



# **LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

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## **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

### **Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience - CLEAR (P178545)**

# **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

## **Volume II of II – Annexes**

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Prepared by  
**Poverty Reduction Fund**



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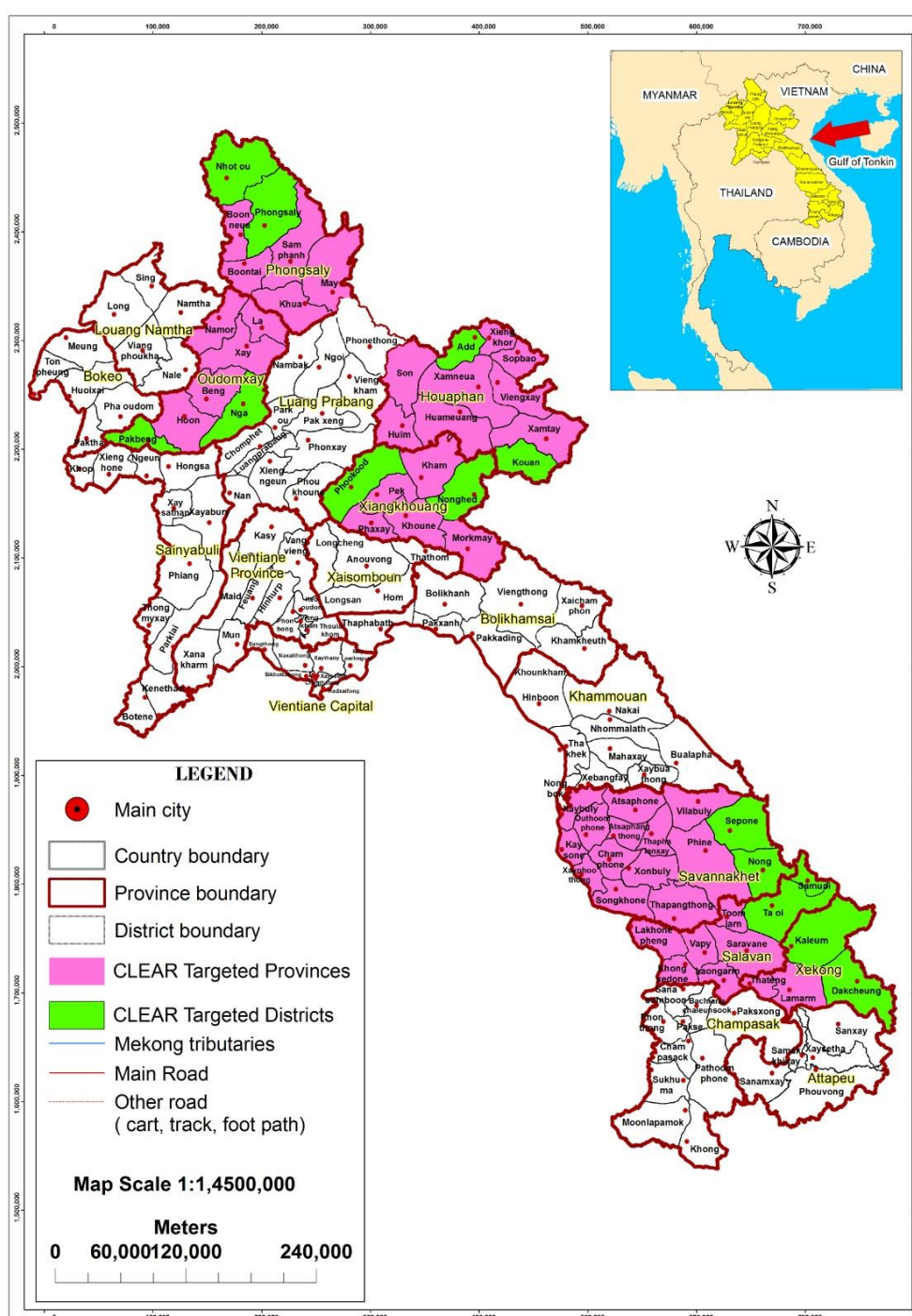
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## ANNEX 1A: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BASELINE INFORMATION OF THE SEVEN TARGETED PROVINCES

The Project will continue to support four convergence provinces in the north and expanding to three provinces in the south. CLEAR will operate in two districts in each province, a total of 12 districts (Figure A1-1 below).

Figure A1-1: Map of Targeted Provinces and Districts cover by the CLEAR Project





## A1.1 PHONGSALY PROVINCE

Phongsaly is located in Lao PDR's far north, with a total land area of 16,270 square kilometers. The majority of Phongsaly province is at a high elevation. Phongsaly Province is one of the remotest of the Lao PDR Provinces, and is dominated by rugged, mountainous terrain and an abundance of thick forests and fast-flowing rivers. The province's capital is Phongsaly, which is the highest city in Laos at 1,400 meters above sea level. The province shares a 350-kilometer border with China in the north and west, and a 300-kilometer border with Vietnam in the east. This province is also located in the southernly extended mountains of China's Yun-Gui Plateau, with elevations ranging from 295 to 1931 meters. Most of Phongsaly Province lies at a high altitude between 500 and 1,500 meters elevation, which moderates the heat of the surrounding areas of Southeast Asia and makes the climate more suitable for trekking and other physical activities. The province is bordered to the south by Luang Prabang Province and to the southwest by Oudomsay Province. The highest mountain in the province is Phou Doychy with an elevation of 1,842 metres. Phongsaly town is surrounded by rolling hills and is built into the side of Phu Fa Mountain (1,625m).

Phongsaly Province has a tropical monsoon climate with two distinct seasons, namely a rainy season (May-October) and a dry season (November-April). The annual temperature ranges from 20.4 °C to 32.1 °C, and the average annual precipitation is around 1747 mm (Xiao, Chiwei and Li, et al., 2019)<sup>1</sup>. The climate is pleasant and refreshing covering the endless mountains down to the canyon of the Nam Ou River, biggest tributary of the Mekong. Phongsaly is characterized by a relatively cool climate. Weather in the province is described as “four seasons in a single day” with cold mornings and evenings, humidity during the day, and rains in the afternoon, which has created lush green forests.

The Swidden agriculture, fallow land, market gardens, and cash crops are traditional in Phongsaly province such as teak and cardamon (Xiao, Chiwei and Li, et al., 2019).

**Household and Population:** Phongsaly has a total population of 187,236 people (92,235 female or 49.3%); average population of districts is 26,748 people, 33,570 households (HHs), 41,896 families, and 515 villages. Those that live in rural areas with road access account for 362 villages of the total villages, and those that live in rural areas with no road access account for 95 villages. The total number of villages at risk of natural disaster accounts for 40.9% (209 villages) of total villages, with the remaining 59.4% (306 villages) having no disaster occurrence. In comparison to the previous census survey, the total number of households in the province decreased from 34,821 in 2015 to 33,570 in 2019/2020.

**Ethnic Group:** The population is officially made up of 28 different ethnic groups, of which the majority being Khmu, Phounoy, different Akha, Tai Lue and Hor, each with their own culture, traditions, costumes, and languages<sup>2</sup>. For the different ethnic groups, men are considered the

<sup>1</sup> Xiao, Chiwei & Li, Peng & Feng, Zhiming & You, Zhen & Jiang, Luguang & Boudmyxay, Khampheng. (2019). Is the phenology-based algorithm for mapping deciduous rubber plantations applicable in an emerging region of northern Laos?. *Advances in Space Research*. 65. 10.1016/j.asr.2019.09.022.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335956956\\_Is\\_the\\_phenology-based\\_algorithm\\_for\\_mapping\\_deciduous\\_rubber\\_plantations\\_applicable\\_in\\_an\\_emerging\\_region\\_of\\_northern\\_Laos](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335956956_Is_the_phenology-based_algorithm_for_mapping_deciduous_rubber_plantations_applicable_in_an_emerging_region_of_northern_Laos)

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.tourismloos.org/show\\_province.php?Cont\\_ID=62](http://www.tourismloos.org/show_province.php?Cont_ID=62)



head of the family. Decision-making roles are dominated by men although women are recognized to share these roles.

**The main livelihood activities** in the province are in rice cultivation, crop production, raising animals and collecting non-timber-forest products (NTFPs). The province is famous for tea plantation. The main commercial production includes tea, sugarcane, rubber, coffee, cardamom, dry season crops and non-timber-forest products. The major farming practice is slash-and-burn agriculture. Rice is by far the most important agricultural product of the province, followed by maize, starchy roots, vegetables, beans and nuts<sup>3</sup>.

**Poverty:** According to the most recent Lao Statistic Bureau (LSB, 2022)<sup>4</sup> report, Phongsaly province has the lowest poverty headcount rate and the lowest poverty gap rate. The key findings from the Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey reported poverty headcount rate of Phongsaly province is reducing from 19.9% in 2013 to 8.1% in 2018/2019 and the distribution of the poor also reduces from 2.4% in 2013 to 1.2% in 2018/2019, with the change of population distribution from 2.9% to 2.8% for the same period. There are 1,917 poor households (5.3%) in the province, of which the urban poor ratio is 123 households (1.8%) and the rural poor at 1,793 households (6.1%). The ratio of food-insecure households is 16.3%, with the rural rate at 18.6% and the urban rate at 5%. However, the multi-dimension of the poor rate in the province has increased from 2.5% in 2012/2013 to 5.2% in 2018/2019 (Lao Statistic Bureau, LSB, 2020)<sup>5</sup>

**Natural Disasters/Hazards:** Phongsaly is another 2018 natural disaster-hit province. It impacted residents, crops, the environment, and social development<sup>6</sup>. The national climate change vulnerability assessment conducted by UNHABITAT examined the occurrence of floods, droughts, landslides, and storms during 2019 in all 18 provinces of Laos and the initial finding found that Phongsaly province was impacted by climate change-related hazards, particularly droughts, which affect 34 percent of the villages. Nhot-ou is the most vulnerable district because it is exposed to a greater number of threats (especially Karng village in the district's northwest, which is heavily impacted by all types of hazards), whereas Sampanh's villages are significantly impacted by droughts. Some areas of the Phongsaly district were also affected by storms and droughts, while communities in the Boon-neua district were impacted by floods and landslides. The majority of primary DRR resources, excluding evacuation centers, are in place, resulting in a high level of adaptive capacity. The figure A1-2 shows the multi-hazard map of Phongsaly and Figure A1-3 shows impacted areas.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.research.kobe-u.ac.jp/gsics-publication/gwps/2013-27.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau (2022). Where are the Poor in Lao PDR? Small Area Estimation: province and District Level Results, Lao PDR [https://laosis.lsb.gov.la/board/BoardList.do?bbs\\_bbsid=B404](https://laosis.lsb.gov.la/board/BoardList.do?bbs_bbsid=B404)

<sup>5</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau (2020) Poverty in Lao PDR: key findings from the Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018/2019, Lao PDR

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/04/c\\_137155698.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/04/c_137155698.htm)

<sup>7</sup> UNHABITAT (2021). Preliminary Results of Lao PDR National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. [https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_Lao\\_PDR\\_National\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Vulnerability\\_Assessment.pdf](https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_Lao_PDR_National_Climate_Change_Vulnerability_Assessment.pdf)



Figure A1-2: Multi-hazard map of Phongsaly Province

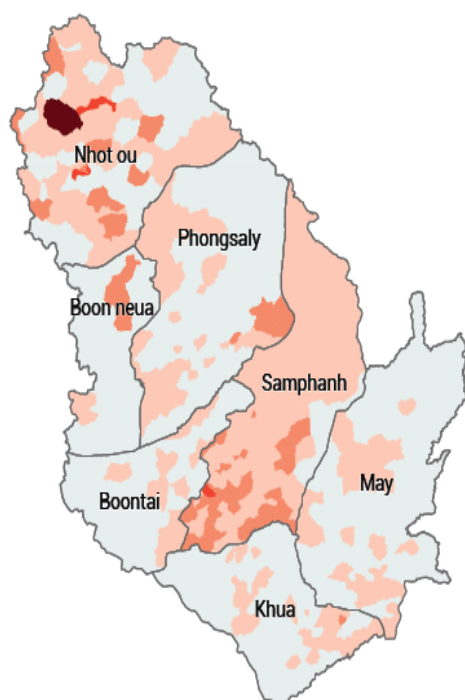
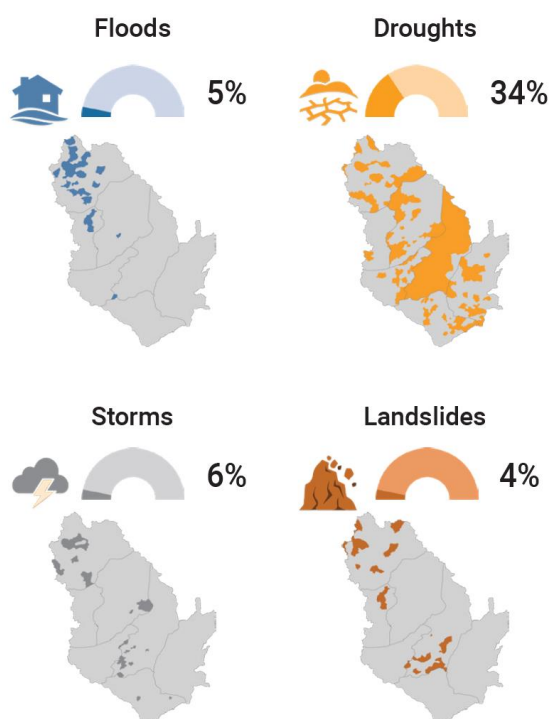


Figure A1-3: Impacted area in Phongsaly Province



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

**Unexploded ordnance or UXOs:** According to Sweet (2017), the Government's allocation of UXO operators to Phongsaly, Luangmantha, and Vientiane Capital is minimal. Humanity and Inclusion commence its first mine action project in Phongsaly in 2022 and will run through 2024 to complete a Technical Explosive Ordinance Disposal Survey and Area Clearance in 21 target villages<sup>8</sup>. There is limited information available about the seismic activities in Lao PDR. According to Sweet (2017)<sup>9</sup> studied, the GOL appears to lack a policy concerning the allocation of UXO operators to the remaining contaminated provinces of Luang Namtha and Phongsaly, and Vientiane Capital. The earthquake hazard maps were developed using MMI scale. The hazard assessment was based on earthquake intensity maps developed by UNOCHA (OCHA, 2011). The results show that one fourth of the area of Lao PDR is located in a high earthquake hazard zone. These areas include Xayabury, Bokeo, Oudomxay, Luangnamtha and Phongsaly provinces.<sup>10</sup>

## A1.2 OUDOMXAY PROVINCE

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent2022\\_Humanity195.php](https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent2022_Humanity195.php)

<sup>9</sup> Sweet.K (2017). Prioritization Policy, Procedures and Practices Relating to UXO Clearance. Mine Action Capacity Development Project Implemented by NPA and the GICHD [https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/Lao\\_-\\_Prioritisation\\_report\\_-\\_2017-07-17\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/Lao_-_Prioritisation_report_-_2017-07-17_ENG.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>MLSW (2012). Lao PDR National Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2012, Vientiane, Lao PDR, Accessible [https://www.adpc.net/igo/category/ID416/doc/2013-ptk8Nb-ADPC-Publication\\_LNARReportWEB\\_\(2\).pdf](https://www.adpc.net/igo/category/ID416/doc/2013-ptk8Nb-ADPC-Publication_LNARReportWEB_(2).pdf)





The province covers an area of 15,370 square kilometers. It borders China to the north, Phongsali province to the northeast, Luang Prabang province to the east and southeast, Xayabury province to the south and southwest, Bokeo province to the west and Luang Namtha province to the northwest. Thanks to its strategic geographical area, Oudomxay has become the target of the government to be developed as a hub of trade in the norther area of the country. Its topography is mountainous, between 300-1,800 meters above the sea level and the rugged mountainous landscape has peaks up to 1,850 meters covered in varying forest types and wider fields<sup>11</sup>.

Annual rainfall ranges from 1,900 to 2,600 millimetres (75-102 in.). Approximately 60 rivers flow through Oudomxay Province, for example Nam Phak, Nam Sae, Nam Beng, Nam Kor and Nam Nga. The Nam Kor flows through the province capital Muang Xay. Main River in Oudomxay is Mekong, Nam Park, Nam Beng and Nam Kor. Approximately 60 rivers flow through its territory, offering great potential for hydropower development. About 12% of Oudomxay's forests are primary forests, while 48% are secondary forests.

According to estimations of the IUCN, approximately 12% of Oudomxay forests are primary forests, 48% secondary forests<sup>12</sup>. Vegetation in Oudomxay is rich by virtue of the monsoon climate. Several kinds of bamboo and a broad range of plants (for example orchids) are found in the region. Also, hardwoods like teak and mahogany trees grow in Oudomxay and are important sources of income for the population.

**Household and Population:** Oudomxay province is divided into 7 districts: Xay, Lar, Namor, Nga, Bang, Houn, and Pakbang districts. The data from the Villages and Household Listing in 2019 reported that there are 472 villages; 333,298 people (166,962 male/50.1% and 166,336 female/49.9%); 60,622 households and 77,684 families in total. The capital is Muang Xay.

**Ethnic Group:** The diverse population is made up of more than 20 ethnic groups in Oudomxay province such as the Hmong, Akha, Khmu, ThaiDam and Yao<sup>13</sup>. Similar to other province across the country, each ethnic in Oudomxay province still maintain their traditional and culture as "Hit 12 Khong 14 of Lao and Leu" refer to the Baddish calendar; "Kin Chieng " of Hmong, Yoa and Kher; "LaPeup" of Kmu; "Boudockdeng and Bounkalor" of Pri, and they are all celebrate after crop harvest.

**The main livelihood activities:** Agriculture remains the main livelihood of rural poor in the province. Subsistence agriculture is still practiced by the majority of the population in Oudomxay province. Rice cultivation using the wet-field paddy system is only possible in plain lowlands, which are scarce in Oudomxay. Natural rainfalls irrigate both mountain rice grown on mountainsides and most of the small cultivable areas in the lowlands. Aside from agricultural land, approximately 40,000 hectares of land are forested or used as meadows. Livestock breeding, particularly of water buffalos, pigs, cattle, and chickens, is an important component of the rural population's livelihood. For the population, forests provide not only wood, but also fruits, herbs, and meat, which contribute to family income.

**Poverty:** According to the most recent Village and Household Listing Survey in 2019, the majority of villages are located in the rural area with access road accounted for 299 villages,

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oudomxay\\_province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oudomxay_province)

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oudomxay\\_Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oudomxay_Province)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.tourismloos.org/show\\_province.php?Cont\\_ID=109](https://www.tourismloos.org/show_province.php?Cont_ID=109)



where rural villages without access road are 117 villages and 56 villages are located in the urban area. More than 59% (279 villages) of the total villages are located in the area that risk to the natural disaster. It is noticed that number of populations living in the rural area with access road (39,067 households or 64.4%), are higher than people living in the urban area (15,809 people or 26.1%). The rural area without access road accounted for 5,786 people or 9.5% of total household numbers.

According to the main results of the Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey, the poverty headcount rate in Oudomxay province dropped from 36.6% in 2013 to 29.2% in 2019, with the poverty gap shrinking from 8.9% to 6.4% over the same time period. The poverty gap as a squared percentage fall from 2.9% to 2%. The distribution of the poor increases from 6.5% in 2013 to 8.7% in 2019, with the distribution of population also increased from 4.4% to 5.5% for the same period. There are 15,191 poor households (25.2%) in the province, of which the urban poor ratio is 1,571 households (9.4%) and the rural poor at 13,620 households (31.3%). The ratio of food-insecure households is 31.5%, with the rural rate at 34.6% and the urban rate at 23%. The multi-dimension of the poor rate in the province has reduced from 50% in 2012/2013 to 53.4% in 2018/2019. (LSB, 2020)<sup>14</sup>

**Natural Disasters/Hazards:** In 2013, there was worst landslide and flash floods occurred in the province which affected schools and people property. The province was hit again by the natural disaster in 2018 which caused livelihood and poverty socio-economic development. Tropical Storm Son-Tinh caused heavy rains and flooding in 55 districts of several provinces across Laos, including Attapue, Savannakhet, Khammouane, Xayabouli, Bolikhamxay, Luangprabang, Bokeo, Sekong, Xiengkhouang and Oudomxay provinces<sup>15</sup>. The finding of the national climate change vulnerability assessment (UNHABITAT, 2021) shows that over half of the population of Oudomxay has reportedly been affected by droughts in 2019, making the region highly vulnerable to climate change-related risks. While all districts are prone to this hazard, Hoon district has the maximum concentration of affected villages. The villages in the northern Namor and southern Pakbeng districts are more vulnerable to floods, cyclones, and landslides. The mountainous southeast of the Beng district in the province's center is also highly susceptible to flooding and cyclones. The province lacks a master plan and evacuation centres, so its adaptive capacity is only moderate. The multi-hazard map of Oudomxay province and its impacted area are presented in Figures A1-4 and A1-5, respectively.

<sup>14</sup> Lao Statistics Bureau (2020) Poverty in Lao PDR: key findings from the Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018/2019, Lao PDR

<sup>15</sup> OCHA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (2018). Year in Review. Accessible <https://ocha.oap.exposure.co/2018-year-in-review?locale=en&categories%3Fembed%3Dtrue%3Fmore%3Dtrue%3Fembed%3Dtrue%3Fmore%3Dtrue%2Fsign-in>





Figure A1-4: Multi-hazard map of Oudomxay

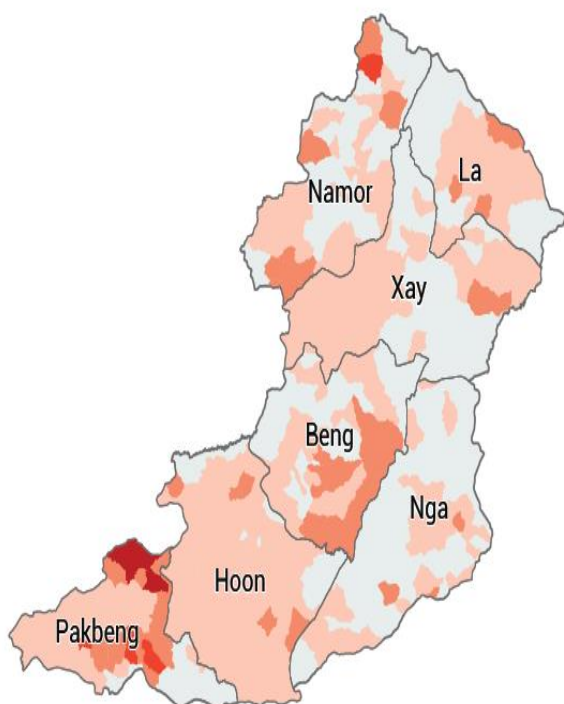
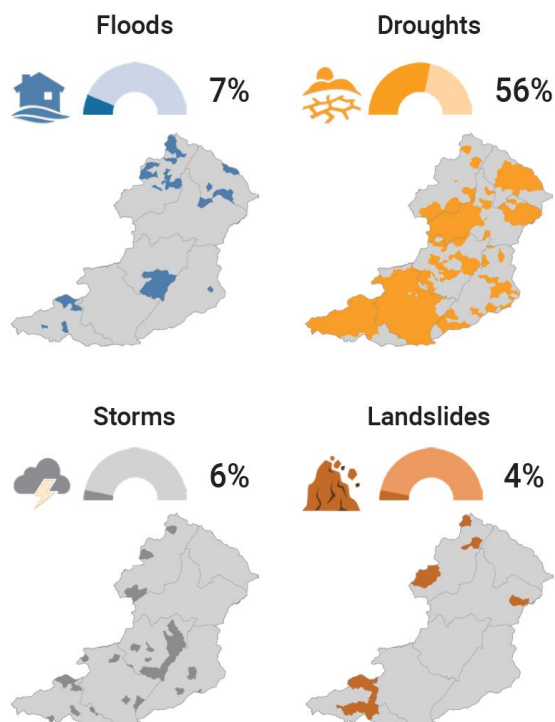


Figure A1-5: Impacted area in Oudomxay



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

**UXO:** The National Regulatory Authority (NRA) presented the UXO National Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 has documented a total of 8 districts, 101 villages with UXO in Oudomxay province. The UXO Sector Annual Report 2020 reported that from 1997 – 2020, total area of UXO land clearance in Oudomxay province was 8,660,108 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 720,954 m<sup>2</sup> (8%) has been utilized for agricultural farming and the rest of 7,939,144 m<sup>2</sup> (92%) of area cleared have been used for other development activities in the province, with 4,963 beneficiaries in the province. The NRA will continue to coordinate with key stakeholder to implement the UXO clearance in the province.

### A1.3 HUAPHANH PROVINCE

Huaphanh Province covers an area of 16,500 square kilometres (6,400 sq mi), located in the middle of the green valley at 1,200 meters. The province is bordered by Vietnam to the north, east and southeast, Xiengkhouang province to the south and southwest, and Luangprabang province to the west. The terrain is rugged, with dense mountainous forest forming much of the province, particularly on the western side. The main road running through the province is Route 6. The province is the home to the Viengxay caves, an extensive network of caves used by the Pathet Lao, and the Hintang Archaeological Park, one of the most important pre-historic sites in northern Laos, dotted with standing megaliths.

Huaphanh is situated in a tropical climate zone, with plentiful rainfall. Droughts occur between monsoon seasons in November and March. The principal rivers are the Nam Ma, which flows



from and into Vietnam, passing the village of Ban Muang-Et, and the Nam Xam, which the towns of XamNeua and Xam Tai lie on.

The dominant land-use pattern in Huaphanh Province is shifting cultivation. The forests are cut and burned at intervals ranging from 5 to 20 years. This is based on the traditional cycle of rotational shifting cultivation<sup>16</sup>. The main threats to forest areas in Huaphanh Province are encroachment by upland farming, shifting cultivation, unsustainable methods of non-timber forest product extraction, and unplanned logging. However, awareness raising about these issues is not sufficient when local communities are in poverty and have no other viable options for their livelihoods.<sup>17</sup>

In the southeast of Huaphanh is the Nam Xam National Protected Area (NPA), which is thought to provide habitat for wild elephants, various gibbons, gaur, banteng, tiger, clouded leopard, Asiatic black bear and Malayan sun bear. South of XamNeua located Tat Saloei, a beautiful waterfall best viewed after the rainy season. Nam Et-Phou Loei is the largest National Protected Area in Laos situated in the northwest of Houaphan. It is best known for harbouring one of the most important tiger populations remaining in Indochina. Its outstanding biodiversity includes over 30 species of large mammals and 300 species of birds. There are some important bird areas (IBA) as well.<sup>18</sup>

**Household and Population:** Huaphanh Province is divided into 10 districts including Xam Neua, Xiengkhor, Hiam, Viengxay, Haumuang, Xam Tay, Sop Bao, Et, Kone, Xon districts. With total population in 2019 of 302,500 people (153,415 male or 50.7% and 149,085 female or 49.3%). The average population of district was 28,939 people.

