region (HNN)
- Promotion of Climate-related Environmental Education (ProCEEd)
- Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation (CliPAD)

About GIZ Laos

GIZ, as part of the German Development Cooperation, has been active in Laos since 1993 and is currently implementing projects in two priority areas: rural development and economic development. Moreover, GIZ engages in good governance and participates in regional programmes for example with the Mekong River Commission.

Please visit www.giz.de/laos for further information on GIZ's work in Laos and worldwide.

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