**Ethnic Group:** Huaphanh is one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in Laos. It is home to 22 different ethnic groups, among them, Hmong, Tai Deng and Yao. Ethnic minority villages are dotted along many of the roads around the province and people of the different minorities are often to be seen buying and selling goods at the market in Xam Neua. Current residents continue the patriotic spirit, enabling the province to be politically stable. The people's hard-working traditions contribute to the development of the local economy.

**The main livelihood activities:** According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment, main exports of Huaphanh province are minerals, corn, wood products, non-timber forest products, and livestock; while major imports include construction material, fuel, production materials, vehicles and consumption goods. Many of its mineral resource deposits have not been explored. Large investments are in mining (by China and Vietnam), industry and the handicraft, agricultural and service sectors.<sup>19</sup>

**Poverty:** According to the most recent Village and Household Listing Survey in 2019, total number of villages in Huaphanh province is 728 villages. The majority of household are located in the rural area with access road (65%), where rural villages without access road is lower (13%) and the rest (21.7%) of house are located in the urban area. Out of total villages, 412 of them (56%) are located in the risk to natural disaster area.

<sup>16</sup><http://www.fao.org/3/af336e/af336e03.htm>

<sup>17</sup>[http://www.snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/leaf\\_laos\\_-\\_succes\\_stories.pdf](http://www.snv.org/public/cms/sites/default/files/explore/download/leaf_laos_-_succes_stories.pdf)

<sup>18</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houaphanh\\_Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Houaphanh_Province)

<sup>19</sup><http://www.investlaos.gov.la/index.php/provinces/huaphan>



According to the main results of the Laos Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018/2019, the poverty headcount rate in Huaphanh province dropped from 45.4% in 2013 to 26.6% in 2019, with the poverty gap decrease from 8.5% to 6%, and distribution of population decrease from 4.6% to 4.1% of the poor. There are 9,891 poor households (19.7%) in the province, of which the urban poor ratio is 1.5% (116 poor households) and the rural poor at 23.1% (9,775 poor households). The ratio of food-poverty is 27.4%, with the rural rate at 31.1% and the urban rate at 3.9%. The multi-dimensional poverty headcount rate of the province has reduced from 54% in 2012/2013 to 28% in 2018/2019. (LSB, 2020)

**Natural Disasters/Hazards:** The analysis of the national climate change vulnerability assessment (UNHABITAT, 2021) indicates that the Huaphanh province is moderately vulnerable to climate change-related risks. In the districts of Sone, Sopbao, and Xamneua, droughts, landslides, and floods pose a significant threat to a substantial number of villages. The southern and eastern districts of Huameuang and Viengxay, respectively, are severely impacted by floods and landslides, whereas the northern district of Xiengkhor is severely impacted by droughts and landslides. Southern Kuane district villages are primarily affected by droughts. Since most primary DRR resources are in place, adaptive capacity levels are high. The multi-hazard map of Huaphanh province and its impacted area are presented in Figures A1-6 and A1-7, respectively.

Figure A1-6: Multi-hazard map of Huaphanh

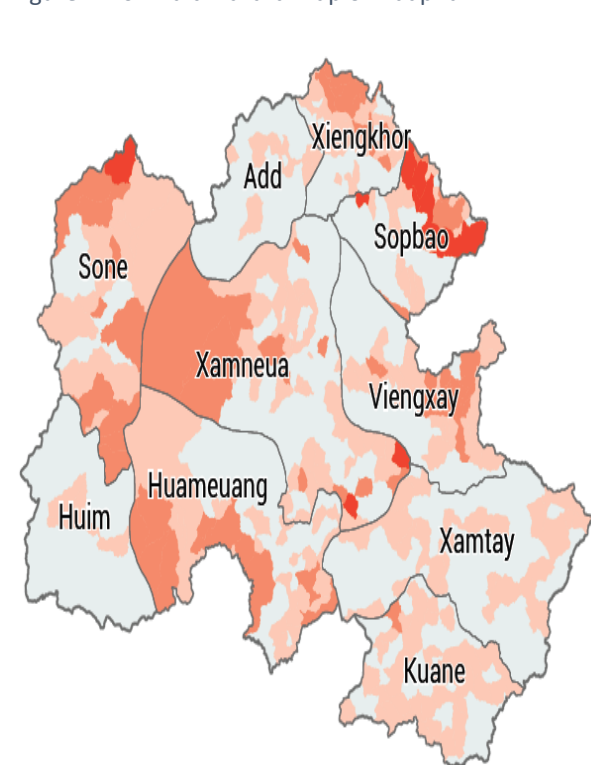
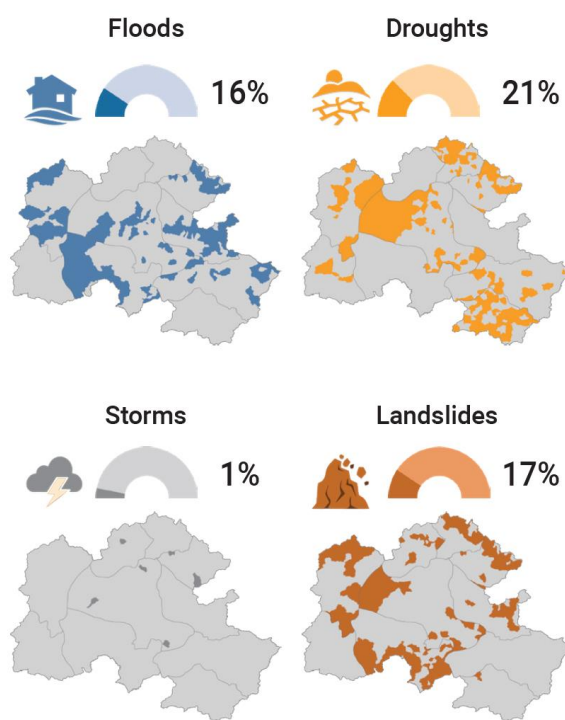


Figure A1-7: Impacted area in Huaphanh



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)



**UXO:** Houaphanh is the eighth most UXO-contaminated province in Laos, with the districts of Viengxay, Xamneua and Houa Meuang being the most affected. Most of the UXO contamination in Huaphan follows the main route east to west through the districts Viengxay, Xamneua, Houa Meuang and Viengthong with very little contamination outside of this, apart from areas around old military camps and mined defensive positions. Bombing occurred throughout all four districts and was particularly intense in Viengxay. Intense land battles occurred in the Xarnneua and Houameuang districts. UXO LAO commenced working in November 1996. Since then, UXO LAO teams have cleared 624 hectares of land and have disposed of more than 37,117 Items of UXO. Community Awareness Teams have visited 433 villages, reaching more than 117,000 people.<sup>20</sup>

## A1.4 XIENGKHUANG PROVINCE

Xiengkhouang Province is located in the North-eastern part of Lao PDR, at a distance of approximately 400 km from Vientiane Capital. Phonsavan is the capital city. The total land area of the province is 16,850 km<sup>2</sup> sharing borders with Vietnam (Nge An Province) to the east, Huaphan Province to the northeast, Luang Prabang to the northwest, Vientiane to southwest and Xaysomboun and Bolikhamxay to the south. Geographically, XiengKhouang Province is characterized as a mountainous area (90 percent), with a plateau area (8%) and lowland paddy area (2%). The province is located between 500 to 2,280 m above sea level.<sup>21</sup>

The province experiences two seasons, a dry (winter) and a rainy season. The dry season lasts from October to March and the rainy season is from April to September with the heaviest rain from June to August. The average temperature is 20.5o C, the rainfall is 1,500 mm/year, the humidity averages around 40 percent and the province receive in average 2,150 hours/year of sunlight.

The main river in Xiengkhuang is Nam Ngum River with a length of 1,403 km and draining as area of 17,000 km<sup>2</sup>. It is the largest river of Xiengkhouang and Vientiane provinces and one of the major tributaries of Mekong in Laos. The river source is located in the Plain of Jars about 1,000-1,100 m above mean sea level. After joining with Nam Lik, the Nam Ngum flows down into the Vientiane Plain for about 80 km in southerly direction to ThaNgone, and then for another 80 km in an easterly direction to join the Mekong River at Pak Ngum District. The annual discharge is 23,021,280,000 m<sup>3</sup> (MRC, 2017)<sup>22</sup>. Nong Tang Lake, 52 km east of Phonsavan at Rte 7, is a picturesque natural lake surrounded by limestone cliffs. Three km north of Phonsavan town the small Lake SadetJao Supanouvong will be found. It is a nice place for a quick retreat or to view the sunset. The locals enjoy the place at Pi Mai celebrations in April, when boat races take place among other activities.

Approximately 55% of the total areas are steep mountainous with scattered forest cover of some 900,000 ha or 58 percent of the provincial land area. Arable land covers some 7%.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.uxolao.org/houaphan/>

<sup>21</sup>UNDP Lao PDR (2013). Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Xiengkhouang province. Accessible <http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/2017/PBSAP%20XK%20Eng.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Mekong Reiver Commission (2017). Annua report on water quality data assessment for Laos 2016 - <http://monre.mynapcloud.com/nreri/images/2018/MRC-2016.pdf>



Xiengkhouang province is known for its grassland area (295,000 ha), used for extensive livestock raising of mainly cattle.

The province is rich in natural resources and has a climate that is suitable for diversified agriculture. Protection of forests, including pine and hing forests, as well as rivers and watershed systems have a high priority, although widespread slash-and-burn agriculture has some negative effects to the forests and biodiversity. The forest cover of the province is estimated to be 43 percent of the total land area and important catchment areas for the Ngum, Khao, Mat, Ngiep, Xan, and Moo Rivers containing more than 102 tributaries. In addition, there are a total of 80 fish conservation zones, 46 fishponds and 38 reservoirs.

The province has two national level Conservation Forests (National Protected Areas [NPAs]): Phou Sa Bot - Phung Chong NPA covering two districts: Kham and Nong Het with a total area of 149,000 ha (18.7 percent total land area) and a small proportion of Nam Et - Phou Leoi NPA (8,000 ha) bordering Huaphan and Luang Prabang provinces. Furthermore, there are three District Conservation Forests: Phou PhaXay, Phou Nang Non and Phou Pha Tung and twelve Provincial Forest Conservation Areas totalling 47,800 ha. The Protection Forest category serves mainly as watersheds/ catchments with a total area of approximately 761,200 ha. Production Forests cover three main areas: Nam Ngiep - Nam Jong, Long Khan – Long Khao and Nam Mo totalling 310,600 ha.

**Household and Population:** According to the Village and Household Listing in Survey 2018/2019, Xiengkhouang province is divided into 7 districts (Paek, Kham, Nong Het, Phoukout, Phaxay, Khoun, Mok May districts), 477 villages, 43,492 households, and has a population of 261,855 people (132,125 people or 50.5% and 129,730 female or 49.5%). Phonsavan is the capital city. The majority of villages (about 409 villages) are located in rural areas with access roads, while 10 villages are located in rural areas without access roads. There are 58 villages in the urban area.

**Ethnic Group:** The Xiengkhouang population is made up of 5 main ethnic groups; the largest are the Lao Loum (52 percent), Hmong (38 percent) and Khmu (8 percent). Their traditional houses, dresses, beliefs and rituals are part of the cultural heritage of Laos. There are also minorities of Chinese and Vietnamese as well as some international workers. Similar to other province, men are considered as the head of the family. This is very prominent among the Hmong and Yao ethnic groups, whose culture holds prominent dominance of males over females and thus, a father is always considered the head in each household. However, generally the decision in the family is jointly shared and discussed between male and female. The community has members of Women Union at all levels, which women has role in the decision making and management of the communities as a member of village management committee.

**The main livelihood activities:** Based on implementation of the five-year socio-development plan of Xiengkhouang province (2016-2020), geographical special conditions, actual conditions of the area, and natural resources within the province, Provincial Environment and Natural Resource Department (PONRE, 2021)<sup>23</sup> reported the agriculture employs 76.76% of the population, services 5.47%, industry 5.18%, and other occupations account for the remainder. When compared to 5 years ago, the economy (GDP) is expected to grow by an average of 7.5% per year, or 98.5% of the plan. Within five years, the total product reached 16,731.07 billion

<sup>23</sup> PONRE (2021). Xiengkhouang Province State of Pollution Report 2020, Lao PDR





kip, with the agriculture-forestry sector growing by an average of 3.51%, accounting for 36.88%, the industrial sector growing by an average of 8.79%, accounting for 35.26%, and the service sector growing by an average of 10.78%, accounting for 27.86%. In 2019, the average income reached 1,622 dollars per person per year, an increase of 444 dollars per person per year, compared to 2015, and a decrease of 378 dollars per person per year compared to the 5-year plan

**Poverty:** LSB (2020) reported the poverty headcount rate in Xiengkhuang province dropped from 43.3% in 2012/2013 to 26% in 2018/2019, with the poverty gap decreasing from 8.6% to 6.2%, and distribution of population decrease from 3.1% to 2.2% of the poor. There are 8,996 poor households (19.4%) in the province, of which the urban poor ratio is 10.2% (1,496 poor households) and the rural poor at 23.6% (7,500 poor households). The ratio of food-poverty is high at 39.5%, with the rural rate of 43.2% and the urban rate at 30.9%. The multi-dimensional poverty headcount rate of the province has reduced from 42.1% in 2012/2013 to 27.5% in 2018/2019.

**Natural hazards/Disaster:** Lao PDR is exposed to many climate hazards, such as flooding, drought, landslides, storms, and typhoons. From 1970 to 2010, 33 natural hazard events were recorded, mostly floods and droughts, affecting almost 9 million people and causing economic damages of over USD 400 million<sup>24</sup>. Xiengkhuang has been experiencing disasters at an increasing rate in the last decade. Communities are exposed to recurrent hazards such as flood and drought impacting on lives and livelihoods year after year by reducing crop yields, yearly incomes, and ultimately increasing the potential of food insecurity<sup>25</sup>. In 2018 Lao PDR faced heavy rains and flooding in several provinces affected livelihood and poverty socio-economic development Tropical Storm Son-Tinh caused heavy rains and flooding in 55 districts of several provinces across Lao PDR. Lao Economic Daily (28 July 2018) reported that bombarded with heavy rains for many days so far this July, numerous areas in Xiengkhuang province have been affected by floods. Areas in seven districts of Xiengkhuang have unavoidably seen the negative impacts. Particularly, the condition in Pek district found 37 flood-affected villages with 41 houses damaged, and impacted 475.4 hectares of rice fields, 0.5 hectares of farming areas, 24 barns, 4 bridges, 4 roads, 2 roads blocked, 13 electric pylons, 1 gas station, and 2 chicken farms, forages and irrigation lines<sup>26</sup>.

According to the analysis of the national climate change vulnerability assessment (UNHABITAT, 2021), Xiengkhuang province is moderately impacted by climate change-related hazards, with droughts affecting nearly one-fifth of the population in the province's center, primarily in Khoune district. While few villages in the north of the Kham and Khoune districts are affected by multiple hazards, such as floods, storms, and landslides, other villages in the district face various combinations of hazards, such as droughts and landslides or landslides and floods. Eastern Pek, Pakhay, Phoukoud, and Morkmay districts are substantially less vulnerable than the rest of the areas. Since primary DRR resources are in place, levels of adaptability are high.

<sup>24</sup>The Asia Foundation (2018), accessible <https://reliefweb.int/report/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/disaster-risk-management-laos>

<sup>25</sup> UNDP Lao PDR (2015). Accessible

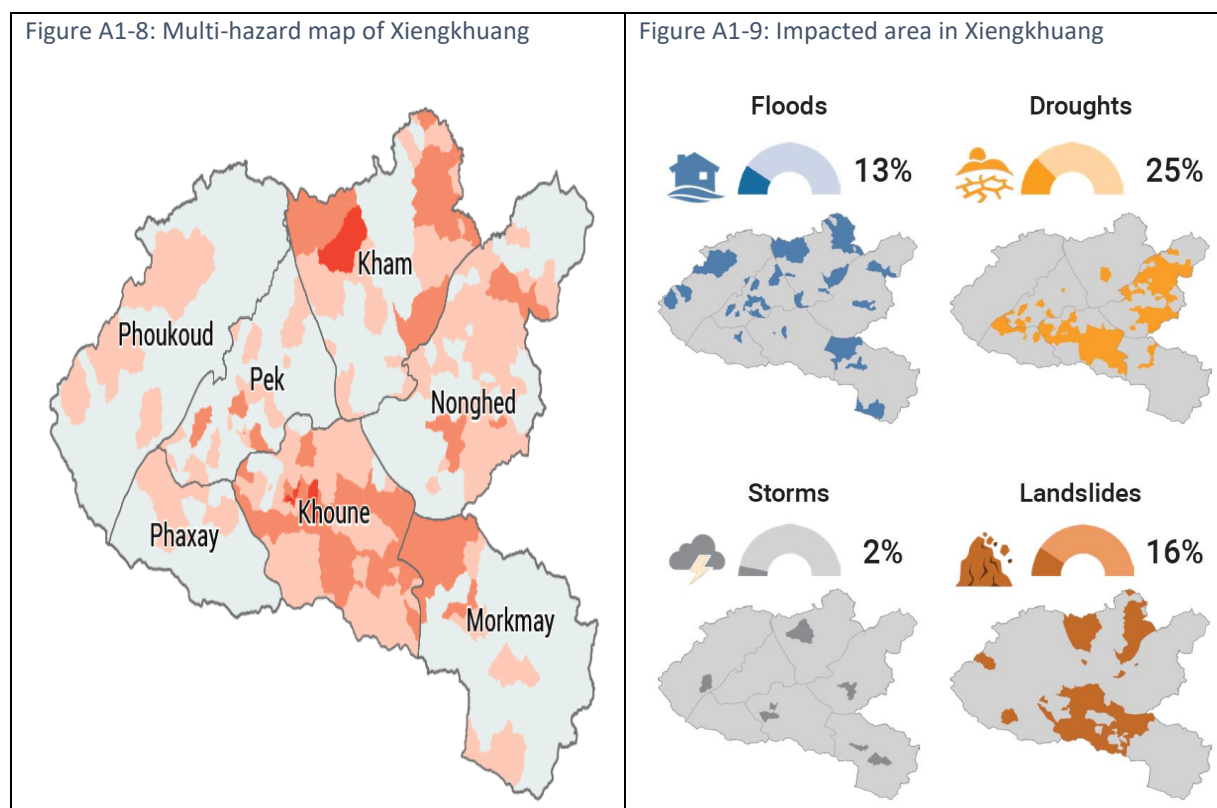
<http://www.la.undp.org/content/laopdr/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/03/09/managing-disaster-risk-in-xiengkhuang.html>

<sup>26</sup> Lao Economic Daily (2018). Accessible <https://laos.opendevelopmentmekong.net/news/floods-hit-xiengkhuang-with-two-dead-and-14-damaged-bridges-this-month/>





Figures A1-8 and A1-9 illustrate the multi-hazard map of Xiengkhuang province and its impacted area.



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

**UXO:** Xiengkhuang province was the site of extensive land battles in the 1960s and 1970s. As one of the two main theatres in the war the other being the so-called Ho Chi Minh trail in the south of Laos – Xieng Khuang’s strategically important Plain of Jars was subjected to hundreds of thousands of bombing raids, leaving the area not only destroyed, but also littered with large numbers of unexploded bombs, including hundreds of thousands of cluster sub-munitions. More than 14,000 hectares of land in Xieng Khuang province have been freed up for use by UXO clearance teams over the past 27 years, with almost 7,000 people in the area falling victim to unexploded ordnance. 6,997 people had been injured or killed in UXO-related accidents in past decades and that 62,191 hectares of land had been contaminated by UXO. Some 14,148 hectares of land have now been restored to normal use, of which 12,315 hectares are agricultural land and 1,833 hectares are being used for various forms of development. An estimated 20,000 people survived out of more than 50,000 who were killed or injured between 1964 and 2008, according to authorities. Based on data recorded in the NRA Dashboard, Xieng Khuang has recorded the highest rate of UXO accidents in Laos, with 206 accidents occurring between 2008 and 2018, resulting in 292 casualties. This has inflicted immense psychological strain on families and communities, while also creating urgent medical needs for those who survive accidents.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> [https://vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent\\_Int65.php](https://vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Int65.php)



## A1.5 SALAVAN PROVINCE

Salavan province is located in the southern part of Laos. It is bordered with Savannakhet Province to the North, Vietnam to the East, Sekong province to the Southeast, Champasak province to the South, and the Mekong River as international border with Thailand to the West. Salavan municipality sits in the province's heart, about 115 km from Pakse. Salavan is divided into eight districts: Salavan, Khongxedon, Toumlan, Lakhonpheng, Laongarm, Samouay, Ta-Oy, and Vapi. (Discover Laos website)<sup>28</sup>

The main geological features are the Bolaven Plateau, Mekong River Valley and Southern Annamite Mountains, which rise to over 2,000 meters in the eastern portion of the province<sup>29</sup>. The Discover Laos has recorded that the province has flat and fertile terrain with rich volcanic soil covers some 40% of the province in its western Mekong River Valley, while the Bolaven Plateau's northern tip rises to 1,000 meters and higher in Salavan's southwest Laongarm District. The Annamite Mountains climb higher than 2,000 meters in the east near the Vietnam border, and scores of rivers and streams crisscross the province, including the Xe Don, Xe Set, Xe Lanong, and Xe Kang Rivers.

The recent forest land cover of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, published in 2019 reported that Salavan province has a total forest area of 642,804 ha (accounts for 61.74% of total land area in the province), the potential area that can be converted to forest area is about 143,185 ha (13.75%) and other type of land of 255,182 ha (24.51%). The province has total area of protection forest of 246,528 ha, protected forest of 268,216 ha and production forest of 136,352 ha.

**Household and Population:** According to the Village and Household Listing in Survey 2018/2019, Salavan province is divided into 8 districts (Salavane, Ta-Oy, Toumlane, Lakhonpheng, Vapy, Khongsedone, Lao Ngarm, and Sa Mouay districts), 579 villages, 71,410 households and 88,644 families in 2019, according to the Villages and Household listing 2019 of the LSB (2020). The province has total population of 425,958 people (214,488 male or 50.4% and 211,470 female or 49.6%). The majority of villages (489 villages) are located in rural areas with access roads. About 38 villages are in urban area, and 52 villages are in the rural areas without access roads.

**Ethnic Group:** Salavan province is home to 14 district ethnic groups, many of which have small populations and unique languages and dialects. Their lifestyles, houses, beliefs, rituals, handicrafts, and ways of making a living vary. Among them are Alak, Katou, Lavene, Ngae, Pako, Phuthai, Souay, Ta-Oy, and Tong. (Rosenblom, 2011).

**The main livelihood activities:** Salavan Province is one of the most important coffee producing areas of Laos along with Champasak Province and Sekong Province. Arabica coffee and coffee beans are the products of the Bolaven Plateau which is an export revenue product and can also be bought in villages along the roads<sup>30</sup>.

**Poverty:** LSB (2020) reported the poverty headcount rate in Salavan province dropped from 52.1% in 2012/2013 to 24.9% in 2018/2019. In opposite, the poverty gap has reduced from

<sup>28</sup> <https://discoverlaos.today/destination/salavan-province>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.tourismmlaos.org/southern-provinces/salavan-province/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://laolandinfo.org/en/salavan-province/>



16.8% to 5.6%, and distribution of population decrease from 6.8% to 1.9% of the poor. There are 12,984 poor households (18.9%) in the province, of which the urban poor ratio is 12.9% (912 poor households) and the rural poor at 19.6% (12,072 poor households). The ratio of food-poverty is 22.2%, with the rural rate of 6.5% and the urban rate at 24.2%. The multi-dimensional poverty headcount rate of the province has reduced from 62.2% in 2012/2013 to 32.9% in 2018/2019.

**Natural hazards/Disaster:** Salavan is prone to flooding practically every year. The recent flooding in 2022 was caused by strong rainfall that swept across Laos, followed by a tropical cyclone that produced significant flooding in North, Central, and Southern Laos. On 15 August 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare issued an official report stating that eight provinces (Huaphan, Xayabouly, Borkeo, Luangprabang, Vientiane Capital, Salavan, Savanakheth, and Champasak) were affected. Rainfall caused significant flooding and landslides, making roads unusable; water and electricity supplies were disrupted; and many homes were evacuated. (IFRC, 2022)<sup>31</sup>. Flooding in Southern Lao provinces in 2019, included Salavan, according to authorities, Salavan province took the brunt of a tropical depression crossing across Laos, producing the highest rainfall in a decade. In Salavan province, 183 villages in three districts were severely impacted.

According to the analysis of the national climate change vulnerability assessment (UNHABITAT, 2021), Saravan province is moderately impacted by climate change related hazards, with nearly a quarter of its population being affected by floods. While all hazards hit villages in Toomlarn district, at the north of the province, Samuoi and Saravane districts are also exposed to floods and storms. Floods, presumably because of the geographical characteristics of the area, affect more than half of villages in Khongxedone district, which is a quite flat watershed that receives water from higher land. Landslides and droughts are rare across this province. Adaptive capacity levels are high, since primary DRR resources are in place. Figures A1-10 and A1-11 presents the multi-hazard map of Saravane province and its impacted area.

<sup>31</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2022-000292-lao>



Figure A1-10: Multi-hazard map of Saravan

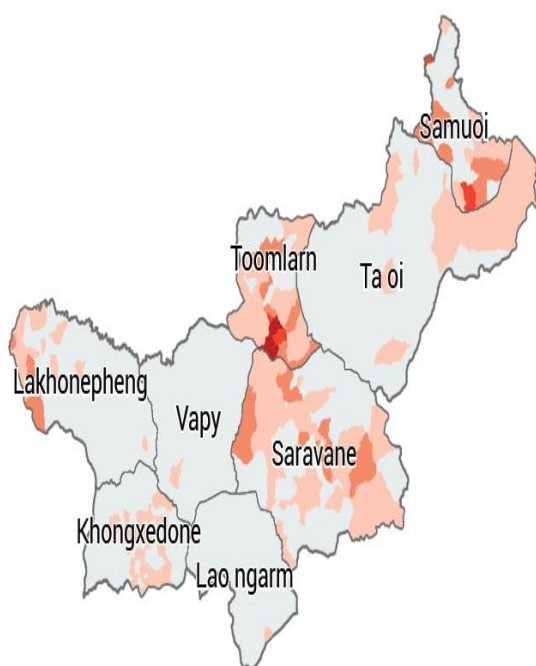
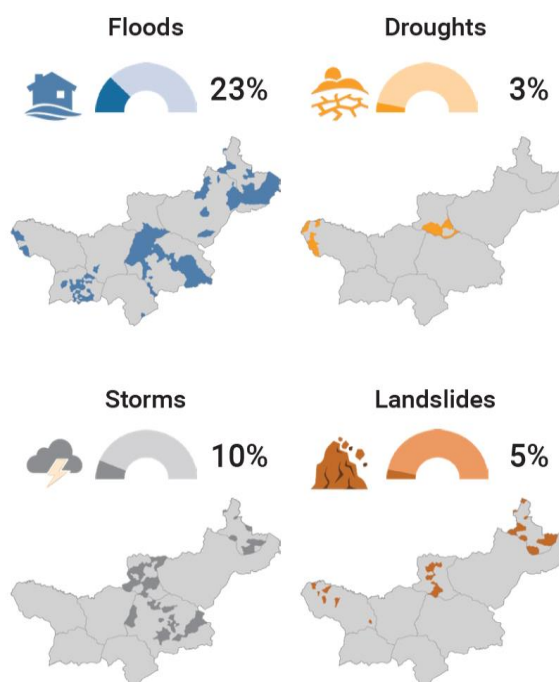


Figure A1-11: Impacted area in Saravan



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

**UXO:** Laos holds the unfortunate title of being the most densely bombed country on earth, with Salavan ranked second behind Xiengkhoung in provincial barrages. After the French retreated from Laos in the 1950s, the Indochina War continued in Salavan as American pilots – many taking off and landing at a 2 km long landing strip hidden in present day Phou Xieng Thong NPA sought to quash Laos’ independence movement. Many of the bombs on Salavan over 15 some years never exploded, especially so-call hundreds via larger casings. To this day, UXO plagues the country’s remote rural development. Survey team produce detailed maps and provide information on UXO locations and active sites, where clearance teams are searching with metal detectors to locate UXOs. Removing team member, all of whom have undergone extensive bomb clearance training at UXO Lao’s Vientiane center, then arrive on the scene to remove or destroy the uncovered UXOs. (Rosenblom, 2011)

## A1.6 SEKONG PROVINCE

The province of Sekong is located in the southern part of Laos and encompasses a total land area of 8,285 km<sup>2</sup><sup>32</sup>. The majority of Sekong is comprised of rough terrain that ranges in elevation from 300 to 600 meters above sea level<sup>33</sup>. It shares an eastern border with Vietnam.

<sup>32</sup> [https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_Lao\\_PDR\\_National\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Vulnerability\\_Assessment.pdf](https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_Lao_PDR_National_Climate_Change_Vulnerability_Assessment.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Information and Culture (2005). The Languages and dialects of Thateng district, Sekong province: A Pilot Survey on Determining Language Affiliation in the Lao PDR. Institute for Linguistic Research with support from the World Bank Fund for Civic Engagement, Empowerment and Respect for Diversity. [https://www.seameo.org/seameoweb2/images/stories/Projects/2008\\_MotherTongueBridgeLang/Other\\_references/WorldBank\\_Papers/Laos/LA\\_Lg\\_Aff\\_Final\\_Report\\_Jun05\\_pdf.pdf](https://www.seameo.org/seameoweb2/images/stories/Projects/2008_MotherTongueBridgeLang/Other_references/WorldBank_Papers/Laos/LA_Lg_Aff_Final_Report_Jun05_pdf.pdf)



The province of Saravan and Attapue surround it to the north, west and south respectively. The province has been classified into three major regions: upland, plateau and lowland<sup>34</sup>.

The Sekong province has complicated geographical conditions that create colorful eco-tourism resources. The climatic condition of Sekong provinces is influenced primarily by the seasonal southwest and northeast monsoons.

Sekong province is reach water resources. The key river and stream in the province include: Sekong river, Se Kaman, Se Namnoi, Huay Rampan and other<sup>35</sup>. The Sekong River (approximately 76km in length) originates in Vietnam and flows through the province. The Sekong river valley is also characterized by a landscape of a fertile plain patterned with a patchwork of rice paddies and fruits orchard. The province is dotted with many cascading waterfalls. Tad Hia, Tad Faek and Tad Se Noi (or Tad Hua Khon) waterfalls are the most convenient to visit from town and offer opportunities for swimming, trekking and village visits. Another waterfall not to be missed is the Nam Tok Katamtok, which originates from the Huay Katam River deep in the jungles of the Bolaven Plateau. In 2011, there were 235 irrigation projects covered a total area of 3956.63 ha for wet season rice, 1429.88 ha for dry season rice and for other crops covering the remaining area of 457.70ha.<sup>36</sup>

The recent forest land cover of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, published in 2019 reported that Sekong province has a total forest area of 606,513 ha (accounts for 71.85% of total land area in the province), the potential area that can be converted to forest area is about 167,780 ha (19.78%) and other type of land for 70,998 ha (8.37%). The province has total area of protection forest of 279,181 ha, protected forest of 107,373 ha and production forest of 188,505 ha.

**Household and Population:** The province has total population of 137,147 people (69,413 male or 50.6% and 67,734 female or 49.4%), 197 villages, 21,781 households and 27,647 families in 2019. There are 4,290 poor households (20.9%) in the province. Sekong is ethnically diverse. Only about 3% of the population is ethnic Lao. The vast majority (97%) come from one of at least 14 distinct ethnic groups. The Alak (21% of the provincial population), Katu (20%), Tarieng (19%) and Nge/Krieng (11%) are the main ethnic groups. Similar to other province, men are considered as the head of the family. Generally, the decision in the family is jointly shared and discussed between male and female. The agriculture is more focused on swidden cultivation and forest products are important for local livelihoods of people in the province. Commercial timber extraction has been expanding rapidly over the past decade in the province by

<sup>34</sup> IUCN (2003). The Economic Return from Conservation Natural forests in Sekong province of Lao PDR <http://lad.nafri.org.la/fulltext/LAD010320040712.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> <https://kpl.gov.la/Page/Footer/Sekong.aspx>

<sup>36</sup> Lao Tourism official website - <https://www.laostourism.org/laos-destinations/sekong/> and UNDP (2013). Effective Governance for small-scale rural infrastructure and disaster preparedness in changing climate project. [https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/LAO/UNDP%20LDCF2%20Prodoc%20Laos%20NAPA%202%2020\(%20Signed%20Version%20\).pdf](https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/LAO/UNDP%20LDCF2%20Prodoc%20Laos%20NAPA%202%2020(%20Signed%20Version%20).pdf)



Vietnamese investors<sup>37</sup>. The province has suitable production land for agricultural cultivation, especially for coffee, almonds, clean vegetables, fruit trees, and so on<sup>38</sup>.

**Natural hazards/Disaster:** Sekong is one of the most vulnerable provinces nationally with more than 75% of villages with an index of between 0.5 and 1.0<sup>39</sup>. The province is highly impacted by climate change related hazards, with floods and landslides being the main threat registered within the province. While droughts mostly affect villages in Thateng district, this area is also vulnerable to floods and storms. Villages in Kaleum district, in the north, and Dakcheung, in the southeast, are highly affected by floods, storms and landslides. Lamarm district only registers floods on its western area. Adaptive capacity levels are low, since primary DRR resources, such as DRR plan, evacuation centres and provincial Master Plan are not in place.<sup>40</sup>

The province is particularly vulnerable to climate change-related hazards, such as floods and landslides, as indicated by the results of the national climate change vulnerability assessment (UNHABITAT, 2021). The villages in Thateng district are particularly vulnerable to drought, but the district as a whole is also at risk from flooding and storms. Northern villages in the Kaleum district and southern villages in the Dakcheung district were hit hard by flooding, storms, and landslides in 2019. The western part of the Lamarm district is the only part to experience flooding. There is a lack of adaptive ability because essential DRR resources such as a DRR strategy, evacuation centers, and a provincial Master strategy do not exist. Because of the availability of these key DRR resources, adaptive capability is quite high. Figures A1-12 and A1-13 present the multi-hazard map of Sekong province and its impacted area.

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<sup>39</sup>UNDP (2013). Effective Governance for small-scale rural infrastructure and disaster preparedness in changing climate project

<sup>40</sup> UNHABITA (2021). Preliminary results of the Lao PDR National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment - [https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_Lao\\_PDR\\_National\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Vulnerability\\_Assessment.pdf](https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_Lao_PDR_National_Climate_Change_Vulnerability_Assessment.pdf)





Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience Project (P178545)

Figure A1-12: multi-hazard map of Sekong

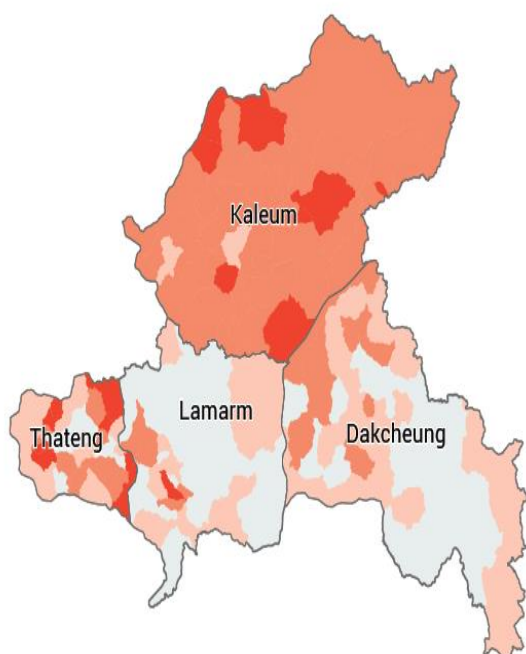
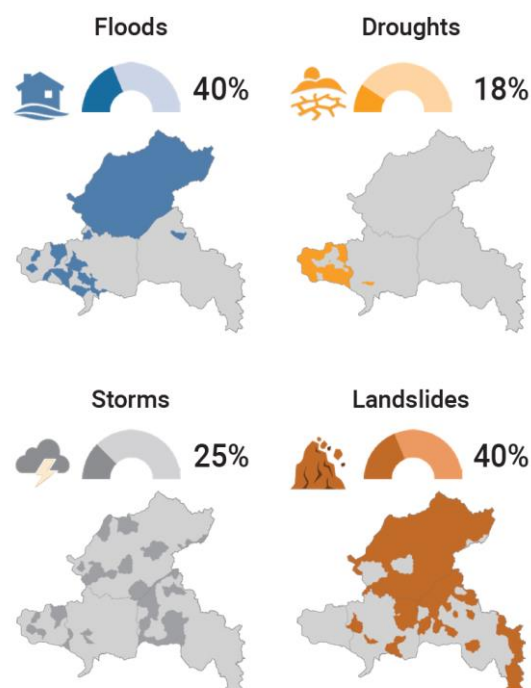


Figure A1-13: Impacted area in Sekong



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

**UXOs:** UXO is still a major issue in Sekong, delaying any road and other infrastructure projects that could contribute to the province's growth. Along with Attapeu, Sekong is thus relatively difficult to access, further contributing to low economic development and high poverty incidence in the area. (IUCN, 2003). The UXO Sector Annual Report 2020 reported that from 1997 – 2020, total area of UXO land clearance in Sekong province was 44,67,553 m<sup>2</sup>, of which 32,003,673 m<sup>2</sup> (72%) has been utilized for agricultural farming and the rest of 12,666,880 m<sup>2</sup> (28%) of area cleared have been used for other development activities in the province, with 176,207 beneficiaries in the province.

## A1.7 SAVANNAKHET PROVINCE

### Overview

Savannakhet province is located in southern Lao PDR, bordering Vietnam to the east and Thailand to the west. Predominantly flat, it has an area of 21,290 square kilometres, which is divided into 15 districts. Savannakhet province is the second-largest city in Laos, after Vientiane, with a population of 125,760 (2018). Savannakhet features a tropical savanna climate (according to Köppen climate classification) with a little subtropical climate characteristics as the city located 16.5° north of the equator. The hottest month is April (mean = 29.5 °C) – with temperature ranging from 23.9 °C to 35.2 °C whereas the coolest month is December (mean = 21.7 °C) with temperature ranging from 15.2 °C to 28.7 °C (83.7 °F). The diurnal temperature variation seems to be greater during winter due to dry conditions. The city experiences dry season during winter months and wet season during summer months due



to activation of monsoon. The driest month is December with precipitation total 2.0 mm while the wettest month is August with precipitation total 323.1 mm.

### Population & Ethnicity

The population of Savanakhet is 125,760 (2018) of which 49.6% is male while 50.4% is female. Savanakhet is home to different ethnic groups including, Lao Loum, Phouthai, Tai Dam, Katang, Mongkong, Vali, Lavi, Souei, Kapo, Kaleung and Ta Oi. However, only three ethnic groups were listed, including Lao Loum (Lowland Lao), Phu Tai, and Bru (2000 census). The Phouthai live in lowland river valleys and there are small groups of Bru, Tri, Laha, and Katang in the mountainous east in remote Nong District. The Bru, however, are a diverse people with various dialects and cultures<sup>41</sup>.

The **Phouthai** often mix with the similar Tai people, and many consider them as a separate group. Though several practice Buddhism, they cling to their traditional animist beliefs. Each Phouthai village has one or more female shamans, called moi yau, who mediate between the people and spiritual worlds by going into a trance. Their most sacred festival is Pi Tian (Spirit of Heaven) in which the community offers sacrifices and prayers to the spirit that they believe resides in paradise above.

The **Bru** live the province's far eastern mountainous area, and are descendants of the Khmer Empire. In fact, "Bru" means "Mountain". Villages are situated in valleys along rivers and streams, and their houses are built in a circle around a communal centre. Most are rice farmers, and apply both terraced and slash-and-burn techniques. They also hunt, fish, and weave. The Bru practice their own traditional religion, based mostly on ancestor worship.

The **Tri** continue to be "slash and burn" communities and move to establish new settlements once the soil is no longer viable. They remain animists, but Buddhism is growing in prominence because of influence from the Lao and Phouthai. Fewer Tri women wear traditional clothing such as colourful scarves and distinctive dresses, though they continue weaving intricate patterns.

The **Katang** are best known for their extended families that dwell in longhouses up to 100-metres-long. Whenever a family member marries, the house is lengthened to accommodate the new family. The Katang are Laos' sixth largest ethnic group, and live in isolated areas of Savannakhet. Both men and women once stretched their earlobes with large bamboo tubes for decoration, but this practice is now rare.

The **Laha** population have trickled over from Vietnam. Many remain in the mountains though some have reached as far as the Mekong. They live in houses on stilts with two entrances and ladders at both ends. Many villages cultivate rice and grow cotton. They believe there are many supernatural forces including spirits of the forest, water, mist, and the house. Tradition requires that a dead person be buried with their money. In each family, only the soul of the father, which will turn into the spirit of the house after his death, is worshipped.

### Natural hazards/Disaster

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<sup>41</sup> Source: <https://wearelao.com/savannakhet-ethnic-diversity> (accessed on April 27, 2023).



Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience Project (P178545)

In terms of water-related disasters, Savannakhet province has the highest percentage of high (0.96 %) and very high hazard areas (0.3 %). Savannakhet Province is also highly influenced by climate change<sup>42</sup>. According to UNHABITAT (2021), a over third of its population in Savanakheth is affected by floods. Villages in Sepone district, at the east, and Songkhone, and Thapangthong districts, at the south, are the most vulnerable as they register floods, droughts, storms and landslides. While Sepone, Xonbuly and Phine districts are largely hit by floods, All the villages in Songkhone and Phalanxay have been affected by droughts<sup>43</sup>.

Figure A1-14: multi-hazard map of Savankhet

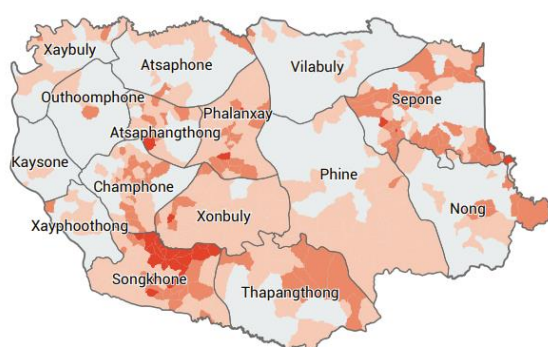
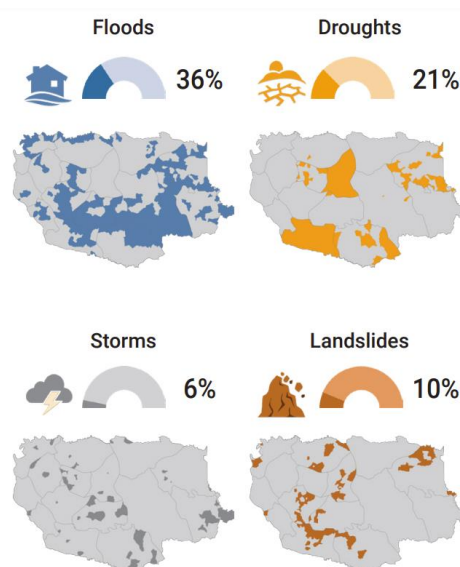


Figure A1-15: Impacted area in Savankhet



Source: UNHABITAT (2021)

## UXOs

According to 2020 UXO Sector Annual Report, during 1997 to 2020, 92,677,055m<sup>2</sup> of agricultural land (83%), and 19,179,557m<sup>2</sup> of development plan (17%) in Savanakheth has been cleared for UXO. In 2020 alone, the number of victim of UXO in Savanakheth is highest in the country (12 cases). In 2021, HALO Trust have continued its survey, clearance, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and – Risk Education (RE) activities across Savannakhet<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Sengphrachanh Phakonkham, So Kazama, and Daisuke Komori (2021). Integrated mapping of water-related disasters using the analytical hierarchy process under land use change and climate change issues in Laos, Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci., 21, 1551–1567 (<https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-21-1551-2021>)

<sup>43</sup> UNHABITA (2021). Preliminary results of the Lao PDR National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment - [https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_Lao\\_PDR\\_National\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Vulnerability\\_Assessment.pdf](https://fukuoka.unhabitat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_Lao_PDR_National_Climate_Change_Vulnerability_Assessment.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.nra.gov.la/resources/AnnualReports/English/UXO%20Sector%20Annual%20Report%202020\\_English.pdf](https://www.nra.gov.la/resources/AnnualReports/English/UXO%20Sector%20Annual%20Report%202020_English.pdf)



## ANNEX 1B: NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

### **National Environmental Legal Frameworks**

**The Law on Environmental Protection, No. 29/NA, dated 18 December 2012** defines principles, regulations and measures related to protection, control, preservation and rehabilitation of the environment, in order to ensure environmental quality, reduction of impacts and pollution created by human activities.

- Article 12 promotes the creation of a green, clean and beautiful environment free of pollution as a cornerstone in environmental management. Article 82 assigns village authorities with the duty to keep the village green, clean and beautiful and to protect streams and community forest.
- Article 23, 24, 25, 26 stipulate general requirements to develop and implement environmental management and monitoring plans, use clean technology and comply with the environmental standards, prevent and control pollution and clean-up and rehabilitate the environment in case of accidental release of hazardous chemicals. Articles 33, 34, 35 contain general requirement to strictly comply with the National Environmental Quality Standards and the National Pollution Control Standards. Article 38, 39 and 40 define general requirements to handle, treat and dispose general waste and hazardous waste in accordance with specific regulations; and to control and monitor potential pollution. Article 52 sets out general obligations to use and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner, to assess potential impacts and protect natural resources, pay royalties and service fees.
- Article 21 and 22 require certain types of investment projects to conduct either an IEE or EIA and to prepare an IEE/EIA report for review and approval by MONRE (EIA) or PONRE (IEE).
- Article 79 establishes the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) as the lead environmental authority and regulator with the responsibility to implement the ESIA System and to inspect and ensure that the environmental and social impacts from investment projects are mitigated.

**The EIA decree issued in October 2022 (No. 389/GoL, dated 20/10/2022).** Approval of a new decree on EIA in early 2019 provided a strong legal basis for development projects to conduct social assessment and plan/implement mitigation measures as needed. The new EIA decree describes the EIA/IEE processes and requirements regarding the preparation and submission of an EIA and IEE reports including the Environment and Management and Monitoring Plan (EMMP). This includes the principles, regulations and measures for managing, monitoring, restoring, and protecting the environment to ensure environmental quality including the pollution control and the impact assessment processes. A number of technical guidelines including the Public Involvement Guideline (PI) were launched in 2012 and are being applied. However, consideration is being made if it is necessary to update this guideline. The objectives of these Guidelines are to (i) ensure the correct implementation of the public involvement and



reflect regulation, principles, transparency and full coverage particularly the involvement of the project affected people in the above involvement process; and (ii) ensure that the project affected people have fairly received reasonable solutions of impacts resulting from investment project. The Department of Environment (DOE) of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is responsible for review of the EIA report and make recommendation for the issuance of an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC)<sup>[1]</sup> while The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Monitoring (DNREM) is responsible for undertaking compliance monitoring. The Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment (PoNRE) is responsible for review, issuance of ECC, and monitoring of project that require an IEE. The new Decision on the List of Projects and Activities Triggered IEE and EIA (No. 0358/MONRE) was issued in February 2023 (see Box 2-1).

<i>Box 2-1 MONRE Decision on the List of Projects and Activities Triggered IEE and EIA (No. 0358/MONRE) related to road and irrigation investment</i>	
<b>Group 1: IEE (Article 2, #6)</b>	<b>Group 2: EIA (Article 3, #6)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New construction of district roads, district city roads, rural roads and specific roads.</li> <li>• Upgrading or rehabilitation of provincial roads and district roads</li> <li>• Construction of irrigation systems, weirs, canals, and drainages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New construction of national and provincial roads</li> <li>• Construction and upgrading or rehabilitation of existing national roads.</li> <li>• </li> </ul>

**Forestry Law (revised 2019)** defines forests as an invaluable national resource with a unique ecology, comprising biodiversity, water resource, and land with various tree species growing naturally or planted in an area of at least 0.5 hectare and a crown cover of at least 20%. Forest in Lao PDR are classified into three categories for the purpose of management, protection, development and utilization as follows: protection forests, conservation forests, and production forests. Each forest category consists of areas of dense forest, dry dipterocarp forest, regeneration forest and degraded forest as prescribed in the Forest Management Plan. Protection forests are forest classified for the function of maintaining water resources, riverbanks and roadsides, for preventing soil erosion and improving soil quality, for protecting strategic areas for national defense and security, safeguarding against natural disasters and providing environmental protection and other functions. Conservation forests (Protected forests) are forests classified for the purposes of conserving nature, preserving and propagating plant species, aquatic animals and wildlife species, protecting forest ecosystems and sites of natural, historical, cultural, touristic, environmental and educational value and for scientific research experiments. Production forests are forests including natural forests and planted forests designated for the supply of wood and NTFPs as commodities to satisfy the





requirements of national socio-economic development and people's livelihoods. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is authorized to develop forestland through coordination with other concerned sectors, local administration authorities and all sectors of society, including Lao citizens, to contribute to forestland development by developing policies, guidelines and measures related to the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of forestland to improve its condition and increase its value in a balanced manner with the forest ecosystem. Forestry Law has defined the scope of protection and development of forest and forestland area by the central, provincial, district and village levels.

***Law on Aquatic and Wildlife (24 December 2007).*** This law determines principles, regulations and measures on wildlife and aquatic life in nature to promote the sustainable regeneration and utilization of wildlife and aquatic life, without any harmful impact on natural resources or habitats and to restrict anthropogenic pressure on decreasing species and the extinction of wildlife and aquatic life. The law outlines guidelines for managing, monitoring, conserving, protecting, developing and utilizing wildlife and aquatic life in a sustainable manner; to guarantee richness of ecological natural equilibrium systems, and to contribute to upgrading livelihoods for multi-ethnic people, which has the potential to develop and realize national social-economic goals.

***Law on Water and Water Resources (Amended), No. 23/NA, 11 May 2017:*** This Law determines the principles, regulations and measures regarding the management, administration, protection, development and use of water and water resources; prevention from the water harmful effects, and restoration and rehabilitation of adversely affected areas with the aims to meet the needs of the people for their livelihoods, agricultural and industrial production and services, to ensure the protection of environment, society and nature, green directive development, sustainability and national security, regional and international integration and contribution into the socio-economic protection and development. This Law applies to both domestic and foreign individuals, legal entities and organizations earning their livings and carrying out their activities in Lao PDR. Article 4 defines rights, obligations, and procedures to gain approval for use of water resources. Article stipulates that medium and large scale uses require feasibility studies, EIAs, and mitigation plans, before permission is granted for use of the resource. Article 22 stipulates that water resource development must be consistent with national and sector plans, must ensure preservation of the natural beauty of the resources, and must protect against harmful effects of water.

***Road Law (2016):*** Road Law describes type of road works comprising construction of new road, road upgrading, road improvement, road rehabilitation, road maintenance, and emergency road works and assign the responsibility for development and management of road networks to DoR and other agencies within MPWT including the provincial Department of Public Works and Transport (DPWT). The law is being revised taken into account the Government policy and the current institutional arrangement. The Road Law states that Ministry of Public works and Transport manages and uses the land for the road activity in conformity with the determination





in the land law. Road width shall have the area consisting of the carriageway, shoulders, pathways, drainages, slope of road and Right of Way (Article 21,22,23,24). Within the Right of Way, it shall be banned all constructions and other activities. Article 30, 31 and 32 (new) states that conducting feasibility study of road construction, maintenance and rehabilitation shall perform environmental impact assessment. Reasonable compensation must be paid to individuals whose land is expropriated for roads, relocation of replacement structures, and loss of trees and crops (Article 38 and 39); and it states that it is prohibited to construct within the road reserve (Article 38).

**Law on Disaster Management, No. 15/NA, dated 24/06/2019** determines the principles, regulations and measures on disaster risk management to enforce the effective, efficient and proactive actions, under the provision of information in a prompt, accurate manner. Accordingly, it aimed at establishing active surveillance to decrease the impacts of disasters to health, lives, assets, public properties, people, environment and infrastructure, as well as the post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation and renovation. This also includes the connection with regional and international stakeholders, in order to contribute to the socio-economic development towards green growth, sustainability and prosperity.

**Law on National Heritage (amended 2021):** The law addresses several environmental protection issues. The Law requires projects that may impact heritage conduct a heritage impact assessment to be endorsed by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. The Law states that socio-economic development shall proceed side by side with protection and conservation of the national heritage. It defines cultural, historical and natural heritage, noting that natural heritage may have scenic or ecological value. The Law also sets out zoning and measures for protection of heritage sites. Areas of national natural heritage shall be registered, especially those containing heritage of high value, such as biodiversity areas, conservation forests, wetlands, caves, and so on. Although it states that sources of biodiversity which have national natural heritage, e.g., wetlands, ponds and marshes, shall be administered by inspection and registration, as proposed by the concerned sectors. It also sets out regulations for protection of national heritage, such as the need to obtain prior approval for development in any national natural heritage area from the Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC) and other concerned sectors.

**Decree on Protected Area (No. 134/G Vientiane Capital, dated 13/5/2015).** This decree determines principles, regulations and standards related to the establishment, allocation, protection, development, utilization and inspection of Protected Areas in order to make the Areas become abundant and sustainable by focusing on the environment protection, watershed protection, prevention from erosion, protection of soil quality, protection of strategic zone for national defense & security, adaptation and reduction of climate changes, solving the global warming, contributing to the improvement of living condition for people of all ethnic groups and developing the national socio-economy. The government allows to use Protected Areas only in an allocated zone and must use them in accordance with related



regulation and law and ensure that there are no negative impacts on forest, quality of soil, natural and social environment. The use of protected areas for public benefit is the use for a research & testing, use as a recreation and tourism site, a source of medicines, a place for protecting watershed, biodiversity, natural & historical environmental and cultural source. The use of protected areas for public benefit shall be permitted by MONRE. Local people, who resides in and around Protected Areas and contribute to the protection and regeneration of forest and Non-Timber Forest Products in the Protected Areas, have the rights to use forest and forest products as determined in the allocation plan of Protected Area and related regulation and law. For the business use, individuals, legal entities and organizations can use Protected Areas in the way that does not impact on natural eco-system namely the use for developing into a natural, cultural and historical tourism site, use for filming a movie or documentary and use for other activities. Specifically, the use for these purposes shall be permitted from related organizations and shall follow the allocation plan, regulated law and regulation.

**Decree on National Environmental Standards, No. 81/GOL dated 21 February 2017** determines ambient environmental quality standards and emission limit values for air, noise, and wastewater emission from different types of activities

### **Government's Regulations on Land Acquisition**

**Land Law No. 70/NA (dated 21 June 2019, Amended)** sets out the principles, regulations and measures on the management and monitoring of land-related work to ensure the effectiveness of the work aiming at ensuring the protection, development, and proper use of land in accordance with its purpose and to improve people's livelihood, ensuring peace, social order, social security and justice and thus contributing to national socioeconomic development in line with the direction towards sustainability with added value to the land, as well as to protect the environment, the national borders and territorial integrity of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

**Decree on Compensation and Resettlement of People Affected by Development Projects, No. 84/GoL, dated 05/04/2016:** Directly applicable to the land acquisition and involuntary resettlement is the Decree on Compensation and Resettlement of People Affected by Development Projects (No. 84/GOL, 5 April 2016). This revised Compensation and Resettlement (C&R) Decree describes the principles, regulations, and standards for mitigating adverse social impacts and compensating for damages resulting from unintentional acquisition or repossession of land and fixed or removal assets, including changes in land use. The decree aims to ensure that the people affected by the project (PAP) are compensated for and assisted in improving or, at least, maintaining their pre-project income and standard of living, and are not made worse off than they would be without the project. The decree describes the strict principles of compensation, particularly for those PAPs which do not have legal land title, land use certificate or other acceptable documentation indicating their right to land use. Unlike ESS5, this government Decree does not provide any provision related to restriction of access to land and natural resources affecting community livelihood and income nor customary lands.



In comparison with the previous Decree (No. 192, 2005), which granted this community of PAP the right to seek compensation not only for their lost assets but also for their lost rights and/or privileges of land use, the revised decree (No 84, 2016) only grants the right to claim for their lost properties, such as homes, trees and/or crops, if found to be located in state lands, and if the land users considered to illegal occupiers.

### **National Social Legal Frameworks**

**Labour Law, No. 43 NA, 24 December 2013** defines the principles, regulations and measures on administration and monitoring of labour skills development, recruitment, and labour protection in order to enhance the quality and productivity of work in society. Article 5 requires that all working conditions are safe, that salary or wages paid are in full, and that all responsibilities in regard to social insurance are implemented for the employees. Article 59 stipulates prohibits unauthorized forced labour in any form. Article 119 requires employers to maintain a safe workplace and ensure good work conditions for the health of the employees, and to provide appropriate facilitation of welfare for employees in the workplace. The employer shall supply information, recommendations, training and protection for employees so that they may undertake their work safely. The employer shall supply individual safety gear to employees in full and in good condition according to international standards. Article 122 requires that the employer must inspect and assess risks to safety and health of the workplace regularly and report the results to the Labour Inspection Agency at least once per year. Article 123: Companies with 100 or less employees must have at least one employee responsible for labour health and safety. Companies with over one hundred employees must appoint a unit and in case of necessity, a safety and health board responsible for labour health and safety shall be established. Article 124: Companies with fifty or more employees must have a medical practitioner. Article 125: Workplace accident or occupational disease that causes major injury or death, must be reported to the Labour Administration Agency within three days. Article 128: If an employee is injured as a result of a labour accident or occupational disease, the employer or social insurance implementation agency must take responsibility for the cost of treatment as determined in the Law on Social Insurance.

**Law on Resettlement and Occupation (No. 086/NA, dated 16 June 2018):** This law was developed based on the compensation and resettlement Decree 84 (2016). The law, which applies for both government and private sector development projects, aims to define, regulate, manage and monitor resettlement and livelihood for Lao population of all ethnic groups to ensure that those who are in areas identified for resettlement and provided with stabilized residential and production land and occupation with ultimate goals to address illegal relocation, eliminate poverty, improve livelihood, security and social order, develop small villages into rural small towns contributing to national socio-economic development and national security.

**Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children (VAWC), No. 56/NA 2014** defines the principles, rules and measures for preventing and combating VAWC



by prevention, protection, provision of assistance to victims of violence and handling of such violence to protect the rights and legitimate interests of women and children; aims to eliminate all forms of VAWC, uphold the roles and dignity of women and children, achieve gender equality, and contribute to developing society in order to maintain peace, public order, solidarity, justice and civilization, and protect and develop the country. The Law is designed to specifically address VAWC that results in or is likely to result in danger, harm, or physical, psychological, sexual, property or economic suffering by women and children.

**The Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children No. 05/NA, 2006** defines principles, rules and measures relating to the administration, monitoring and inspection of the implementation of the protection of the rights and interests of multi-ethnic children. These include measures against those committing offenses toward children, in order to ensure that children are whole in body, mind and spirit, so that they have good attitudes, knowledge and ability and are able to live good lives and become good successors of the nation. Article 26 on children's education says that the State has policies to promote and create conditions to ensure that children receive education by expanding formal education, professional training centers and skills training centers provided by both the State and the private sector, and by providing sufficient teachers, textbooks and materials.

**The Law on the Development and Protection of Women and Children (2004)** is designed to guarantee and promote the roles of women, to define fundamental measures for developing and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of women, and to define the responsibilities of the State, society and family toward women. It has the following aims: promoting the knowledge, capability and revolutionary ethic of women; gender equality; eliminating all forms of discrimination against women; and preventing and combating trafficking in women and children, and domestic VAWC. This is in order to create conducive conditions for women to participate and be a force in national defense and development. The law defines sexual violence as 'an act or attempted act that results in harm to the sexual rights of women and children such as rape, forced sex, any act of obscenity, sexually indecent assault, unwanted sexual comments or sexual touching; or the sending of women or children to another person for sexual purposes. The law encompasses domestic and public violence, including in educational institutions, workplaces and alternative care settings.

**The Law on Anti-Trafficking in Persons, No. 73/NA of 17 December 2015** defines the principles, rules and measures regarding the administration, monitoring, supervision, inspection of anti-trafficking in persons to protect the rights, interests, lives, health, dignity, freedom of the citizens and to preserve national traditions and customs aiming at keeping the society safe and secure, in good order and contributing to the national development and protection. The law sets out preventive measures and enforcement measures to combat trafficking of persons and includes provisions on victim protection, compensation and assistance. The Ministry of Education and Sport is responsible for creating conditions which enable Lao citizens, notably women and children living in remote areas, to have access to basic



general education and to prevent school children and students from becoming the victims of trafficking, and for incorporating anti-trafficking measures in educational curriculums; and creating favorable conditions for the victims to continue their education free of charge.

**The Family Law (1990)** states that ‘the husband and wife have equal rights in all aspects within the family. The husband and wife together make decisions on their own family matters, and are mutually obliged to love, show mutual respect and share a joint obligation for child-rearing and education and build a genuine family bond, happiness and advancement’ (Article 13). In addition to these laws and regulations, the Government of Lao PDR has expressed its commitment to promoting gender equality in a number of policy documents. It approved the Development Plan for Lao Women (1998–2003), which led to the National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children being established in 2003. The plan has been revised every five years and includes goals and programs to promote Lao women’s legal awareness; and to improve their education, skill levels, health, nutrition, and income-generating opportunities, as well as to reduce their workload.

**The law on Lao Women Union (No. 31/NA, 2013)** addresses the government of Lao PDR promotes the development, protection and advancement of women and support their participation, decision-making and equitable benefit-sharing in all development activities according to the Article 4.

**The Law on Health Care, No. 58/NA, dated 24 December 2014** determines the principles, regulations and different measures relating to the organization, activities, management and control of health care activities, in order to ensure that all citizens, families and communities have access to equal, full, equitable and quality health care services, and to protect the rights and interests of health care professional workers, with the aim of increasingly developing modern health care services to enable all citizens to have good health and to be able to effectively contribute to the protection and development of the nation.

**The Law on Hygiene, Prevention and Health Promotion (Amended 2011)** focuses on controlling the elements of the environment which are dangerous or may be dangerous to the body, to mental health and social status of human. This law promotes investment in health and hygiene prevention, addresses community health and hygiene, and ensures that all building construction includes hygiene principles. It also requires health and hygiene in the workplace for workers and states that all facilities must put in place wastewater and solid waste management, and anti-fire systems.

**The Law on Prevention of HIV Disease dated 01/NA issues on 29 June 2010** defines effective principles, regulations, measures, management and monitoring of HIV/AIDS control and prevention in order to reduce HIV infection, and AIDS with the aim to promote good health and a HIV free environment among all Lao people, so that they can contribute to the development and the protection of the country.



**The Law on Prevention and Control of Communicable Disease, 19 December 2017** determines the principles, regulations and measures on the management, monitoring, and supervision of prevention and control of communicable disease, to ensure its implementation in a constant and quality manner, with the aim to prevent the incidence and prevalence of disease, decrease sickness and deaths to all populations which are applicable at regional and international levels, so that they can effectively contribute to the protection and development of the nation.

**The Law on Lao Front for National Development, No. 49/NA, issues on 20 August 2018** defines religious leaders on regular basis to give advice on matters pertinent to religious freedom and faith of the Lao people aiming to ensure solidarity, unity and make religious activities are in line with religious principles, the national constitution and laws, in particular, the Prime Ministerial Decree No. 92 on management and protection of religious activities in the Lao P.D.R. In case there is some misunderstanding on religious matter in some locality, and to meet with religious leaders and local administrative authority to together solve the problem peacefully.

**The Decree on Occupational Health and Safety No 22/GOL of 5 February 2019** requires employers to provide annual health check-ups for their employees. Employers shall record work accidents and occupational diseases and report to the Labour Management Authorities. An employer or the social security organization is responsible for covering the cost of treatment, allowances and compensation to victims of work accidents or occupational diseases.

**GOL Policy and Procedure to combat COVID-19:** Since March 2020, considering the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in neighboring countries such as China, Thailand, Vietnam, and others, the GOL took strict actions to prevent infection within Lao PDR. Three policy and guideline were issued on 13 March 2020 to control COVID-19 transmission and infection i.e. (a) guideline on prevention of the transmission and infection of COVID-19 at international airport, land border, and transportation stations; (b) guideline on prevention of the transmission and infection of COVID-19 at suspected to be infected area or temporary quarantine center; and (c) guideline on prevention of the transmission and infection of COVID-19 at public place (hotel, guesthouse, offices, schools, and others).

### **Government's Regulations on Ethnic Minority Peoples**

Constitution of Lao PDR (No. 63/NA, dated 8 December 2015) was revised in 2015. The Constitution recognizes the need to incorporate the concerns of ethnic groups in developing policy and programs in all sectors, and has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the rights of all ethnic groups. Article 8 states that “the State pursues the policy of promoting unity and equality among all ethnic groups. All ethnic groups have the right to protect, preserve and promote the fine customs and cultures of their own tribes and of the nation. All acts creating division and discrimination among ethnic groups are prohibited”.





**The 1992 Ethnic Minority Policy of the Lao PDR**<sup>45</sup> towards ethnic minorities identifies three essential tasks: (i) strengthening political foundations, (ii) increased production and opening of channels of distribution in order to convert subsistence-based economics towards market-based economics, and (iii) a focus on the expansion of education, health and other social benefits. The Policy states that the Lao PDR must discourage ethnic minorities from continuing their practices associated with shifting cultivation through arranging for permanent livelihoods for such groups so that the benefits of other forms of agriculture outweigh those associated with shifting cultivation. Lao PDR considers that many of its upland minorities (especially the Khmou and Hmong) observe “backward traditions that are reflected in their production lifestyle”. In practice the Lao PDR realizes that it is quite impractical to change all these “backward” practices it attributes to ethnic minority groups because of limited arable area for lowland agriculture and even many lowland Lao are involved in some forms of upland agriculture.

**National guideline on consultation with ethnic groups** was prepared by the Lao Front for National Construction<sup>46</sup> (LFNC) in 2013 in line with the National Guideline on Public Involvement (2012). The National guideline on consultation with ethnic groups aims to ensure that all ethnic groups who benefit from or are adversely affected by a development project, without regard to the source of funding, are fully engaged in a meaningful consultation process at all stages from preparation into implementation. The guideline also aims to ensure that the potentially affected ethnic groups are better informed of project objectives, as well as their potential positive and adverse impacts on their livelihood and their environment, and provided with opportunities to articulate their concerns. The guidelines provide principles and process to carry out meaningful consultations with, and obtain free, prior and informed consent of, all ethnic groups affected by developments projects in a culturally sensitive manner. The guidelines consist of a) objectives and scope of the guidelines, b) consultation processes with ethnic groups at respective stages of development projects c) consultation approaches and methods for different ethnic groups in a culturally appropriate manner, d) expected outcomes of consultation at each stage, and e) implementation arrangement and responsibility.

**Decree No. 207 on Ethnic Group Affairs (2020)** sets out the principles, regulations, and measures on the management of ethnic affairs. The Decree aims to promote unity among the nation’s diverse ethnic groups. It provides officials with guidelines for the regulation of ethnic groups. Individuals and all types of organizations, in both the public and private sectors, are encouraged to engage in the affairs of the country’s ethnic groups. The decree states that ethnic groups must be governed using principles that ensure unity and equality. In addition, all ethnic groups should be permitted to practice their special customs and traditions in



accordance with the country's constitution and laws. The Decree bans all forms of discrimination against ethnic groups while calling for all ethnic groups to be provided with equal opportunities for development and participation in national protection and development. While all ethnic groups are allowed and encouraged to maintain their cultural practices, it is the state's policy to end the practice of traditions that hinder the social advancement of certain ethnic groups. In this regard, the government encourages ethnic groups to use their cultural practices and communities to attract tourists, as a means to generate income and alleviate poverty. The government also encourages ethnic groups to use natural resources in ways that are sustainable, which it believes can be achieved by people having permanent jobs and regular incomes.

### **Government's Regulation on Pest Management**

**Regulation 2860/MAF** on pest management is the latest legal document (June 2010) which was updated from the previous Regulation 0886/MAF which dated back in March 2000. The regulation was developed based on the WHO recommended Classification of Pesticide by Hazard and Guideline to Classification 1994-1995. It is noted that since January 2010, the GoL have registered companies who import pesticides, fertilizers and seeds into Lao PDR. Registered pesticides were also adjusted in May 2010, based on the new Regulation 2860/MAF. The Department of Agriculture (DoA) under MAF is mandated to oversee all usage of pesticides.

**Regulation 2860/MAF** consists of ten Parts and one Annex, establishing the Control of Pesticides within Lao PDR. It defines the principles, rules, and measures for controlling activities that involve pesticides within Lao PDR in order to protect human, animal and plant health, and the environment, and to be harmonized with international obligations and regulations in which Lao PDR is a contracting party. The Regulation is a tool for monitoring and controlling the production, processing, import/export, distribution, transportation, storage, use, and proper disposal of pesticides to ensure the safety of people, animals, plants, and the environment. It applies to all stakeholders involved in the use and management of pesticides.

### **Government's Regulation on Good Agriculture Practice and Organic Agriculture Standard**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has issued four ministerial decisions (since 2004 and 2005):

- i. ***Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Produce Quality Management Standard (No 0539/MF, dated 09/02/2011).*** The Decision is used as a tool for practicing Good Agriculture Practice Quality Management Standard of fruit and vegetable production; and for value adding to fruit and vegetable production as well as improving the quality of the fruit and vegetables production and supply chain to meet the requirements of domestic and international market.
- ii. ***Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Environmental Management (No 0538/MF, dated 09/02/2011).*** The Decision is an instrument to manage fresh vegetables and



- fruit-based GAP to conserve and protect the environment in and out of farm sites.
- iii. *Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Produce Quality Management Standards* (No 0539/MF, dated 09/02/2011). The Decision serves as an instrument to promote GAP implementation for agricultural products, especially for fruit and vegetable production in response to demand of domestic and international markets.
  - iv. *Decision on GAP for Labor Safety, Health and Welfare* (No. 0540/MAF, dated 9/02/2011). This decision aims to protect the health, safety and welfare for workers who are working in GAP.
  - v. Law on Livestock Production and Veterinary Matters (No. 03/NA, dated 25 July 2008). The Law defines the principles, rules and regulations related to the organization, management and inspection of livestock production and veterinary activities in order to boost, promote and develop the nation's potential in animal production and related livestock resources. Its objectives are guarantee food security and ensure standards to safeguard consumers; create the conditions necessary for the growth and development of the animal product processing industry; participate and contribute to strong social and economic development (i.e. National Development); create a better quality of life for the people of Lao PDR; and to ensure sustainable environmental protection.

### **Government's Regulation on Food**

The Law on Food (2013) defines principles, regulations and measures on the management, monitoring, and control of food and food-related activities in terms of quality and efficiency, and to ensure the food safety and nutrition to enable a good health and longevity for all, so as to effectively contribute to the protection and development of the nation.



## ANNEX 2: SCREENING FOR FINANCING ELIGIBILITY AND E&S RISKS AND IMPACTS

Annex 2 elaborates the Figure 5. 1 - E&S Management Procedure in Chapter 5 of ESMF. The Annex provides guidance on two-step screening for investment activities proposed by a project village for investment activities under Component 1. While step 1 (Annex 2A below) aims to ensure only activities eligible for project financing is further considered, step 2 (Annex 2B below) guide screening and scoping for E&S risks & impacts associated with proposed investment activities that pass Step 1.

Annex 2 is intended for use by District Implementation Unit (DIU) with technical support from E&S Consultant engaged by PMU, and PMU's ES officer. DIU will be trained by PMU as soon as the project becomes effective. Training will be repeated as needed. It is noted that even though DIU will provide training to VSMC and VIT on the details of Annex 2, and provide them with hands-on experience in using Annex 2, DIU will initiate and directly prepare SS-ESMP (under the guidance of PMU's ES Consultant and E&S Officer) for civil works subproject using inputs provided by VSMC and VIT.

### ***ANNEX 2A: NEGATIVE AND PREFERENCE LIST (Step 1)***

This Annex (2A) provides guidance on how a subproject/activity is screened for investment eligibility under Component 1. For investment activities under Component 2 (credit and savings, capacity building in animal husbandry, cultivation, marketing), and Component 3 (home gardening...), these investment activities are not subject to E&S screening because these activities are of small scale (household level). Instead, relevant Do and Don't List, and ESCOP, will apply to individual beneficiary households, and producer's group (See Annex 3).

- **Scope of application:**

This Annex is applied to all investment activities proposed in the village-level Annual Investment Proposal to be prepared annually by a Village Authority (VA) for submission to PMU for review and approval.

- **Users of Step 1:**

A user of Step 1 is District Implementation Units (DIU).

- **Procedures:**

Before a Village Authority discusses among their villagers on the community development needs and propose a list of investment activities based on such needs, DIU will walk the VA through the following Negative List and Preference List (below).

#### **2A.1 NEGATIVE LIST**

- This Negative List is applied to all project activities proposed under Component 1, 2 and 3.
- Before DIU screens the list of potential subproject/ activities, DIU must provide training to VA on how the Negative List is used.



■ **Usage of the Negative List:**

- In the Negative List below, DIU will walk VA through the list to choose either a “Yes” or “No” to each item on the Negative List. Before selecting a Yes/No, provide a brief justification to why a Yes or No is proposed/selected. Note that when providing justification to environmental and social aspects for such items as item No. 3, 5, 11 in Table 2A-1 Negative List, additional information may be collected to support a sound justification for a “No” response.
- When in doubt, Project’s District Implement Unit could contact PMU’s ES Consultant for support.
- The proposed subproject/activities will not be financed if one of the items on the Negative List has a “Yes” response.
- This list should be used in conjunction with description of proposed project activities as described in Annex 1 (Project Description), and relevant project guidance such as Project Operation Manual, Guidance for Self-Help Group and Producers’ Group Guidance, Manuals for Nutrition, Community Force Account, and Community Driven Development.

**Table 2A-1 Negative List**

No.	Negative List	Yes	No	Justification for Yes, or No
1	Proposed activities are located in area designated as protected areas, or biodiversity conservation area – as defined by Government of Laos (GOL).			
2	Are located in area designated as protected areas, or biodiversity conservation area – as defined by Government of Laos (GOL).			
3	Necessitate land acquisition that affects more than 200 persons or 20 households.			
4	Potentially adversely impact the integrity or productivity of collectively owned Ethnic Group (EG) land. Civil works could be carried out adjacent to collectively owned IP land but shall not impact the integrity or its productivity.			
5	Affect physically a cultural or archaeological site that are of special spiritual significance to local peoples and communities such as forest, temple, sacred site like trees, rocks, grounds, etc.			
6	Involve restricted access to natural resources, resulting in adverse impacts on the livelihoods of local people?			
7	Involve primary production or harvest of living natural resources.			
8	Purchase of guns; chain saws; asbestos, dynamites, destructive hunting and fishing gears and other investments detrimental to the environment.			





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No.	Negative List	Yes	No	Justification for Yes, or No
9	Purchase of pesticides, herbicides and other dangerous chemicals that are prohibited from use under Lao's national regulations.			
10	Forestry operations, including logging, harvesting or processing of timber and non-timber products (NTFP).			
11	Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.			
12	Introduction of non-native species, unless these are already present in the vicinity or known from similar settings to be non-invasive.			
13	Significant conversion or degradation of natural habitat or where the conservation and/or environmental gains do not clearly outweigh any potential losses.			
14	Production or trade in any product or activity deemed illegal under Lao PDR's laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international bans.			
15	Labor and working conditions involving harmful, exploitative, involuntary or compulsory forms of labor, forced labor <sup>47</sup> , child labor <sup>48</sup> or significant occupational health and safety issues.			
16	Trade in any products with businesses engaged in exploitative environmental or social behavior.			
17	Subprojects that require full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will not be funded including any projects that will use or induce the use of hazardous materials (including asbestos) or any banned chemicals.			
18	Construction of health center and school buildings, which are not directly contribute to improved livelihood and nutrition outcomes and covered by other projects.			
19	The village has been resettled for less than 4 years or if the village plans to relocate to another place in the next four years			
20	Village infrastructure that specifically serves expansion of previous village facilities due to the arrival of households relocated less than 2 years prior or planned for relocation is another non-eligible activity.			

#### 4A.2 PREFERENCE LIST

In screening through the Negative List, the Preference List below could be used as a reference to identify a broad range of investment options that are eligible for project financing:

- Promote skill development, increase income revenue and promote conservation of fish habitats.

<sup>47</sup> Forced labor means all work or service, not voluntarily performed, that is extracted from an individual under threat of force or penalty.

<sup>48</sup> Harmful child labor means the employment of children that is economically exploitive, or is likely to be hazardous to, or to interfere with, the children's education, or to be harmful to the child's health, or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.



- Promote reforestation and re-vegetation.
- Promote conservation of water resources.
- Increase awareness and ownership of local community to protect and manage their forest areas, wetlands, wildlife or biodiversity.
- Promote utilization of natural/organic pesticide from herb instead of chemical pesticide.



## **ANNEX 2B: E&S SCREENING AND SCOPING (Step 2) – To be applied to Component 1**

### ▪ **Scope of application:**

This Annex is applied to all activities that pass screening in Step 1 (above). The result of this step will inform which E&S mitigation approach (ESCAP, Do and Don't Do, or site-specific ESMP) will be applied to the proposed investment activities.

### ▪ **Users of Step 2:**

User of this Annex are District Implementation Units (DIU). DIUs will propose how E&S risks and impacts that are identified/assessed with proposed investment activities are addressed. DIU will walk the Village Authority through the process of E&S screening and scoping – similar to the way that they did for Step 1 which screens financing eligibility vis-à-vis the Negative List.

### ▪ **Procedures:**

This Annex provides guidance to DIU and VA on how DIU and VA will:

- a) Screen/identify relevant E&S risks and impacts that associated with civil work/ activities proposed in annual village-level Annual Investment Proposal;
- b) Determine the WB's ESS that apply to proposed subproject/activities in the Annual Investment Proposal;
- c) Anticipate the magnitude of E&S risks and impacts *vis-à-vis* each proposed investment activities in the village-level Annual Investment Proposal); and propose risk classification for each project investment activity.
- d) Propose which approach (e.g. ESCAP, Do & Don't Do, SS-ESMP) that will be applied to each investment activity.

In the sections below, various E&S screening tables are prepared for potential investment activities as per Project Component 1. DIU needs to identify each investment activity by its project component – to use the correct table. It is noted that activities under Component 3 that involve home gardening, for example, will not be screened for ES risks and impacts but Do and Don't Do practices are proposed for application (in Annex 3C).



## PROJECT COMPONENT 1

**Table 2A-1 E&S Screening for Component 1 (construction of civil works)**

It is planned during project preparation that around 60,000 USD would be allocated for each village for infrastructure and capacity building. Except for storage/processing facilities that could be newly built, other infrastructure such as bridge, road, and irrigation canal, involve mostly small repair based on the existing structures.

No	Questions	Answer (Yes/No/TBD)	Comments (if needed)	Action Required	World Bank ESS	E&S Documents that may be required
1	Is the proposed investment (road, bridge, irrigation, drinking water, storage house...) a <b>completely new infrastructure or b) rehabilitation of existing civil work that involves structural change/extension?</b>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>If YES, prepare SS-ESMP in accordance with Annex 3A.</b></li> <li>• <b>Apply relevant ESCOP, Do &amp; Don't Do.</b></li> </ul>
2	Are located in area designated as protected areas, or biodiversity conservation area – as defined by Government of Laos (GOL).					
3	Will the investment activity result in land acquisition, and/or adverse impacts on the livelihoods of local people, including vulnerable/disadvantaged peoples <sup>49</sup> ?				ESS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prepare A-RP in accordance with Project's RPF</b></li> </ul>
4	Will the works require the removal of trees (fruit or other trees)?				ESS1	Apply relevant SS-ESCOPs in Annex 3B.
5	Will the works be located in or near a cultural/heritage area such as spirit forest and temple				ESS8	
6	Will the works result in increases in, or changes to the type of, traffic using the road?				ESS1 and ESS4	Apply relevant SS-ESCOPs in Annex 3B
7	Will the works increase noise levels in the community (due to vehicles, works, etc.)?				ESS1	Apply relevant SS-ESCOPs in Annex 3B

<sup>49</sup> See also Definitions section of ESMF.



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No	Questions	Answer (Yes/No/T BD)	Comments (if needed)	Action Required	World Bank ESS	E&S Documents that may be required
8	Would work required setting up a worker's camp? Otherwise, where are workers expected to live?				ESS2, ESS4, ESS5	Apply relevant SS- ESCOPs in Annex 3B
9	Is an influx of workers (national and foreign), from outside the community, expected?				ESS2 and ESS4	Apply relevant SS- ESCOPs in Annex 3B
10	Is there a risk related to contraction of HIV/AIDS and/or other sexually transmitted diseases, as a result of project works?				ESS4	
11	Is there a risk of COVID-19 spread as a result of project works?				ESS4	Apply relevant Guidance from Annex 5 of LMP
12	Is there a risk that SEA/SH and/or VAC may increase as a result of project works?				ESS4	Apply Worker's Code of Conduct (Annex of LMP)
13	Is there a risk that traffic accidents and/or death may increase as a result of the project?				ESS4	Apply Do & Don't (Annex 3C)
14	Is there a risk that women and other vulnerable groups may not benefit and/or be more adversely impacted by the project?				ESS4, ES S5 and ESS7	Apply SEP (Section 3.3 and 4.4)





## ANNEX 3A: GUIDELINE AND TEMPLATE FOR SITE SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Based on the result of E&S screening (Annex 2B), the Site-Specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (SS-ESMP) will be prepared for subproject (civil work) when a subproject involves:

- a) **Construction of a completely new** civil works such as storage/processing facilities, small irrigation canal, small bridge/access road that lead to a community's farm site, drinking water facilities) – whether it is built on a **new, vacant site**, or **on a site with old/existing** similar civil works that are out of order, or not functioning well.
- b) **Repair of existing civil work** that involves **structural change/upgrade/extension**, e.g. reconstruction of a road embankment, repair of a road section that involve installation of a new culvert as a flood control measure.

It is required that the first SS-ESMP that is prepared for one district will be prepared in English and submitted to the WB for prior review before the SS-ESMP is adopted for implementation by VIT. The approved ESMP will be translated into Lao language for disclosure and training for DIU, VSMC and VIT.

The Site Specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (SS-ESMP) will establish the environmental and social standard and compliance mechanisms and serve as ES management requirements for supervision and enforcement of good environmental and social practices during sub-projects implementation.

The SS-ESMP will include the potential impacts and mitigation measures, which should be further detailed to mitigate risks and impacts within specific locations and activities or amended as needed, including by breaking them down into impacts/mitigation during planning, implementation, and after the project or long term sustainability.

The SS-ESMP should be read together with other documents that may be required, such as LMP (Annex 4) and an Abbreviated Resettlement Plan (A-RP) in Annex 5 may be part of the set of management plans to mitigate social impacts, if required. A-RP should follow the guidance outlined in the Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF (See Annex 5). Stakeholder engagement should follow the parameters outlined in the project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), and ensuring the SEP is updated. PRF PMU will make sure that the SS-ESMPs (and other sub-plans if required) for the civil works consulted and disclosed prior to approval. PRF PMU will also ensure that a grievance mechanism is in place during the entire project process to address any concern or suggestion for improvement coming from the stakeholders at local or national level.

To prepare and implement an ESMP, the following arrangements have been made for each project district:

**Table 3A-1 Roles of Relevant Stakeholder**



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No.	Steps	Roles of Relevant Stakeholder			
		DIU	VSMC	VIT	PMU
1	Screen for E&S risks and impacts, and scoping	Initiate and conduct	Support DIU in providing information and make justifications	Support as needed	Oversight
2	Prepare SS-ESMP	Support DIU in providing project technical information and baseline information and conducting consultations	Support as needed	Support as needed	Initiate and prepare with TA from E&S Specialist
3	Submit ESMP to WB for review and comments				PMU submit
4	Review and Clearance				First ESMP for each project district
5	Implement ESMP	Technical support & M&E	Monitoring	Implementation	Monitoring and reporting to WB Bi-Annually

**Template for SS-ESMP**

**SITE SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**FOR .....(Subproject Name)**

Date		GIS reference	
Village		District	Province



<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Approved by:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## 1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE ESMP

- Objectives.
- Scope. This ESMP covers all investment activities that have been screened for E&S risks and impacts using guidance in Annex 2B.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES COVERED BY THE SS-ESMP

- Brief description of project activities to be covered by the SS-ESMP
- Brief description of name of village, location.
- Estimated beneficiaries.

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BASELINE INFORMATION

- Overview of the Project location
- Environmental baseline information: information and map of land, forest areas, rivers, cultural heritage and disaster risks, use of chemical and etc.
- Socioeconomic and environmental baseline information: brief description of name of village, location, overview of village population, ethnic groups, map of village in relation to other villages of the project district, infrastructure, economic profile, livelihood activities, solid waste management, sources of water use and drinking water, access to education and health, sanitation system and etc.

## 4. E&S RISKS, IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This section provides a summary of E&S risks and impact based on ES Screening results using guidance in Annex 2B.



**Table 4-1 Summary of E&S Risks/Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

Potential negative Impact <sup>50</sup>	Environmental and Social mitigation Measures	Location	Estimated mitigation costs	Implementing Agency	Supervising / Monitoring Agency
<b>DETAILED DESIGN/ PRE-CONSTRUCTION MOBILISATION STAGE</b>					
Site selection/location:					
• Conservation area					
• Mountainous area					
• Community area					
• Land property					
• Natural disasters risks management (DRM) and climate change (CC) integration (e.g. flash flood and erosion/landslide)					
• Flood area					
• Fish spawning areas and migration routes					
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set standards appropriate for class of road, traffic and terrain</li> </ul>				

<sup>50</sup> Sample impacts which need to be updated when preparing the actual SS-ESMP



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Potential negative Impact <sup>50</sup>	Environmental and Social mitigation Measures	Location	Estimated mitigation costs	Implementing Agency	Supervising / Monitoring Agency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize impact on trees and replant when work is completed.</li> <li>Minimize impacts on wildlife, virgin forest areas, cultural relics etc.</li> <li>Ensure a safe design including speed restriction and warning signs, to control livestock as necessary and where possible discuss possible designs with local people.</li> <li>Ensure culvert, bridge and road are suitably designed to minimize effects on hydrology.</li> <li>Ensure design improves the drainage system by rectifying any existing problems such as scouring of adjacent lands, which should be checked for during the monsoons. Include tree planting in design where possible.</li> </ul>				
UXO Clearance					
Consultation with affected and beneficiary groups including vulnerable and poor groups					
<b>CONSTRUCTION STAGE</b>					
Dust, noise, vibration					





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Potential negative Impact <sup>50</sup>	Environmental and Social mitigation Measures	Location	Estimated mitigation costs	Implementing Agency	Supervising / Monitoring Agency
Use of borrow area					
Erosion and sedimentation					
Downstream water quality					
Waste (construction waste, domestic and hazardous)					
Occupational health and safety: use of PPE					
Working conditions					
Child labor and Forced Labor					
Exposure to pesticide due to increased crop production					
Environmental sanitation (due to animal waste)					
Community Health and Safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic and road safety/accident</li> <li>Contracting communicable disease(s)</li> <li>Noise and duct disturbances</li> </ul>					
Sexual Exploitation & Abuse, Sexual Harassment					
Domestic Violence					
Violence Against Children					



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Potential negative Impact <sup>50</sup>	Environmental and Social mitigation Measures	Location	Estimated mitigation costs	Implementing Agency	Supervising / Monitoring Agency
Permanent Land acquisition					
Temporary land acquisition					
Temporary economic displacement					
Discrimination in Job Opportunity for Members of Disadvantaged Groups					
Culture awareness					
Inequality in selecting project beneficiary households					
Gender stereotype (roles in family and community)					
<b>CLOSURE PHASE</b>					
Site clean-up					
Consultation with affected and beneficiary groups including vulnerable and poor groups					
Technical inspection					
Land over to community					
<b>OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE STAGE</b>					
Speed control					
Community participatory and ownership in operation and maintenance					



## 5. MONITORING AND REPORTING

DIU, with technical assistance of E&S officer of PMU, will conduct quarterly compliance monitoring as per ESCOP under Section 5 and submit E&S Quarterly Monitoring Report to PMU. PMU will conduct Bi-Annual compliance monitoring and submit E&S Bi-Annual Monitoring Report to WB using the Monthly Monitoring and Reporting Form provided in Annex 7B.

**Accident Reports:** Reports of the circumstances of any significant accident occurring during the implementation will be promptly informed by the PRF PMU to the World Bank within 48 hours using reporting procedure and form in Annex 7C.

## 6. BUDGET FOR ESMP IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of SS-ESMP will be financed by the project and will be carried out with the implementation support by project staff at and community workers.



## ANNEX 3B: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL CODE OF PRACTICES (ESCOP)

The ESCOP sets forth E&S requirements that all VITs and VSMCs are required to comply with to avoid/minimize E&S risks and impacts that are associated with implementation of subproject activities under Component 1 (for construction of small civil works, waste management, conservation of water sources, prohibition on wildlife consumption and trade) within each village.

Requirements in ESCOP aims to address relevant negative impact from construction activities such as air pollution, good housekeeping, noise, vibration, waste, and occupational risks related to health and safety of workers while at work, traffic safety, risks, local traffic, etc., and health and safety of community members that may affected as a result of the presence and the work of project workers in their community.

The ESCOP is subject to modification/update to meet the specific E&S risks and impacts anticipated with the nature, scope and scale of each subprojects/activities.

If the proposed scenario provided in the Table 3B-1 to Table 3B-5 (especially the key issues and mitigation measures) does not take place/or irrelevant, the PRF team can simply fill in “not relevant” in a remark column OR simply delete the irrelevant scenario.

Below are example SS-ESCOP that are prepared for:

- **Agricultural and Rural Access Roads/Bridges** (Table 3B-1);
- **Small Irrigation** (Table 3B-2)
- **Drinking Water** (Table 3B-3)
- **Post-harvest facilities** (e.g. drying platforms, storage facilities, and small processing facilities) (Table 3B-4)
- **In-village solutions for better market access and tree preservation** (e.g. fencing or tree planting) (Table 3B-5).

**Table 3B-1: ESCOP for Agricultural and Rural Access Roads**

Key issues to consider	Mitigation measures	Remarks
<b>Location</b>		
Conservation area	No animal killing	
	No land occupation	
	No forest cutting	
	Solid waste Management	
	No camping	



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Key issues to consider	Mitigation measures	Remarks
Natural disasters risks management (DRM) and climate change (CC) integration (e.g. flash flood and erosion/landslide) Flood area	Consult with local people and authority on history of natural disaster and any potential for risk such as flash flood and erosion/land slid)	
Mountainous area	Design slope should be less than 17%	
	Side drain	
	Slop protection	
	Guard rail (simple type)	
Community area	Speed limit sign	
	Dust and noise control	
	timely public information on works duration and schedule	
Land property	Minute of meeting on conflict resolution and attached the land certificate	
	Cultural area, history, etc.	
Fish spawning areas and migration routes	Avoid negative impacts such as disposal of spoil and tree uprooting which could silt up water courses Ensure optimal design.	
<b>SEP</b>		
Compliance with the requirements and procedures provided in SEP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups ( disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>	
<b>Planning, Design and Land Acquisition</b>		
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set standards appropriate for class of road, traffic and terrain</li> <li>• Minimize impact on trees and replant when work is completed.</li> <li>• Minimize impacts on wildlife, virgin forest areas, cultural relics etc.</li> <li>• Ensure a safe design including speed restriction and warning signs, to control livestock as necessary and</li> </ul>	





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Key issues to consider	Mitigation measures	Remarks
	<p>where possible discuss possible designs with local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure culvert, bridge and road are suitably designed to minimize effects on hydrology.</li> <li>• Ensure design improves the drainage system by rectifying any existing problems such as scour of adjacent lands, which should be checked for during the monsoons. Include tree planting in design where possible.</li> </ul>	
UXO Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultation with local people and authority to screen for the level of UXO contamination as part of E&amp;S screening and scoping during survey and design of infrastructure activities.</li> <li>• If UXO risk exists, the project will collaborate with National Regulatory Agency (NRA) for UXO technical survey for all project funding activities that involve excavations and/or expansion of land area so that a UXO free certificate can be obtained before starting construction activities.</li> </ul>	
Worker's Code of Conduct (CoC) for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP - Annex 1).</li> <li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Worker's Code of Conduct (CoC) for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC.</li> <li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP - Annex 4).</li> </ul>	
<b>Construction phase</b>		
Borrow pit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction materials should be obtained from certified quarries;</li> <li>• Reduce the speed of vehicle movements for the equipment transformation, earthwork, and foundation work.</li> </ul>	
Erosion risk	<p>Design/provide adequate slope protection</p> <p>Provide maintenance procedure</p>	
Historical remains or cultural items could be uncovered.	Implement "chance find" procedures" provided in Appendix A and ensure all such finds are reported and discussed with representatives of the local people.	
Solid waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide litter bins, containers, and recycling systems for waste at all places of work;</li> <li>• There shall be no burning, burial, or disposal of hazardous waste on site; and</li> </ul>	



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Key issues to consider	Mitigation measures	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recyclable products such as wooden form work for trench works, concrete, scaffolding products, site keeping, packing materials, etc. shall be gathered on site and isolated for reuse, loading or disposal to approved local landfills.</li> </ul>	
Waste Oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oil waste and other hazardous waste (including contaminated soil and oil spills) must be kept closed and separated from other wastes. This type of waste must be transported by licensed transporters to a licensed disposal facility;</li> <li>Do not allow to drain into soil and river</li> </ul>	
Camp	Secure agreement with local community	
	Provide water supply, mosquito net, and adequate sanitation (toilet, washing space, etc.), and good housekeeping to prevent rodents, insect, etc.	
Storage of construction material	Provide hard compacted, impervious, and bounded flooring to hazardous material storage areas.	
Dust and noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control speed limit, periodic watering, plant appropriate trees, surfacing</li> <li>Restrict work to daylight hours and limit the size and frequency of any blasting near settlements (especially hospitals) near intensive livestock production and wildlife breeding areas.</li> <li>Control vehicles speeds, noise and weight of loads and control dust and flying debris by covering loads or wetting material if necessary. Construct temporary roads if necessary. Use locally available construction material wherever possible to minimize transport distances.</li> </ul>	
Works can have temporary effects on irrigation or washing/drinking water supplies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure VIT takes into account local water uses.</li> <li>Temporary drainage may have to be constructed.</li> </ul>	
Labour management procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupational health and safety: application of PPE</li> <li>Training on safe working condition</li> <li>Safe working conditions</li> <li>No Child labor</li> <li>No Forced Labor</li> </ul>	
Public health, road safety, and other social negative impacts in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training workers on occupational safety regulations and providing workers with enough protective clothing in accordance with applicable national legislation.</li> </ul>	



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Key issues to consider	Mitigation measures	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure workers do use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when they are working; and</li> <li>• Install fences, barriers, danger warning / prohibition signs across the building area indicating possible threat to government staff.</li> <li>• Use safe traffic control as necessary and causes the minimum possible disruption to all traffic.</li> <li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP)</li> </ul>	
Accident	Awareness training in cooperation with the Police Office Report to the WB within 48 hours (See Annex 7C)	
Communication between VIT and PMU (including District Implementation Unit and local communities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate project details prior to the start of construction;</li> <li>• Contact information which stakeholders may access and obtain updates on site activities, project progress and outcomes of implementation of the project;</li> <li>• Respect local culture and customs;</li> <li>• Timetable for construction and work, service interruption, if appropriate; and</li> <li>• Notification boards shall be established at the construction site containing project information, as well as contact details on the site manager, environmental staff, health and safety staff, telephone numbers and other contact information so that any concerned government staff and the affected public may have the opportunity to express their complaints and suggestions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Operation phase</b>		
Speed control	Install measures to control speed limit (sign, bumper, etc.), education campaign	
Community participatory and ownership in operation and maintenance	Awareness raising on Community participatory and ownership in operation and maintenance for sustainable use	

**Table 3B-2: ESCOP for Drinking Water**



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Subproject Issues	Mitigation Measures	Remarks
<b>Location</b>		
Land property	Minute of meeting on conflict resolution and attached the land certificate	
Protected area	Approved by concern sector	
Natural disasters risks management (DRM) and climate change (CC) integration (e.g. flash flood and erosion/landslide) Flood area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with local people and authority on history of natural disaster and any potential for risk such as flash flood and erosion/land slid)</li> <li>Include appropriate measure to mitigate flood impacts</li> <li>Provide adequate drainage system</li> </ul>	
Water source protection	Set up regulation and principle	
Community zone	Establish the water user regulation	
Close to borrow pit/quarry, waste disposal sites	Water testing	
UXO Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct consultation with local people and authority to screen for the level of UXO contamination as part of E&amp;S screening and scoping during survey and design of infrastructure activities.</li> <li>If UXO risks, the project will collaborate with National Regulatory Agency (NRA) for UXO technical survey for all project funding activities that involve deep excavations and/or expansion of land area so that a UXO free certificate can be obtained before starting construction activities.</li> </ul>	
<b>SEP</b>		
Compliance with the requirements and procedures provided in SEP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups ( disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</p>	
<b>Construction</b>		
Historical remains or cultural items could be uncovered.	Implement “chance find” procedures” provided in Appendix A and ensure all such finds are reported and discussed with representatives of the local people.	
Solid waste generation	Provide appropriate waste collection and disposal	



Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience Project (P178545)

Subproject Issues	Mitigation Measures	Remarks
Waste Oil	Do not allow to drain into soil and river	
Camp	Secure agreement with local community	
	Provide water supply, mosquito net, and adequate sanitation (toilet, washing space, etc.), and good housekeeping to prevent rodents, insect, etc.	
Storage of construction material	Storage in proper area; toxic wastes and materials will be stored in	
Labour management procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational health and safety: application of PPE</li> <li>• Training on safe working condition</li> <li>• Safe working conditions</li> <li>• No Child labor</li> <li>• No Forced Labor</li> </ul>	
Public health, road safety, and other social negative impacts in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training workers on occupational safety regulations and providing workers with enough protective clothing in accordance with applicable national legislation.</li> <li>• Ensure workers do use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when they are working; and</li> <li>• Install fences, barriers, danger warning / prohibition signs across the building area indicating possible threat to government staff.</li> <li>• Use safe traffic control as necessary and causes the minimum possible disruption to all traffic.</li> <li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP)</li> </ul>	
<b>Operation</b>		
-possible contamination of water	Establish measure to protect quantity and quality of water sources. Fencing water tape	

**Table 3B-3: ESCOP for Small Irrigation**

Issues to consider	Actions	
<b>Location</b>		
<b>Down stream</b>		
Impact water user	Community consultation (resolution)	
Reduction of downstream flows affecting flood plain use, flood plain ecology,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider including generic dam safety measures into design</li> </ul>	



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Issues to consider	Actions	
riverine and estuarine fisheries, users of water, dilution of pollutants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compensatory measures where possible.</li> <li>• Relocation or redesign of subproject.</li> </ul>	
Deterioration of river water quality below irrigation subproject and contamination of local ground water (higher salinity, nutrients, agrochemicals) affecting fisheries and downstream users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved water management; improved agricultural practices and control of inputs (particularly pesticides and chemical fertilizers).</li> <li>• Imposition of water quality criteria.</li> </ul>	
Fertilizer	Data from community	
	Introduction to community	
Erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proper design and layout of furrows or field avoiding too steep a gradient.</li> <li>• Land Levelling</li> <li>• Design of terraces on hillsides minimizing surface erosion hazard.</li> <li>• Maintain vegetation Cover</li> <li>• Integrate climate resilient into the project design</li> <li>• Include appropriate measure to mitigate flood impacts</li> </ul>	
Temporary Block fish passage	Properly designed screens and ladders in consultation with community	
<b>Up stream</b>		
Fish protection	Establish the fish protection area; Integrate fish passage and screening activities into subprojects implementation	
Water recourse protection	Set up management regulation	
Water quality deteriorated or made unusable by upstream land use and pollutants discharge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control of land use in watershed areas.</li> <li>• Control of pollution sources</li> <li>• Water treatment prior to use.</li> </ul>	
<b>SEP</b>		
Compliance with the requirements and procedures provided in SEP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> </ul>	





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Issues to consider	Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups ( disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>	
Land requirements affect local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize land acquisition and resettlement in selecting alignment.</li> <li>• Prepare and implement of A-RP before starting construction activities.</li> <li>• Attempt to negotiate a fair design or compensation solution, which does not cause undue hardship.</li> </ul>	
UXO Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultation with local people and authority to screen for the level of UXO contamination as part of E&amp;S screening and scoping during survey and design of infrastructure activities.</li> <li>• If UXO risks, the project will collaborate with National Regulatory Agency (NRA) for UXO technical survey for all project funding activities that involve deep excavations and/or expansion of land area so that a UXO free certificate can be obtained before starting construction activities.</li> </ul>	
<b>Construction phase</b>		
Historical remains or cultural items could be uncovered.	Implement “chance find” procedures” provided in Appendix A and ensure all such finds are reported and discussed with representatives of the local people.	
Borrow pit	construction materials should be obtained from certified quarries	
Erosion location	Design the suitable slop protection	
	Provide Maintenance procedure	
Solid waste	Allocate suitable area for waste.	
	Separate recyclable waste	
Wasted lubrication	Do not allow to drain into soil and river	
Camp	Let community allocate	
	Provide sanitation, waste water and allocate the soiled waste site	
Labour management procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational health and safety: application of PPE</li> </ul>	



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Issues to consider	Actions	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training on safe working condition</li><li>• Safe working conditions</li><li>• No Child labor</li><li>• No Forced Labor</li></ul>	
Public health, road safety, and other social negative impacts in the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training workers on occupational safety regulations and providing workers with enough protective clothing in accordance with applicable national legislation.</li><li>• Ensure workers do use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when they are working; and</li><li>• Install fences, barriers, danger warning / prohibition signs across the building area indicating possible threat to government staff.</li><li>• Use safe traffic control as necessary and causes the minimum possible disruption to all traffic.</li><li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li><li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li><li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP)</li></ul>	
Construction material storage	Store safely in an approved area	
Water logging of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regulation of water application to avoid over-watering.</li><li>• Installation and maintenance of adequate drainage system.</li><li>• Use of lined canals or pipes to prevent seepage.</li><li>• Accurate calculation of delivery of irrigation requirements.</li></ul>	
Salinization of soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measures to avoid water logging: Leaching of salts by flushing soils periodically</li><li>• Cultivation of crops with salinity tolerance.</li></ul>	
Scouring of canals	Design of canal system to minimize risk Use of canals lined with rocks	



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Issues to consider	Actions	
Clogging of canals by sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures to minimize erosion on fields</li> <li>Design and management of canals to minimize sedimentation.</li> <li>Provision of access to canals for removal of weeds and sediments.</li> </ul>	
Leaching of nutrients from soils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoidance of over-watering</li> <li>Replacement of nutrients by fertilizer and/or crop rotation.</li> <li>Accurate calculation of fertilizer requirements.</li> </ul>	
Encroachment on swamps and other ecologically sensitive areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chose subprojects" site to avoid or minimize encroachment on critical areas.</li> <li>Establishment of compensatory parks or reserved areas.</li> </ul>	
Introduction or incidence of water-borne or water-related diseases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of lined canals or pipes to discourage vectors</li> <li>Avoidance of stagnant or slowly moving water</li> <li>Installation of gates at canal ends to allow complete flushing</li> <li>Filling or drainage of borrow pits along canals and roads</li> <li>Water testing</li> <li>Disease prophylaxis and treatment</li> </ul>	
Disease and health problems from use of wastewater irrigation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wastewater treatment (e.g. settling ponds prior to use).</li> <li>Establishment and enforcement standards for wastewater use.</li> </ul>	
<b>Operation</b>		
Potential increase use of pesticide	Provide training on safe use of pesticides Promote the use of no-chemical agriculture	
Conflicts over water supply and inequalities in water distribution throughout service area.	Means to ensure equitable distribution among users and monitor to assure adherence. Establishment of effective water users associations	
Over-pumping of groundwater.	Limitation of withdrawal so that it does not exceed "safe yield"(recharge rate).	

**Table 3B-4: ESCOP for Post-Harvest Facilities (Post-Harvest Facilities (drying/storage/processing facilities)**



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Subproject issues	Mitigation measure	Remarks
<b>SEP</b>		
Compliance with the requirements and procedures provided in SEP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>	
<b>Pre-Construction</b>		
Land requirements affect local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize land acquisition and resettlement in selecting alignment.</li> <li>• Prepare and implement of A-RP before starting construction activities.</li> <li>• Attempt to negotiate a fair design or compensation solution, which does not cause undue hardship.</li> </ul>	
UXO Clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultation with local people and authority to screen for the level of UXO contamination as part of E&amp;S screening and scoping during survey and design of infrastructure activities.</li> <li>• If UXO risks, the project will collaborate with National Regulatory Agency (NRA) for UXO technical survey for all project funding activities that involve deep excavations and/or expansion of land area so that a UXO free certificate can be obtained before starting construction activities.</li> </ul>	
Water system	Detail study and proper design	
Drainage system	Check drainage systems at planning stage	
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check, document and mitigate for any geo-specific environmental issue</li> <li>• Consult with local people and authority on history of natural disaster and any potential</li> </ul>	



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Subproject issues	Mitigation measure	Remarks
	for risk such as flash flood and erosion/land slid) • Include appropriate measure to mitigate flood impacts	
Brick molding: • Disturbance of habitats • Loss of land • Land degradation • Air pollution from dust • Pressure on existing water resources	• Reallocation of farming land • Possible use of cement block as an alternative • Provision of boreholes	
Brick curing: • Deforestation and • Pollution from smoke	• Afforestation (tree planting) Quotas per construction (school, dispensary, markets etc.) community based woodlots	
<b>Construction</b>		
Historical remains or cultural items could be uncovered.	Implement “chance find” procedures” provided in Appendix A and ensure all such finds are reported and discussed with representatives of the local people.	
Civil works building: • Noise and air pollution • Pressure on existing water resources • Creation of borrow pits	Establishment of additional possible water sources Landscaping	
Carpentry: • Deforestation • Noise	• The provision of timber by the community should be approved by the local authorities • Use of alternative materials (bamboo, steel, reinforced concrete • Afforestation (tree planting) Quotas per construction (school, dispensary, markets etc.) community based woodlots	
Waste materials	Dispose of all waste in line with GoL regulations	
Labour management procedure	• Occupational health and safety: application of PPE • Training on safe working condition • Safe working conditions • No Child labor • No Forced Labor	
Public health, road safety, and other social negative impacts in the village	• Training workers on occupational safety regulations and providing workers with	



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Subproject issues	Mitigation measure	Remarks
	<p>enough protective clothing in accordance with applicable national legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure workers do use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when they are working; and</li> <li>• Install fences, barriers, danger warning / prohibition signs across the building area indicating possible threat to government staff.</li> <li>• Use safe traffic control as necessary and causes the minimum possible disruption to all traffic.</li> <li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP).</li> </ul>	
<b>Operation</b>		
Waste management	Set up committee	
	Allocate suitable area for waste	
	Separate recyclable waste	
	Set up rules and regulations	
Water system, drainage system	Detail study and proper design to protect rivers	

**Table 3B-5: ESCOP for in-village solutions for better market access and tree preservation (e.g., fencing) or tree planting.**

Subproject issues	Mitigation measures	Remarks
SEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> </ul>	





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Subproject issues	Mitigation measures	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>	
Community health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize traffic congestion, dust and noise generation;</li> <li>Limited working hour during the day time, especially in residential areas, and control driving speed;</li> <li>Provide appropriate safety sign (day and night) and closely inform local residents;</li> <li>Avoid spill of used oil and other toxic materials, including safe transportation and storage;</li> <li>Avoid social/cultural conflict between workers and local population.</li> <li>Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li> <li>Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP)</li> </ul>	
Good housekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply good housekeeping in the construction and/or storage sites to ensure safety of workers and peoples (Gather up and remove debris to keep the work site orderly and safe; Plan and implement adequate disposal of scrap, waste and surplus materials; Keep the work area and all equipment tidy. Designate areas for waste materials and provide containers; Keep stairways, passageways and ladders free of material, supplies and obstructions; Secure loose or light material that is stores on roofs or open floors; Keep materials at least 2m (5ft) from openings, roof edges, excavations or trenches; Remove or bend over nails protruding from lumber; Keep hoses, power cords, welding leads, etc. from laying in heavily traveled walkways or areas; Ensure structural openings are covered/protected adequately; Provide the appropriate fire extinguishers for the materials found on-site. Keep fire extinguisher stations clear and accessible; etc.);</li> </ul>	
Labour management,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure access to clean water and latrines by workers and provide mosquito net;</li> </ul>	



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Subproject issues	Mitigation measures	Remarks
occupational health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Occupational health and safety: application of PPE</li><li>• Training on safe working condition</li><li>• Safe working conditions</li><li>• No Child labor</li><li>• No Forced Labor</li><li>• Avoid social/cultural conflict between workers and local population.</li><li>• Training on Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li><li>• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC (provided in LMP).</li><li>• Training on and comply with Guideline for COVID-19 prevention (provided in LMP)</li></ul>	
Prohibition lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not permit rubbish to fall freely from any locations of the project and/or access by animals (dogs, cats, pigs, etc.). Use appropriate containers;</li><li>• Do not throw tools or other materials;</li><li>• Do not raise or lower any tool or equipment by its own cable or supply hose;</li><li>• Use grounding straps equipped with clamps on containers to prevent static electricity buildup;</li><li>• Do not allow resource extraction, habitat degradation, wildlife trade and consumption by workers in protected areas.</li></ul>	
Note on Flammable/explosive materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Store flammable or explosive materials such as gasoline, oil and cleaning agents apart from other materials;</li><li>• Keep flammable and explosive materials in proper containers with contents clearly marked;</li><li>• Dispose of greasy, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved containers;</li><li>• Store full barrels in an upright position;</li><li>• Store empty barrels separately;</li><li>• Post signs prohibiting smoking, open flames and other ignition sources in areas where flammable and explosive materials are stored or used;</li><li>• Store and chain all compressed gas cylinders in an upright position;</li><li>• Mark empty cylinders and store them separately from full or partially full cylinders;</li></ul>	



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Subproject issues	Mitigation measures	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ventilate all storage areas properly;</li><li>• Ensure that all electric fixtures and switches are explosion proof where flammable materials are stored.</li></ul>	



## Appendix A – Physical Cultural Resources

If worker(s) engaged by VIT encounter an object that they think an archaeological find or remain, the worker must do the followings:

- Stop construction activities in the area of archaeological finds;
- Inform the Community Supervisor and head of VIT immediately;
- Delineate the discovered site or area;
- Secure the site to prevent any damage or loss of the artifact. In cases of removable artifact or sensitive remains, a night guard shall be arranged until the responsible local authorities or the National Culture Administration takes over;
- VIT Head to notify District E&S Officer immediately within the day of discovery. District E&S Officer will notify relevant local authorities and the Culture Department of Province (within 24 hours or less);
- Local authorities and the Culture Department of Province will come to site and will be in charge of protecting and preserving the site before deciding on subsequent appropriate procedures. This would require a preliminary evaluation of the findings to be performed by the archeologists of National Culture Administration. The significance and importance of the findings should be assessed according to the various criteria relevant to cultural heritage; those include the aesthetic, historic, scientific or research, social and economic values;
- Decisions on how to handle the finding shall be taken by the responsible authorities and Culture Department of Province. This could include changes in the layout (such as when finding an irremovable remain of cultural or archeological importance) conservation, preservation, restoration and salvage;
- Implementation for the authority decision concerning the management of the finding shall be communicated in writing by relevant local authorities; and
- Construction work could resume only after permission is given from the responsible local authorities or Culture Department of Province concerning safeguard of the heritage.



## ANNEX 3C: LIST OF DO AND DON'T PRACTICES

A list of Do and Don't Practices (below) is proposed for E&S risk and impact management for each project components. These will be adopted by VSMC, VITs, SHGs, PGs and Nutrition Groups for respective activities in Component 1, 2 and 3. The lists of Do and Don't covers that following key aspect (i) good engineering and housekeeping practices of communities; (ii) prevention of injuries of project personnel and communities; (iii) prevention of direct workers (staff) and contracted workers from involving in any form of natural resource extraction, habitat degradation, wildlife trade.

This Annex 3C will apply to all community member, project beneficiaries, project workers while working in the village's project areas, particularly those are living near the forestland areas.

***For Component 1 (which focuses on construction and rehabilitation of small-scaled civil works supporting livelihoods development)***

### During construction/rehabilitation of the civil works

#### List of DO Practices:

- Limited working hour during the day time, especially in residential areas, and control driving speed;
- Minimize earth excavation and appropriate disposal of spoil;
- Minimize opening of new borrow pits and ensure proper closure;
- Minimize traffic congestion, dust and noise generation;
- If travel by car, always use seat belts (seat belts help prevent serious injuries in the event of an accident)
- Obey all traffic rules (driving license, received training, speed control, seat belts, no alcoholic drinks, no use of phone while driving etc.)
- Proper maintenance of construction equipment and vehicles;
- Provide appropriate safety sign (day and night) and closely inform local residents;
- Avoid spill of used oil and other toxic materials, including safe transportation and storage;
- Apply good housekeeping in the construction and/or storage sites to ensure safety of workers and peoples (Gather up and remove debris to keep the work site orderly and safe; Plan and implement adequate disposal of scrap, waste and surplus materials; Keep the work area and all equipment tidy. Designate areas for waste materials and provide containers; Keep stairways, passageways and ladders free of material, supplies and obstructions; Secure loose or light material that is stores on roofs or open floors; Keep materials at least 2m (5ft) from openings, roof edges, excavations



or trenches; Remove or bend over nails protruding from lumber; Keep hoses, power cords, welding leads, etc. from laying in heavily traveled walkways or areas; Ensure structural openings are covered/protected adequately; Provide the appropriate fire extinguishers for the materials found on-site. Keep fire extinguisher stations clear and accessible; etc.);

- Ensure access to clean water and latrines by workers and provide mosquito net;
- Avoid social/cultural conflict between workers and local population.
- Read, understand and sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC provided in the LMP.
- Participate and provide opinions, comments and recommendations in the project meetings and consultation workshops.

**List of DO NOT Practice:**

- Do not permit rubbish to fall freely from any locations of the project and/or access by animals (dogs, cats, pigs, etc.). Use appropriate containers;
- Do not throw tools or other materials;
- Do not raise or lower any tool or equipment by its own cable or supply hose;
- Use grounding straps equipped with clamps on containers to prevent static electricity buildup;
- Do not allow resource extraction, habitat degradation, wildlife trade and consumption by workers in protected areas.

**NOTE ON FLAMMABLE/EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS:**

- Store flammable or explosive materials such as gasoline, oil and cleaning agents apart from other materials;
- Keep flammable and explosive materials in proper containers with contents clearly marked;
- Dispose of greasy, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved containers;
- Store full barrels in an upright position;
- Store empty barrels separately;
- Post signs prohibiting smoking, open flames and other ignition sources in areas where flammable and explosive materials are stored or used;
- Store and chain all compressed gas cylinders in an upright position;
- Mark empty cylinders and store them separately from full or partially full cylinders;
- Ventilate all storage areas properly;





- Ensure that all electric fixtures and switches are explosion proof where flammable materials are stored.

#### **During operation and maintenance (O&M) of the civil works**

- Ensure the maintenance plan (which is prepared as part of respective civil works proposal for the access roads, bridges, small irrigation canal, drinking water supply, storage/processing facilities...) is updated and implemented by stakeholders as discussed and agreed during village meetings for developing village development plan
- Where relevant, safety measures are taken – as part of operational plan, including installation and maintenance safety/traffic sign post, guardrails, public awareness raising related to safety to user of civil works.
- For storage/processing facilities, ensure risks such as electrical shocks, fire...are communicated to people involved in operation and maintenance of these facilities.
- In case of grain storage, follow good practices related to grain storage to maintain the quality of the grain and prevent post-harvest loss due to pests (rodents...), and promote appropriate use of chemicals to control pest, including use of chemical in related post-harvest technologies (See also Good Agricultural Practices in Annex 3D).

***For Component 2 and Component 3 (supporting a) effective operation of credit and saving groups, b) agricultural extension for improved cultivation, animal husbandry for self-help groups and producer's group.***

<b>Exposure to agricultural chemicals</b>	<p><b>FOR PEOPLE WHO TAKE LOANS FOR CROP PRODUCTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Attend project training on GAP which include a) proper use of agricultural inputs, including use of agri-chemicals and treatment of empty pesticide containers, b) proper way to spray pesticide, use of PPE to protect pesticide sprayer from direct exposure to pesticide, etc.</li></ul> <p><b>Never allow the spray to drift</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Spray pesticide on a calm day to avoid wind blowing the spray to other plants.</li><li>▪ This drift can not only kill plants and landscapes you desire to keep but could make it land in areas, like water, where it can harm other plants and animals</li></ul> <p><b>Keep people and pets away while you're spraying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Not only can drift harm plants but it can harm people and pets.</li><li>▪ Spray alone and protect yourself with the proper safety equipment.</li><li>▪ Always wear a longed-sleeve shirt, long pants and shoes and socks.</li><li>▪ Wear chemical-resistant gloves for all mixers and loaders, plus applicators using handheld equipment.</li><li>▪ Must use protective eyewear, including goggles, face shield or safety goggles.</li></ul>
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	<p><b>Don't spray to the point of runoff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Do not spray in a manner that allow run off into storm drains, drainage ditches, gutters or surface waters.</li><li>▪ To minimize this risk, try to spray when no rain is predicted for 24 hours to help ensure the rain doesn't wash the pesticide off the area you just treated.</li><li>▪ Rinse your equipment over the treated area will help avoid run off to water bodies or drainage systems.</li></ul> <p><b>Never mix the pesticides with another product unless recommended on the label</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Some pesticide benefit from the use of a surfactant, others don't.</li><li>▪ Avoid mixing an oxidizing agent with an herbicide as this cause a hazardous chemical reaction.</li><li>▪ Always thoroughly read the label for every product you buy before using.</li></ul> <p><b>Allow the spray to dry completely</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ The job is not over until the spray has completely dried.</li><li>▪ Most of pesticide are safe when they're dried and have no entry restrictions to pets, people or livestock.</li></ul> <p><b>Wash up thoroughly once you're done</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and maintaining your personal protective equipment.</li><li>▪ Wash these items in detergent and hot water separately from other laundry.</li><li>▪ Get rid of any clothing that has been drenched or heavily contaminated with one of our products.</li><li>▪ Don't forget to wash your hands with plenty of soap and water before eating, drinking, smoking or using the toilet.</li><li>▪ Try to wash up and change into clean clothing as soon as you're done.</li></ul>
<b>Animal waste</b>	<p><b><i>FOR PEOPLE WHO TAKE LOANS FOR ANIMAL HUSBANDRY (PIG, COW, GOAT RAISING...)</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ It's very important for livestock owners to pick-up, store, and utilize or dispose of manure properly.</li><li>▪ Protecting livestock from living in an unhealthy environment. Manure can contaminate animal feed and sicken animals.</li><li>▪ Avoid creation of a breeding ground for nuisance insects that carry diseases.</li><li>▪ Lessen the chance of parasite re-infestation, which can happen when internal parasites hatch in the manure and mud and are then ingested by the animals.</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preventing the contamination of groundwater and surface waters by manure, which is harmful to fish, aquatic life, and people, and stimulates growth of aquatic weeds</li> </ul>
<b>SEA/SH</b>	<p><b>Understand</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Know that the project has zero-policy for SEA/SH</li> <li>Be aware of one's feelings, attitudes, and behaviors in relation to sexual harassment;</li> <li>see that behavior corresponds with the expectations and behavioral requirements</li> </ul> <p><b>Observe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>be aware and conscious of engaging in potential sexual-harassment behaviors or incidents while participating in project events</li> <li>be sensitive to individuals who may be offended by the verbal and non-verbal behavior of others</li> <li>be aware of subtle forms of sexual harassment</li> <li>watch for and discourage sexual behaviors that negatively affect work.</li> <li>pay attention to the response of others in order to avoid unintentional offense;</li> </ul> <p><b>Confront</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if possible, confront the sexual harasser immediately. Tell the person that you find that type of attention offensive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resolve</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact E&amp;S Focal Point of PMU (See Stakeholder Engagement Procedure – Section 6.4.3 Redress Procedure for Complaints related to SEA/SH)</li> </ul>
<b>Household disputes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of your own's family reason(s) that may trigger verbal or physical violence</li> <li>Try to explore if there is a reason that originate from your participation in project activities</li> <li>Try to remain calm in such situation</li> <li>Explain to your partner as needed</li> <li>Seek advice from local Women's Union</li> <li>If necessary, stop participating in project activities and ask for project support later on if needed (village authority, local EG leaders, local prestige person...that your partners</li> </ul>



## ANNEX 3D: GOOD FARMING PRACTICES (GFA)

### A. Purpose of GFA

It was found from RPF III Project that use of pesticide and chemical fertilizer is a common practice among many farmers in provinces supported by RPF III Project. The CLEAR project will continue to target the existing four provinces of RPF III, and cover additional two new provinces.

While the project will not procure and promote use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, it is anticipated that as the project supports rehabilitation of irrigation, improve tertiary roads, build small-scale farm produce storage and processing facilities, and promote agri-business development, it is likely that the need for increased use of chemical inputs (e.g. pesticide and chemical fertilizers) would increase.

This Good Farming Practices (under CLEAR), therefore, aim to a) promote use of non-chemical agriculture – through avoiding/ minimizing improper use of chemical agricultural inputs such as pesticide, chemical fertilizers, and animal feeds, and b) promote conservation of natural resources.

### B. Target groups of GFA

The target groups of GFA include:

- Members of Self-Help Groups who apply loan of the project for household agricultural development that involve cultivation and or livestock raising;
- Members of Producer Groups who benefit from project support in terms of business development plan and facilities supported by the project such as storage/ processing facilities, tertiary roads;
- Farmers who benefit directly from project's rehabilitation of on-farm irrigation canals;
- Beneficiary individual and households who attend horticulture (including rice, vegetable, and other cash crops), and livestock development trainings;
- Beneficiary individual and households who benefit from project support in development of home gardening and livestock raising;

### C. Legal frameworks

The following legal documents will serve as a guidance for adoption of GFA under CLEAR project:



**Regulation 2860/MAF** on pest management which establishes the Control of Pesticides within Lao PDR. It defines the principles, rules, and measures for controlling activities that involve pesticides within Lao PDR in order to protect human, animal and plant health, and the environment, and to be harmonized with international obligations and regulations in which Lao PDR is a contracting party. The Regulation is a tool for monitoring and controlling the production, processing, import/export, distribution, transportation, storage, use, and proper disposal of pesticides to ensure the safety of people, animals, plants, and the environment. It applies to all stakeholders involved in the use and management of pesticides.

**Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Produce Quality Management Standard** (No. 0539/MF, dated 09/02/2011). The Decision is used as a tool for practicing Good Agriculture Practice Quality Management Standard of fruit and vegetable production; and for value adding to fruit and vegetable production as well as improving the quality of the fruit and vegetables production and supply chain to meet the requirements of domestic and international market.

**Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Environmental Management** (No. 0538/MF, dated 09/02/2011). The Decision is an instrument to manage fresh vegetables and fruit-based GFA to conserve and protect the environment in and out of farm sites.

**Decision on Good Agriculture Practices for Produce Quality Management Standards** (No. 0539/MF, dated 09/02/2011). The Decision serves as an instrument to promote GFA implementation for agricultural products, especially for fruit and vegetable production in response to demand of domestic and international markets.

**Decision on GAP for Labor Safety, Health and Welfare** (No. 0540/MAF, dated 9/02/2011). This decision aims to protect the health, safety and welfare for workers who are working in GAP.

**Law on Livestock Production and Veterinary Matters** (No. 03/NA, dated 25 July 2008). The Law defines the principles, rules and regulations related to the organization, management and inspection of livestock production and veterinary activities in order to boost, promote and develop the nation's potential in animal production and related livestock resources. Its objectives are: guarantee food security and ensure standards to safeguard consumers; create the conditions necessary for the growth and development of the animal product processing industry; participate and contribute to strong social and economic development (i.e. National Development); create a better quality of life for the people of Lao PDR; and to ensure sustainable environmental protection.

**Law on Food** (2013) defines principles, regulations and measures on the management, monitoring, and control of food and food-related activities in terms of quality and efficiency, and to ensure the food safety and nutrition to enable a good health and longevity for all, so as to effectively contribute to the protection and development of the nation.

#### **D. Action to be Taken by the Target groups**

##### **(i) Prohibition**



To avoid adverse impacts due to pesticides, procurement of pesticides will be prohibited and this has been included in the “non-eligibility list”.

## **(ii) Training of target groups**

For farmers:

- Provide trainings that covers the following topics:
  - Sustainable agriculture
  - Proper use of pesticides and fertilizers, including technical options for pest management (chemical management vis-à-vis ecologically based pest management) – household level;
  - Adoption of ecologically based pest management at community level:

For agricultural inputs dealers/shops:

- Provide training on MAF’s Regulation 2860/MAF on Pesticide Management
- Orientation of Project purpose and expected support of local agricultural inputs dealers/shops in promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

**(iii) Monitoring of pesticide use:** As part of Project’s monitoring plan, PMU will monitor changes in adoption of GFA related to use of chemical pesticide, fertilizers and animal feeds among the target groups.

## **E. Implementation arrangement and budget**

### **(i) Planning and implementation**

In close cooperation with PAFO, CLEAR staff at central level will be responsible for providing training to CLEAR staff at provincial and district offices trainings on agricultural extension for the target groups. Budget for training will be included in the Village Development Plan.

### **(ii) Monitoring**

CLEAR staff at district level will work with DAFO staff to conduct joint monitoring of the use of chemical agricultural inputs (including chemical pesticide and fertilizers, and animal feed) in project villages.



## **ANNEX 4: LABOR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES (LMP)**

See standalone LMP as Annex 4 of ESMF.





## **ANNEX 5: RESETTLEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK (RPF)**

See standalone RPF as Annex 5 of ESMF.



## ANNEX 6: CONTINGENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMPONENT (CERC) MANUAL

The Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) for CLEAR will have an initial zero value but may be financed during the project to allow for an agile response to an eligible crisis or emergency. The three village types are equally eligible to CERC in the event of an emergency crisis. CERC activities are predefined to be adapted to type I villages in order to prioritize food security and safe water. They provide emergency staple food and equipment for safe drinking water. Critical agricultural inputs and tools are provided in time to restart production during the following agricultural season.

### A6.1 Introduction

This document is prepared as an addendum to the ESMF of the Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience Project – CLEAR (P178002). It describes additional information on the environment and social safeguard (ESS) requirements for the implementation of the proposed activities. Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) will be the project owner. Project Management Unit (PMU) under RPF will be the CERC Implementing Agency and responsible for guiding and coordinating all CERC activities which are chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister.

The guidance and procedures included in this CERC ESMF should be considered in the Emergency Response Manual (ERM) that will be prepared during the project implementation, and will contain the environmental and social requirements in case CERC is activated. The guidelines and procedures included in this CERC Addendum takes into account the Bank's ESF requirement for the CERC (Bank's Guidance on CERC, October 2017) and potential activities that the CERC could finance.

### A6.2 Identification of potential activities that are eligible for financing under Component 5

The activities to be carried if the CERC Component 5 of CLEAR include: provision of goods, services, and works as identified in Table A8-1. The location of the contingency activities will be within project provinces. It is important to note that the activities or subprojects to be financed under Component 5 (CERC) avoid activities or subproject that are complex in terms of environmental and social aspects (for example land acquisition and/or resettlement). This is because CERC objective is to support immediate priority activities that are typically less than 18 months.

**Table 1 –Positive list of goods, services and works**

Items
<b>Goods</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT equipment and supplies</li> <li>• Cleaning supplies including hand hygiene and disinfectants;</li> <li>• Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stockpiles, including masks, gowns and gloves;</li> <li>• Equipment and supplies for temporary housing/living during field data collection (gas stoves, utensils, tents, beds, sleeping bags, mattresses, blankets, hammocks, mosquito nets, kit of personal and family hygiene, etc.)</li> <li>• Lease of vehicles (Vans, trucks)</li> </ul>
<b>Services</b>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consulting services related to emergency response including, but not limited to urgent data collection and installation of ICT equipment.</li><li>• Technical Assistance in developing TORs for data collection companies.</li><li>• Non-consultant services to deliver any of the activities described in the “Goods” section of this table (e.g., debris removal, dump trucks, drones survey)</li></ul>
<b>Works</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repair of damaged tertiary roads, irrigation system, good warehouses, food processing facilities</li><li>• Small repair of project offices at district and provincial level.</li><li>• Removal and disposal of debris associated with any above eligible activity.</li></ul>
<b>Training</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct necessary training related to emergency response including, but not limited to the Implementation of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) to be prepared when the CERC is activated.</li><li>• Training on Rapid Needs Assessment and other related assessments, including those related to ESF instruments.</li></ul>
<b>Emergency Operating Costs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incremental expenses by the Government for a defined period related to early recovery efforts arising as a result of the impact of an eligible emergency. This includes, but is not limited to: operational costs<sup>51</sup> and rental of equipment</li></ul>

### A6.3 Potential Environmental and Social (ES) Impacts

The environmental and social (ES) risks of this project are considered Low to Moderate. However, these E&S risk may change depending on the activities to be carried out under the CERC. The Project is expected to bring about significant socio-environmental and economic benefits to the target poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups in the project villages. Most of the environmental risks and impacts are local, temporary, and mitigatable through implementation of appropriate measures set forth under project’s ESMF (See ESMF for details).

The environmental risks may include environmental impacts such as air, water pollution, vibration, noise – during rehabilitation of access roads, culverts. There is also risk of UXO, particularly for activities that involve digging of soil, excavation, removal of debris, etc. The social risks of this project are considered Low. However, it depends on activities implemented under the CERC. Potential social risks associated with Project activities include (a) lack of stakeholder and inclusive engagement and clear communication; (b) risks related to the labor and working conditions of project workers; (c) risk of exclusion and discrimination particularly of ethnic groups, including poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; (d) risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH), and Violence Against Children (VAC). These risks and impacts are low and could be addressed/ mitigated through implementation of measures proposed in ESMF and through consultation and coordination

<sup>51</sup> As per Amended Financing Agreement, signed January 28, 2020 “Operating Costs” means the reasonable costs of goods and non-consulting services required for the day-to-day coordination, administration and supervision of Project activities, including leasing and or routine repair and maintenance of vehicles, equipment, facilities and office premises, fuel, office supplies, utilities, consumables, communication expenses (including postage, telephone and internet costs), website maintenance, translation, printing and photocopying expenses, bank charges, publications and advertising expenses, insurance, Project-related travel, subsistence and lodging expenses, and other administrative costs and costs of contractual staff directly related to the Project, but excluding salaries, bonuses, fees and honoraria of equivalent payment of members of the Recipient’s civil service.”



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among affected community, local authorities, contractors, services providers, and consultants, using the principles set forth in SEP. The ES consultant will help the project to promote and provide means for effective and inclusive engagement with project-affected parties, as instructed in the SEP, throughout the project lifecycle.

To ensure that adverse impacts will not occur given the nature of emergency, the items and the following activities are prohibited for financing under the Project:

1. Production and/or trading of tobacco or any products containing tobacco and alcoholic beverages;
2. Gambling, casinos and equivalent enterprises;
3. Production and/or trading in weapons and munitions;
4. Using asbestos as construction material;
5. Using raw material and/or hazardous & toxic (Bahan Berbahaya dan Beracun/B3) wastes in large quantities. The project cannot finance activities which uses, produces, stores or transports raw material and hazardous & toxic waste such as toxic substance, material which may cause fire or explosion;
6. Siting and/or actions which could potentially destroy protected and biodiversity sensitive areas, natural habitat and/or critical natural habitat. The Project cannot finance activities that is located within, adjacent to or traversing protected areas and biodiversity sensitive areas such as natural conservation areas, protected forests etc. or any activity which may alter the function or effectiveness of protected and sensitive areas, cause adverse impact to biodiversity and habitats. Further on protection of biodiversity and habitats, especially vulnerable and endangered species listed in the criteria and categories of the International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List and Annex 1 and 2 of the Convention on International Trade Endangered Species (CITES). Additionally, the Project cannot finance any sub-project or activity which causes significant conversion and/or degradation of the natural habitat or any critical natural habitat environment including those of terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems that have High Conservation Value, essential ecosystem areas, significant biodiversity and / or protected conservation zones;
7. Siting and/or actions which could potentially destroy cultural conservation areas. The Project must not finance any project which degrades or destroys cultural value of a cultural conservation area, not only limited to artefact and cultural structure, but also locations considered sacred or having high spiritual value for local people. In the contract agreement with the contractor, there must be provisions and guideline concerning what measures must be taken if these artefacts and structures are found within the project site;
8. Siting and/or actions which could potentially result in land acquisition or involuntary resettlement under eminent domain principle. The project cannot finance activities that result in the forced evictions or physical or economic displacement of the affected communities, including indigenous and tribal peoples, and activities that may constrain or terminate access of local communities to land or resources that they traditionally use;
9. Using excessive timber, water and energy. The project cannot finance activities that utilize the excessive use of natural resources with large civil works;
10. Using timber from illegal logging. The Project must not finance infrastructure related to or support illegal logging;
11. Employment of child labor and forced labor and against national labor law and local labor regulation. The Project cannot finance activities involving any forms of child labor. Related to forced labor, the project cannot finance activities involving any forms of forced labor, and also trafficked persons, includes the practice of the bonded /indentured labor, excessive limitations



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of freedom of movement, excessive notice periods, physical punishment, use of security or other personnel to force or extract work from project workers, or other restrictions that compel a project worker to work in a non-voluntary basis. The Project also cannot finance activities involving work without formal contractual agreements that comply with GoL regulations, including with donors, intermediary and / or channeling agencies, and beneficiaries.

12. Production and/or trading in radioactive materials. This does not apply to the purchase of medical equipment, quality control (measurement) equipment and any equipment where the International Finance Corporation (IFC) considers the radioactive source to be trivial and/or adequately shielded;
13. Production and/or trading in any product or activity deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international bans, such as pharmaceuticals, pesticides/herbicides, ozone depleting substances, PCB's, wildlife or products regulated under CITES;
14. Involving traditional mining practice which uses the prohibited substances, e.g., mercury, other radioactive substances;
15. Utilization of stone / minerals from illegal mining (unable to show a copy of the mining permit issued by the relevant agency);
16. Drift net fishing in the marine environment using nets in excess of 2.5 km. in length;
17. Involving activities that relates to infrastructure development located in international water area, disputed area, and/or on land that cannot prove clean and clear status;
18. Involving activities related to local political parties. The project will not finance any activities that support political activities such as political candidate's campaign;
19. Large civil works;
20. Procurement of hazardous substances in large quantities;
21. Land acquisition and resettlements;
22. Activities that may have adverse impacts on indigenous people; and
23. Other activities involving higher risks (e.g., traditional mining, industrial-based livelihood, large scale commercial plantation or excessive use of resources).

#### A6.4 Environmental and Social Management

When the CERC component is activated, ESF consultant will be engaged to carry out the following steps:

- Step 1 Application of the Ineligible/Negative Criteria List.** The prohibited activities for CERC under Section A8.3 will also be applied. Given that the CERC objective is to support immediate priority activities (18 months), CERC activities that involve physical resettlement will be avoided;
- Step 2 Identification of ES issues and preparation of mitigation plans.** Based on the results from Step 1, PMU will implement LMP and Community Health and Safety Plan (CHSP) for the CERC activities;
- Step 3 Implementation and M&E.** LMP and CHSP will be implemented. PMU will monitor the implementation on the ground and report the results to the WB.
- Step 4 Completion and Evaluation.** Once the CERC subprojects have been completed, PMU will assess the results before contract liquidation. Any pending issues and/or grievance must be solved before the subproject is considered completed. PMU will submit the completion report describing the compliance of safeguard performance and submit it to WB when required.

#### A6.5 Institutional Arrangement for Project Implementation

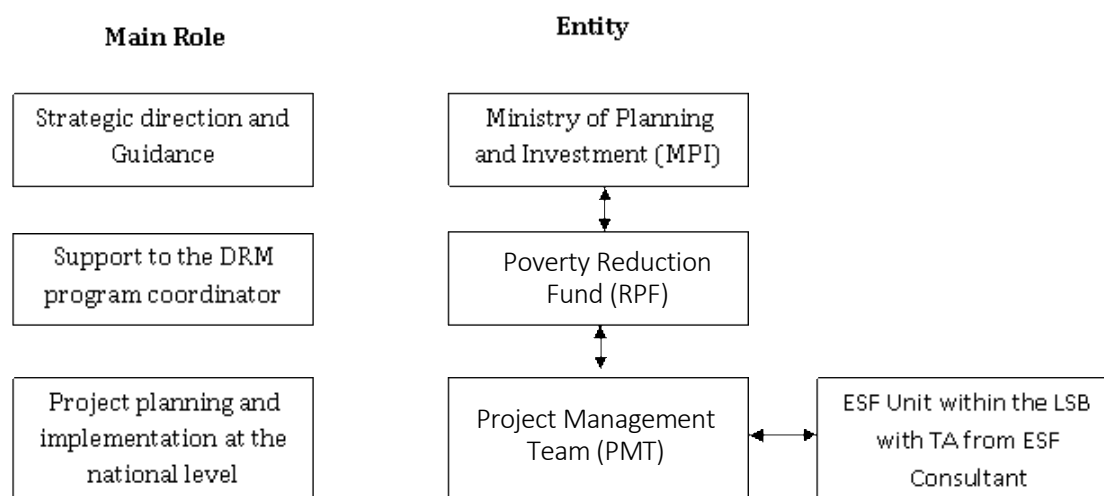
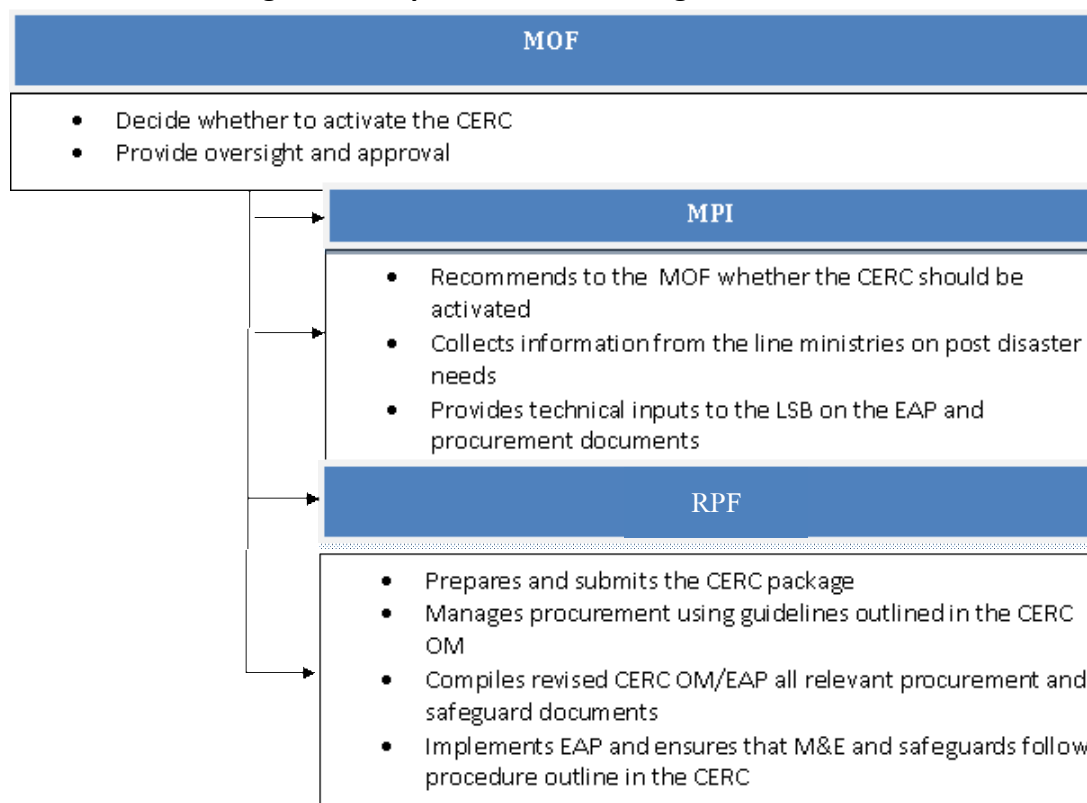


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As mentioned above, PMU will lead the implementation with TA from consultants and will report to the CERC Implementing Agency, i.e., The National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee (NDPCC) who is responsible for guiding and coordinating all CERC activities under the chairmanship of the Vice Prime Minister. The Disaster Management Division within Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is the lead coordinator. NDPCC will provide the inputs to PMU to prepare necessary documents to activate the CERC, including the declaration of disaster, the latest impact assessment of situation reports and the list of goods and works to be included in the Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Figure 1 below presents organization arrangement for CERC as well as those for the ESMF addendum.

**Figure 1 – Implementation Arrangement for CERC**





## ANNEX 7A: PROPOSED MONITORING MEASURES AND INDICATORS

Aspect	Component	Standard monitoring	Means of verification	Monitoring Frequency/ Responsibility
<b>I. Training and reporting</b>				
1. Trainings on ESF instruments including ESMP, SEP, ESCP.	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the training and reports including but not limited to number of training events, training dates, training topics, number of participants with segregation of male and females and their organization, trainers, training outcomes, evaluation, list of participants and training materials</li> </ul>	Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
2. ESMF Reporting	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the number of a standalone E&amp;S monitoring reports</li> </ul>	Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
3. Accident reporting	All components	Check the number of accident cases and reports including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapid accident reports</li> <li>Investigation reports (police)</li> <li>Root cause analysis report</li> <li>Final audit report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field investigation</li> <li>Documentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case by case within 48 hours for Rapid accident reports</li> </ul>
<b>II. Social monitoring measures</b>				
4. Implementation of A-RP	C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As provided in PRF and/or A-RP (A standalone document)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field assessment</li> <li>Interview with PAHs</li> <li>A-RP completion report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>





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Aspect	Component	Standard monitoring	Means of verification	Monitoring Frequency/ Responsibility
5. Implementation of SEP	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the consultation reports including but not limited to number of consultation events, number of participants with segregation of male and females, ethnic groups and vulnerable group and their organization, issues raised, outcomes, evaluation, list of participants and consultation materials</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
6. Participation of female, vulnerable and ethnic groups	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the implementation of CLEAR implementation manuals and ensure that they incorporate ethnic group sensitivity/culturally responsive and meaningful consultation.</li> <li>Where needed, conduct small group meetings at village level using appropriate translators or ethnic language speakers, with village groups split by gender.</li> <li>Pay special attention to ethnic and gender sensitivity, taking into account ethnic groups' gender perspectives and incorporating them into the communication strategy.</li> <li>Ensure implementation of the code of conduct for workers that include ethnic groups while engagement then data collection and other project activities.</li> <li>Ensure that the project and its staff and community workers respect ancestral and spiritual land and forest use and remain sensitive to customary use of land by the community, especially ethnic groups.</li> </ul>	Field assessment (FGD) and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>



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Aspect	Component	Standard monitoring	Means of verification	Monitoring Frequency/Responsibility
7. Implementation of LMP	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As provided in LMP (A standalone document)</li> </ul>	Field assessment (FGD) and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
8. Occupation Health and Safety	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check that appropriate PPEs (safety hard hat, safety boots, gloves, safety glasses, ear protection buds and masks) are provided to and used by staff during the civil works operation;</li> <li>Check that activities with high potential risks and hazards (cut, burn, electrocution, etc.) are performed and/or closely supervised by experience staff;</li> </ul>	Visual inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily during ICT infrastructures installation;</li> <li>During the field trip.</li> </ul>
9. Community health and safety	C1 and C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check the compliance with driving rules and regulation;</li> <li>Check road accidents (damage to community and public assets, injuries and/or deaths) and transmitted and infected with COVID-19.</li> </ul>	Visual inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the field trip.</li> </ul>
10. SEA/SH and Violence Against Children (VAC)	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check whether information and training on GBV-SEA/SH based on the WB Good Practice Note and the national and international convention on elimination of violence against women and children are provided to appropriate stakeholders.</li> <li>Ensure implementation of the Codes of Conduct on GBV-SEA/SH and VAC</li> </ul>	Field assessment (FGD) and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> <li>Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
11. Implementation of GRM	All components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check whether GRM are properly communicated with relevant stakeholders (e.g., Whether workers are informed about the relevant GRM upon their recruitment and their</li> </ul>	Field assessment (FGD) and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly by District E&amp;S officers to PMU</li> </ul>



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Aspect	Component	Standard monitoring	Means of verification	Monitoring Frequency/ Responsibility
		<p>right to redress, confidentiality and protection against any reprisals from the employer, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event project received a complaint, check whether it has been processed and filed accordance to its designated categories and it is correctly report through the GRM systems and referral paths if related GBV-ESA/SH and/or CA.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bi-annual by PMU to the WB</li> </ul>
<b>III. Environmental monitoring measures</b>				
12. Solid and hygiene management	All component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check that the recyclables have been properly segregated;</li> <li>• Check general good housekeeping, hygiene management, and tidiness;</li> <li>• Check and assure that no littering and burning of garbage</li> <li>• Check and assure proper disposal of solid waste</li> <li>• Check the compliance with SS-ESCOP for good household keeping (in Annex 5)</li> </ul>	Visual inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily by CSMC (community technician and community supervisor)</li> <li>• Monthly by District E&amp;S officers</li> <li>• Bi-annual by PMU E&amp;S specialist</li> </ul>
13. Dust and noise impact during the civil works	C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check that the workplace is properly sealed during the renovation and installation works;</li> <li>• Check that vehicle speed limit through the communities, during field work, is in accordance with the traffic rules.</li> </ul>	Visual inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>
14. Extraction of natural resources (forest and water sources), illegal wildlife consumption	C1,C2 & C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check and assure that no extraction of protected forest land, unattainable use of natural resources (forest and water sources), no conflict among the communities regarding the use of natural resources, no illegal wildlife consumption and trading, and no illegal logging.</li> </ul>	Visual inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>



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Aspect	Component	Standard monitoring	Means of verification	Monitoring Frequency/ Responsibility
and trading, and illegal logging				
15. Climate change and disaster impacts	C1 and C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check and assure the compliance with DRM manual</li></ul>	Visual Inspection and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As above</li></ul>
16. Implementation of GFA	C2 and C3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As provided in GFP (in Annex 3D)</li></ul>	Visual Inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As above</li></ul>



## ANNEX 7B: BI-ANNUAL E&S MONITORING REPORT TEMPLATE



**Lao People's Democratic Republic**  
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity  
\*\*\*\*\*

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

**Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience  
(P178545)**

# Quarterly/Bi-Annual Environmental and Social Monitoring Report

Date:...../...../.....

Reported by:.....



## Abbreviations and Acronyms

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Project Background in Brief
- 1.2. E&S Requirements
- 1.3. Implementation Arrangement

### 2. Project Implementation Progress in Brief

Component and Activity	Brief Progress	Remarks
<b>Component 1: Local Economic Development Initiatives Sub-Grants and Community Capacity Strengthening</b>		
(i) agricultural and rural access roads, outside the district's rural road network		
(ii) drinking water and irrigation		
(iii) village facilities for crop production or livestock raising		
(iv) drying platforms and storage facilities		
(v) small processing facilities		
(vi) in-village solutions for better market access		
(vii) tree preservation (e.g., fencing) or tree planting		
<b>Component 2: Community Livelihoods Enhancement</b>		
Common Interest Groups (CIG)		
Self Help Groups (SHG)		
Producers Groups (PG)		
<b>Component 3: Community Nutrition Interventions</b>		
Women nutrition groups (WNGs).		
Home visits.		
Multi-media peer learning (MMPL).		
Integrated community nutrition platform and meetings.		
Home nutrition gardening.		
Goat dairy for child feeds.		

### 3. Implementation of Safeguard Measures

#### 3.1. Safeguard Capacity Building

#### 3.2. ESS Compliance Monitoring

##### 3.2.1 Compliance ESSs

WB ESSs <sup>52</sup>	Brief Description of Compliance	Photo Ref ID.
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<sup>52</sup> This can modify based on the SS-ESMP and A-RPs.



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<b>ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts:</b>		
• Application of negative and Preference List?		
• Conducting E&S Screening and Scoping?		
• Update and implement SS-ESCOP?		
• UXO Survey and Clearance?		
<b>ESS2: Labour and Working Conditions:</b>		
• Labour management: including (i) employment discrimination, (ii) denial of basic labour rights; (iii) potential labour disputes, (iv) child labour; (v) accidents and injuries involving heavy equipment and construction activities; (vi) transmitted and infected with COVID-19; (vii) road accidents due to poor road condition and risks related SEA/SH and VAC; (viii) including the temporary labour influx of construction workers is likely to increase the risk of substance abuse such as alcohol and amphetamine.		
• Training workers on occupational, health and safety regulations and SEA/SH and VAC?		
• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC		
• Occupational health and safety: Application of PPE?		
• UXO Survey and Clearance?		
• Occurrence of complaints?		
<b>ESS3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management:</b>		
• Construction, hazardous, general solid, and recycle wastes have been properly segregated and disposed off?		
• No littering and burning of garbage?		
• General good housekeeping, hygiene management, and tidiness?		
• Proper operation and maintenance of construction equipment, fuels and oils?		
• Proper disposal of construction and domestic wastes?		
• Use of pesticides?		
• Training on and application of GFA?		
<b>ESS4: Community Health and Safety:</b>		
• Compliance with driving rules and regulation such as vehicle speed limit through the communities, during field work, is in accordance with the traffic rules?		
• Implementation of noise and dust measures: watering unpaved roads and speed limit through the communities and unpaved roads?		
• Road accidents (damage to community and public assets, injuries and/or deaths) and transmitted and infected with COVID-19?		
• Training workers on SEA/SH and VAC, HIV and Covid-19 Prevention?		
• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC		





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• Removal of temporary access road upon completion?		
• Compliance with SS-ESCAP?		
• Training on and application on Good Farming Practices (GFA)?		
• Occurrence of complaints?		
<b>ESS5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement:</b>		
• Encroachment to private land and properties?		
• Occurrence of donation?		
• A-RP prepared and implemented before commencement of construction activities?		
• Occurrence of complaints?		
<b>ESS6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources:</b>		
• Integration of disaster risks and sustainable use of natural resources in the sub-project site selection and design?		
• Site clearance within the approved boundary?		
• No extraction of protected forest land, unattainable use of natural resources (forest and water sources), no conflict among the communities regarding the use of natural resources, no illegal wildlife consumption and trading, and no illegal logging?		
• Removal of temporary water flows diversions or blockages upon completion?		
• Compliance with SS-ESCAP?		
<b>ESS7: Indigenous People/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Community:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>		
<b>ESS8: Cultural Heritage:</b>		
• Encroachment to natural habitats and physical cultural properties and heritage?		
• Implementation of Chance Find Procedures for Physical Cultural Resources?		
<b>ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure:</b>		
• Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed		



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<p>households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>		
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### 3.2.2. Non-Compliance ESS and Proposed Corrective Action (CA)

WB ESSs <sup>53</sup>	Brief Description of Non-Compliance	Photo Ref ID.	Proposed CA	Responsibility and Timeline
<b>ESS1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts:</b>				
• Application of negative and Preference List?				
• Conducting E&S Screening and Scoping?				
• Update and implement SS-ESCP?				
• UXO Survey and Clearance?				
<b>ESS2: Labour and Working Conditions:</b>				
• Labour management: including (i) employment discrimination, (ii) denial of basic labour rights; (iii) potential labour disputes, (iv) child labour; (v) accidents and injuries involving heavy equipment and construction activities; (vi) transmitted and infected with COVID-19; (vii) road accidents due to poor road condition and risks related SEA/SH and VAC; (viii) including the temporary labour influx of construction workers is likely to increase the risk of substance abuse such as alcohol and amphetamine.				
• Training workers on occupational, health and safety regulations and SEA/SH and VAC?				
• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC				
• Occupational health and safety: Application of PPE?				
• UXO Survey and Clearance?				
• Occurrence of complaints?				

<sup>53</sup> This can modify based on the SS-ESMP and A-RPs.



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<b>ESS3: Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management:</b>				
• Construction, hazardous, general solid, and recycle wastes have been properly segregated and disposed off?				
• No littering and burning of garbage?				
• General good housekeeping, hygiene management, and tidiness?				
• Proper operation and maintenance of construction equipment, fuels and oils?				
• Proper disposal of construction and domestic wastes?				
• Use of pesticides?				
• Training on and application of GFA?				
<b>ESS4: Community Health and Safety:</b>				
• Compliance with driving rules and regulation such as vehicle speed limit through the communities, during field work, is in accordance with the traffic rules?				
• Implementation of noise and dust measures: watering unpaved roads and speed limit through the communities and unpaved roads?				
• Road accidents (damage to community and public assets, injuries and/or deaths) and transmitted and infected with COVID-19?				
• Training workers on SEA/SH and VAC, HIV and Covid-19 Prevention?				
• Sign to knowledge and comply with Code of Conduct (CoC) for Workers for prevention of SEA/SH and VAC				
• Removal of temporary access road upon completion?				
• Compliance with SS-ESCOP?				
• Training on and application on Good Farming Practices (GFA)?				
• Occurrence of complaints?				
<b>ESS5: Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement:</b>				
• Encroachment to private land and properties?				
• Occurrence of donation?				
• A-RP prepared and implemented before commencement of construction activities?				
• Occurrence of complaints?				
<b>ESS6: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources:</b>				
• Integration of disaster risks and sustainable use of natural resources in				



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the sub-project site selection and design?				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site clearance within the approved boundary?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No extraction of protected forest land, unattainable use of natural resources (forest and water sources), no conflict among the communities regarding the use of natural resources, no illegal wildlife consumption and trading, and no illegal logging?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal of temporary water flows diversions or blockages upon completion?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with SS-ESCAP?</li> </ul>				
<b>ESS7: Indigenous People/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Community:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> <li>Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li> <li>List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li> </ul>				
<b>ESS8: Cultural Heritage:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encroachment to natural habitats and physical cultural properties and heritage?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of Chance Find Procedures for Physical Cultural Resources?</li> </ul>				
<b>ESS10: Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct consultations with local communities and ethnic groups and vulnerable groups (such as those with a disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor, ethnic people) in the project planning, design, implementation and monitoring with compliance with SEP.</li> </ul>				



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include, address and/or respond to feedbacks and/or recommendations.</li><li>• List of participants with (i) segregation of gender, ethnic groups, vulnerable groups (disability, female-headed households, the elderly, the poor people); and (ii) signature.</li></ul>				
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**4. Implementation of SEP**

**5. Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM)**

**6. Accident Reporting**

**7. Challenges and Proposed Solution**

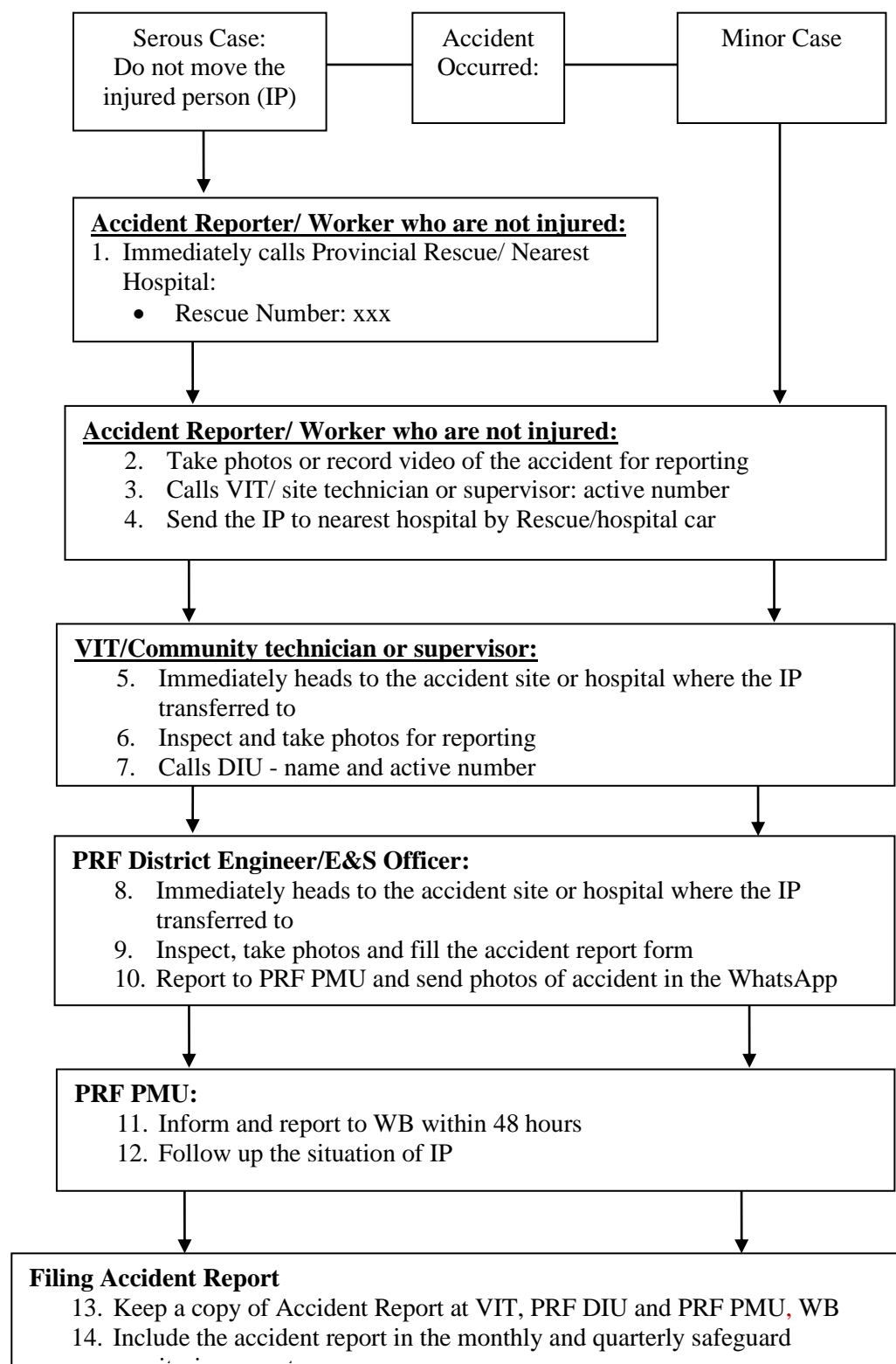
**8. Attachments**

- Attachment 1: Photo of Compliance Findings
- Attachment 2: Summary Non-Compliance and Proposed Corrective Actions
- Attachment 3: Record of GRM record
- Attachment 4: List of Participant of Training and Consultation



## ANNEX 7C: INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURE

### A. FOR ACCIDENTS





## Accident Reporting Form

**Date of the Accident:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Accident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Detailed Description of the Accident:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Responses / Corrective Actions Taken:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Causes(s) of the Accident:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Preventive Measures:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Submitted by:</b>		<b>Position:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	





## B. FOR OTHER INCIDENTS

The following incident types are to be reported using the environmental and social incident response process.

**Fatality:** Death of a person(s) that occurs within one year of an accident/incident, including from occupational disease/illness (e.g., from exposure to chemicals/toxins).

**Lost Time Injury:** Injury or occupational disease/illness (e.g., from exposure to chemicals/toxins) that results in a worker requiring 3 or more days off work, or an injury or release of substance (e.g., chemicals/toxins) that results in a member of the community needing medical treatment.

**Acts of Violence/Protest:** Any intentional use of physical force, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, deprivation to workers or project beneficiaries, or negatively affects the safe operation of a project worksite.

**Disease Outbreaks:** The occurrence of a disease in excess of normal expectancy of number of cases. Disease may be communicable or may be the result of unknown etiology.

**Child Labor:** An incident of child labor occurs: (i) when a child under the age of 14 (or a higher age for employment specified by national law) is employed or engaged in connection with a project, and/or (ii) when a child over the minimum age specified in (i) and under the age of 18 is employed or engaged in connection with a project in a manner that is likely to be hazardous or interfere with the child's education or be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

**Forced Labor:** An incident of forced labor occurs when any work or service not voluntarily performed is exacted from an individual under threat of force or penalty in connection with a project, including any kind of involuntary or compulsory labor, such as indentured labor, bonded labor, or similar labor-contracting arrangements. This also includes incidents when trafficked persons are employed in connection with a project.

**Environmental pollution incident:** Exceedances of emission standards to land, water, or air (e.g., from chemicals/toxins) that have persisted for more than 24hrs or have resulted in harm to the environment.

**Discrimination based on SOGI:** Discrimination means creating a distinction, exclusion, or restriction which has the purpose or effect of impairing or excluding a person based on their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics from being on an equal basis with others.

**Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. In Bank financed operations/projects, sexual exploitation occurs when access to or benefit from a Bank financed Goods, Works, Non-consulting Services or Consulting Services is used to extract sexual gain.



**Sexual Abuse:** Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. In Bank financed operations/projects, sexual abuse occurs when a project related worker (contractor staff, subcontractor staff, supervising engineer) uses force or unequal power vis a vis a community member or colleague to perpetrate or threat to perpetrate an unwanted sexual act.

**Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. In Bank financed operations/projects, sexual harassment occurs within the context of a subcontractor or contractor and relates to employees of the company experiencing unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favor or acts of a sexual nature that are offensive and humiliating among the same company's employees.

**Other:** Any other incident or accident that may have a significant adverse effect on the environment, the affected communities, the public, or the workers, irrespective of whether harm had occurred on that occasion. Any repeated non-compliance or recurrent minor incidents which suggest systematic failures that PMU deems needing the attention of the WB.

## For environmental and social incidents

**Form to be completed by PMU within 24 hours**

B1: Incident Details			
Date of Incident:	Time:	Date Reported to PIU:	Date Reported to WB:
Reported to PIU by:	Reported to WB by:	Notification Type: Email/'phone call/media notice/other	
Full Name of Main Contractor:		Full Name of Subcontractor:	

B2: Type of incident (please check all that apply) <sup>1</sup>
Fatality <input type="checkbox"/> Lost Time Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Displacement Without Due Process <input type="checkbox"/> Child Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Acts of Violence/Protest <input type="checkbox"/> Disease Outbreaks <input type="checkbox"/> Forced Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected impacts on heritage resources <input type="checkbox"/> Unexpected impacts on biodiversity resources <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental pollution incident <input type="checkbox"/> Dam failure <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>

B3: Description/Narrative of Incident
---------------------------------------



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For example:

- I. What is the incident?
- II. What were the conditions or circumstances under which the incident occurred (if known)?
- III. Are the basic facts of the incident clear and uncontested, or are there conflicting versions? What are those versions?
- IV. Is the incident still ongoing or is it contained?
- V. Have any relevant authorities been informed?

**B4: Actions taken to contain the incident**

Short Description of Action	Responsible Party	Expected Date	Status

**For incidents involving a contractor:**  
Have the works been suspended under Contract GCC8.9? Yes ☐; No ☐;  
Name of Contractor:

**B5: What support has been provided to affected people**

**Form to be completed by PMU (following investigation)**

**C3a: Fatality/Lost time Injury information**

Cause of fatality/injury for worker or member of the public (please check all that apply):

1. Caught in or between objects ☐ 2. Struck by falling objects ☐ 3. Stepping on, striking against, or struck by objects ☐  
 4. Drowning ☐ 5. Chemical, biochemical, material exposure ☐ 6. Falls, trips, slips ☐  
 7. Fire & explosion ☐  
 8. Electrocution ☐ 9. Homicide ☐ 10. Medical Issue ☐ 11. Suicide ☐ 12. Others ☐  
**Vehicle Traffic:** 13. Project Vehicle Work Travel ☐ 14. Non-project Vehicle Work Travel ☐ 15. Project Vehicle Commuting ☐  
 16. Non-project Vehicle Commuting ☐ 17. Vehicle Traffic Accident (Members of Public Only) ☐

Name	Age/DOB	Date of Death/Injury	Gender	Nationality	Cause of Fatality/Injury	Worker (Employer)/Public



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**C3b: Financial Support/Compensation Types (To be fully described in Corrective Action Plan template)**

1. Contractor Direct ☐ 2. Contractor Insurance ☐ 3. Workman's Compensation/National Insurance ☐  
 4. Court Determined Judicial Process ☐ 5. Other ☐ 6. No Compensation Required ☐

Name	Compensation Type	Amount (US\$)	Responsible Party

**C4: Supplementary Narrative**

## For SEA/SH Incident

*Incident Form for SEA/SH (to be completed by PMU within 24 hours)*

B1: Incident Details		
<b>Date of incident intake by the project/GM:</b>	<b>Date Reported to PIU:</b>	<b>Date Reported to WBG:</b>
<b>Reported to project/GM by:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Survivor <input type="checkbox"/> Third party <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  <b>Is a record of this incident in GM?</b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Reported to PIU by:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> GM operator <input type="checkbox"/> Directly, by Survivor <input type="checkbox"/> Directly, by third party <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<b>Reported to WBG by:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> PIU <input type="checkbox"/> Directly, by Survivor <input type="checkbox"/> Directly, by third party <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

B2: Incident type (please check all that apply) See Section B above for definitions
Sexual exploitation <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/>

B3: Provide the following details from the GM record	
Age of survivor (if recorded in GM):	Have the national legislation or mandatory reporting



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	requirements been followed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex of survivor (if recorded in GM): Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Was the survivor referred to service provision? <sup>29</sup> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the survivor employed by the project (as indicated by the survivor or complainant and reported in the GM)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is the alleged perpetrator employed by the project (as indicated by the survivor or complainant and reported in the GM)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Basis for further action	
a. Has the complainant provided informed consent to lodge a formal complaint? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	c. Has the survivor provided informed consent to be part of an investigation into misconduct? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Does the employer have a suitable administrative process and capacity in place to investigate misconduct relating to SEA/SH in a survivor-centered way? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	d. Has the complaint been filed anonymously or through a third party? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If the answer to any of these questions is no, has the GM assessed the risks and benefits of carrying out an investigation into the alleged misconduct, taking into account the survivor's safety and wellbeing? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Will an investigation into misconduct be undertaken in addition to an investigation into adequacy of project systems, processes or procedures? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	



## ANNEX 8 – RAPID ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Rapid Environmental and Social Assessment (RESA) is to identify and assess environmental and social contexts, risks and impacts of the investment activities proposed under the Community Livelihood Enhancement And Resilience (CLEAR) project, as well as to promote equal opportunity and inclusion through design of the CLEAR project. Based on the assessment, mitigation measures and development enhancement approach will be proposed and integrated into the design and implementation of the CLEAR project's activities, and E&S instruments include ESMF, SEP, LMP, PRF, and ESCP will be developed and implemented.

The CLEAR project is being built on the results of PRF III. To leverage the secondary data that are available from PRF III, the Rapid ESA will be based on the review, the data collection/field work and meetings/consultations with key stakeholders (including the design teams and the consultants carrying out other assessments) to assess the achievements and challenges made under PRF III, meanwhile examining the E&S risks and impacts associated with the new investment activities under the CLEAR project.

Consultation was conducted as part of RESA exercise to collect data and information for preparation of E&S instruments.

The purpose of consultation for the ESA is to a) solicit feedback from some selected key project stakeholders who have been participating in PRF III on the management of ES risk and impact; C) use such feedback as lessons learned/ opportunities for enhanced project design under CLEAR through the promotion of equal opportunities for participation and inclusion by all target project beneficiaries as well as to be more effective and practical on ways to avoid and manage the risk related to environment, health, and safety especially those related to UXO and different types and locations of civil works. The Rapid ESA also looked in the contexts (i.e. how risks/opportunities apply to different groups of people – vulnerable including ethnic minorities; different priorities, how different groups (i.e. ethnic minorities) are socially structured etc. Key group of stakeholders to be consulted are presented under the Methods section.

Feedback (as primary data) are collected through this consultation includes the following key aspects:

- Aspects of PRF III ESMF implementation that have worked well, especially those related to safety of workers and wastes management.
- Aspects that could be further improved (through lessons learned from PRF III), including those related to environment, health, and safety
- Opportunities and challenges under CLEAR (considering also new province), including those related to natural disaster, risk related to awareness and practices on covid-19, risk related to UXO and others disaster (fire, forest fire, etc.), knowledge and use of pesticides/fertilizer,

### 2. METHODS

This RESA was conducted based on a combination of review of relevant literature (secondary data) and consultation with stakeholders of the project (primary data). Meetings were held with beneficiaries who are members of village authorities, self-help groups (SHG), mothers with children under two, village facilitators, community mobilizers. Meetings were also conducted with project staff at district



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level and subsequently with national level to share preliminary feedback of both beneficiaries and project staff based in the project sites. Consultation was also held with stakeholders from ministry of planning and investment and ministry of health to share feedback from the field and project staff based in Xiengkhouang province and additional telephone interviews with village facilitators in Huaphan and Sekong Provinces for validation, and for double checking if the feedback/observations from Xiengkhouang have similarities with beneficiaries and project staff in other three project provinces.

**Key group of stakeholders:**

The consultation under CLEAR covered both affected stakeholder and interested stakeholders.

Project affected stakeholders include individuals, groups, communities and local organizations (department of agriculture and forestry, department finance and planning)

**Project beneficiaries:**

- Beneficiary households selected for consultation (Nutrition, Livelihood, Community Development, Producers (who members are from Self-Help Group)
- Households with voluntary contributions, land replacements and cash compensations<sup>54</sup>

**Project implementation team**

- Nutrition and Community Development team, and Livelihood work team
- Local authorities

**Data collection techniques:**

Techniques used for the consultation include: 1) Key informant interview, 2) Focus group discussion, 3) Field observation, as well as data collected through desk review of existing documents available under PRF.

**Key Informant Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with selected project key stakeholders at district and village levels, including:

- DAFO and existing PRF III district teams (Nutrition, Community Development, Livelihood, Technical Assistance/Engineering)
- Representative of village authority including village women union and ethnic groups representatives.
- HH with voluntary contributions, land replacements and cash compensations<sup>55</sup>

**Focus Group Discussion (FGD):** Groups of men and group of women from Ethnic Minorities

- Group of Women (from Self-Help Groups) who benefit from Pro-Nutrition Activities, Financial Literacy, Nutrition practices, etc.
- Group of Men (from Producer Groups) who benefit from project support (e.g. business plan, producer business management, use of production tools...)

<sup>54</sup> Based on the Technical Assessment and Outcomes Survey 2022: Around 20% or 18 of sub-projects reported social impacts on personal property which were satisfactorily resolved through voluntary contributions, land replacements and cash compensations

<sup>55</sup> Based on the Technical Assessment and Outcomes Survey 2022: Around 20% or 18 of sub-projects reported social impacts on personal property which were satisfactorily resolved through voluntary contributions, land replacements and cash compensations





- Targeted Self-Help Groups (SHG)

**Field Observation:** While carrying out assessment process, the team also recorded what they've seen by taking notes, video recording and photos of the existing social and natural environments, which also provided sufficient, relevant and updated information on the physical, biological, economic, social, cultural and visual components. This also included geographical and socio-economic context of the district and village. Prior permission, by verbally asking for consent before each interview/consultation, was sought by the assessment team on whether they are fine with having photos taken, or their video recorded. All of the people consulted agreed to this request and were happy for the assessment to take their pictures and videos.

### **Section of Study site**

- Due to time constraint and because the other teams already conducted information in other parts of the project areas, the result of the study from the other teams is used as secondary data to complement this ESA. And only one province (Xiengkhoang Province, Nonghet District) is selected for the RESA. Two villages of Nonghet District were selected (including Pha-Lin village (a poorer village where PRF provided them with gravity-fed water supply under PRF II and rural access road under PRF III, the village also established a nutrition group and SHGs) and Nong-Lae village (PGs village)).
- It is noted that some villages in Nonghet District are likely to be included under CLEAR.

## **3. FINDINGS**

### **3.1 Poverty Profile in Laos PDR**

This section (3.1) is drawn from the WB report published in 2020, namely, Lao PDR Poverty Profile – Poverty Report for the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018-2019. The information in Section 3.1 provides a snapshot of the poverty of Laos (seven project provinces are marked with yellow bar).

#### **3.1.1 Overview of Poverty in Laos and in Project Provinces**

According the WB 2020 (WB - 2020 - Lao PDR Poverty Profile), the national poverty headcount rate in 2018/19, estimated using the revised poverty methodology, was 18.3 percent. This indicates that almost a fifth of the Lao PDR population were living on less than LAK 9,364 a day (approximately USD 1.10, or 2.40 per person per day in 2011 PPP USD). Although Poverty in Lao PDR continues to decline, the impact of growth on poverty reduction was low. Between 2012/13 and 2018/19, the annual GDP growth rate averaged about 7 percent, and GDP per capita grew at an annual rate of 5.6 percent. But a one-percent increase in GDP per capita during this period was associated with a mere 0.67 percent decline in the poverty rate. Average consumption grew by only 3.3 percent, falling behind the rate of economic growth.

Poverty has fallen more rapidly in rural areas than in urban areas. The depth and severity of poverty followed a similar trend, declining markedly in rural areas while remaining largely unchanged in urban areas. Poverty depth, as measured by the poverty gap, is the extent to which individuals fall below the poverty line. The larger the poverty gap, the poorer on average people below the poverty line are, and **the more resources are needed to lift them out of poverty.**

According to the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey (LECS) that was implemented between June 2018 and May 2019, the following key findings are important:



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- Poverty declined from 24.6 percent in 2012/13 to 18.3 percent in 2018/19. The rate of poverty reduction has been rapid in rural areas, while urban poverty reduction has stagnated.
- The incidence of poverty is typically higher among agricultural households, Hmong-lumien households and households headed by a person who has not completed lower secondary education or an unemployed person, and such gaps have widened.
- Multidimensional poverty declined between 2012/13 and 2018/19, especially in rural areas, the northern region and the southern region, mirroring a decline in monetary poverty.
- Notwithstanding improvements in monetary indicators of poverty and non-monetary aspects of household welfare, food insecurity remains a pressing problem among low-income households in rural areas.

In project provinces, poverty remains among the highest compared to other provinces. Project provinces are marked in yellow shade below.

**Table 1 - Poverty and Distribution of The Poor by Province (2012/13–2018/19)**

	Poverty Headcount Rate			Poverty Gap			Squared Poverty Gap		
	2013	2019	Change	2013	2019	Change	2013	2019	Change
<b>Lao PDR</b>	24.6	18.3	-6.3	5.9	3.9	-2.0	2.1	1.3	-0.8
<b>Vientiane Capital</b>	2.5	5.0	2.5	0.3	1.0	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.3
<b>North</b>									
<b>Phongsaly</b>	19.9	8.1	-11.8	3.4	1.2	-2.2	0.9	0.3	-0.6
<b>Luangnamtha</b>	25.0	10.5	-14.4	4.5	1.9	-2.6	1.2	0.6	-0.6
<b>Oudomxay</b>	36.6	29.2	-7.5	8.9	6.4	-2.5	2.9	2.0	-1.0
<b>Bokeo</b>	51.8	19.4	-32.4	15.0	4.2	-10.8	5.9	1.3	-4.5
<b>Luangprabang</b>	30.0	20.4	-9.6	6.8	3.1	-3.7	2.1	0.7	-1.4
<b>Huaphanh</b>	45.4	26.6	-18.8	13.3	5.8	-7.5	5.3	1.8	-3.5
<b>Xayabury</b>	15.7	21.1	5.4	2.7	4.5	1.8	0.7	1.5	0.8
<b>Central</b>									
<b>Xiengkhuang</b>	34.3	26.0	-8.2	8.6	6.2	-2.3	3.1	2.2	-0.9
<b>Vientiane</b>	10.9	5.3	-5.6	1.6	1.0	-0.6	0.3	0.3	-0.1
<b>Borikhamxay</b>	14.7	20.6	5.9	2.9	5.1	2.2	0.9	1.8	0.9
<b>Khammuane</b>	25.2	25.5	0.3	6.6	5.1	-1.5	2.3	1.5	-0.8
<b>Savannakhet</b>	29.1	27.5	-1.5	6.2	6.5	0.3	2.0	2.3	0.3
<b>Xaysomboun</b>		8.2			1.3			0.3	
<b>South</b>									
<b>Saravane</b>	52.1	24.9	-27.2	16.8	5.6	-11.2	6.8	1.9	-4.9
<b>Sekong</b>	44.4	30.6	-13.8	13.3	6.2	-7.1	5.7	1.9	-3.8
<b>Champasack</b>	19.6	8.7	-10.9	4.0	1.8	-2.3	1.2	0.5	-0.7
<b>Attapeu</b>	9.1	27.8	18.8	1.4	5.7	4.4	0.3	2.0	1.7



*Source* World Bank, 2020, Poverty Profile in Lao PDR.

### 3.1.2 Vulnerable and poor groups

Households headed by an agricultural self-employed person and an unemployed or economically inactive person have the highest poverty rates. It was noted, in particular, that **poverty rate among people living in households headed by an unemployed or economically inactive person is 21.3 percent**. About 90 percent of unemployed household heads were previously engaged in agricultural activities but have **become unemployed due to seasonality**, while economically inactive persons are mostly the elderly. Poverty remains high and persistent among households headed by an agricultural self-employed person (24.6 percent in 2018/19) albeit falling by 7.3 percentage points over the previous six years. These households together with households headed by a seasonally unemployed person constitute 75 percent of the poor. Conversely, the poverty rate of households headed by wage workers and nonfarm self-employed workers is low, with each estimated to be around 5 percent in 2018/19, a marked decline from 9 percent in 2012/13.

**Remittances from migrants have become an important source of income.** In 2018/19, **14 percent of the population lived in households that received remittances**, up from 11 percent in 2012/13. The poverty rate among remittance-receiving households has fallen from 13.8 percent in 2012/13 to 10.2 percent in 2018/19: almost half the poverty rate than those without remittances.

It is noted that the **incidence of poverty is higher among households headed by the non-secondary educated, the unemployed, the Hmong-lumien persons and individuals self-employed in farming**. The Hmong-lumien group has also experienced the slowest pace of poverty reduction, with gaps between them and other ethnic groups widening as a result.

### 3.1.3 Key Ethnic Groups in Project Areas

There are various ethnic groups present in the project provinces (as in table below). However, key ethnic groups that are included as current beneficiaries include two groups: Lao, Tai, Phong, Thai, Lue, Yuan, Yang, Aesk, Thai Nue, Khmu, and Pair.

No.	Province	No. of ethnic groups	Some of the identified main ethnic groups
1	Phongsaly	28	Khmu, Hmong, Yao, Akha, Phounoy Tai Lue, Hor, Syl, Hayi, Lolo
2	Oudomxay	20	Khmu, Hmong, Yao, Akha, Lahu, Lanten, Tai Daeng,
3	Huaphan	22	Khmu, Hmong, Yao, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng, Tai Phuan
4	Xiengkhouang	5	Khmu, Hmong, Yao, Tai (Tai Phuan, Tai Dam, Tai Daeng)
5	Salavan	14	Alak, Katou, Lavene, Yae, Pako, Phuthai, Souay, Ta-Oy, and Tong
6	Sekong	N/A	Triang, Yae, Katu and Ha Luk, Brou, Broa
7	Savannakhet	N/A	Phouthai, Tai Dam, Katang, Mongkong, Vali, Lavi, Souei, Kapo, Kaleung, Ta Oi, Bru, Tri, Laha, and Katang

Of the ten ethnic groups who are currently beneficiaries, Hmong, Khmu, Akha, Phong, Phounoi, Lao are the major beneficiary groups. General characteristics of these groups are described below:



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▪ **Hmong**

There are 376 HHs living in the project area, primarily in Xayabouly (257 households in Phieng and Xienghone districts, 106 households in Bolikhamxay).

Hmong Khao (“White” Hmong) is one of five Hmong sub-groups present in Lao PDR. After Khmu, Hmong has the largest population of all ethnic groups in the country. The Hmong trace their origins in Lao PDR to waves of migration from China in the early years of the 19th century. Causes for this migration attributed by both Hmong respondents and research sources include historical conflict between Hmong and Han Chinese, population growth, unacceptable burden of taxation and refusal to integrate with Han Chinese. Migrated Hmong are now found throughout the northern provinces of Lao PDR, southern Yunnan, northern Viet Nam and northern Thailand.

Typically, Hmong have settled in the highest areas of the upland, even preferring to be buried on mountain tops. They have a reputation of being both hard working and more recently, assertive in Oudomxay Province over acquiring land and property. Hmong Khao are also structured by clans, or seng (e.g., Toe, Veu, Tsiong, Moa, Lee, Va, Ya, Ha, Ja, and Keu). The seng determines the boundaries of land and property rights, and protects the role of men as transmitters of those rights by constraining women’s choices, particularly as to who and when a woman may marry.

The Hmong are an Asian ethnic group from the mountainous regions of China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Hmong are also one of the sub-groups of the Miao ethnicity in Southern China. Historically, Hmong society is patriarchal. The Hmong culture usually consists of a dominant hierarchy within the family. Males hold dominance over females and thus, a father is considered the head in each household. Hmong are generally group oriented, so the interests of the group come before the interests of individuals. They belong to the Hmong-luMien ethno-linguistic group and either speak the “Hmong Der” (White Hmong) or “Mong Leng” (Green Hmong) dialect. Hmong are skilled at hunting, mixing herbal medicines and raising animals, particularly horses. Hmong believe in a variety of natural, ancestral and supernatural spirits and their religious practices incorporate elements of ancestor worship. Intricate embroidery and heavy silver jewelry adorn their clothes. The Hmong constitute about 8% of the Lao PDR population. In the past, the Hmong used to be called the Miao or Lao Soung. Lao Soung means “Lao of the mountaintops.” The expression refers to where the Hmong traditionally liked to live. These names are no longer considered appropriate, and the Hmong prefer to be called by their ethnic group name. The Hmong are a proud ethnic group, maintaining their distinctive culture and traditions. They cannot marry within their clan, or even a person of their own family name. This means that men and women often have to find a spouse from outside of their village. Traditionally after marriage, a woman will then follow her husband and sever ties with her parents. The Hmong practiced shifting cultivation of unirrigated upland crops; buckwheat, barley, and millet were grown at the highest altitudes, and rice and corn (maize) at lower elevations. Virgin forest was cleared and burnt off for the planting of new fields; when soil fertility declined (usually after several decades), the entire village would relocate. New villages could be a considerable distance away from a group’s previous locale. In the late 19th century the opium poppy was introduced into the highlands by outside traders, and the Hmong began to cultivate it in an integrated cycle together with corn and dry rice. They sold opium to itinerant traders, usually Chinese, in return for silver. By the late 20th century, shifting cultivation had become impracticable except in a few remote areas. In response to government programs in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, the Hmong have now largely abandoned shifting cultivation and opium production. They have instead turned to the permanent-field cultivation of crops such as rice and corn or the gardening of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, which they sell in lowland markets.

▪ **Khmu**

The Khmu people are the oldest inhabitants of northern Lao PDR, and are now settled throughout all Northern provinces and as far as Bolikhamxay Province. Next to the Lao Loum, they are numerically the



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largest ethnic group in the country. They have eight sub-groups which co-reside, for example Khmu-Rok, Khmu-Lue, Khmu-Ou, and Khmu-Khrong. Khmu are strongly governed by spirits, both benevolent and dangerous, which influence foundations of customary law. The world of the spirits consistently influences gender relations, land use and property rights, and change disturbs the relationship between the Khmu and the external world. Different levels of spirits govern different choices made by men and women – some spirits are territorial, associated with particular places or locations, others are associated with the village and under the authority of the territorial spirit. The belief in spirits can influence the choices made by men and women in their daily routine, seasonal activities, property rights and relationships between the sexes. Other spirits govern the structure of the household and are normally ancestral who continue to protect the well-being of families. Lastly, there are individual spirits, linked to the household.

Each sub-group may be composed of several patrilineal clans called “ta”. Ta names are totemic, meaning they are taken from a natural object, or animal, or bird, to which the clan considers itself closely related and usually has prohibitions associated with the totem. Among Khmu Lue in Oudomxay, ta may include Teu Mong (a kind of civet cat), Teu va (a kind of fern), Teu Kok (a species of bird), etc. The totem is the household spirit, and membership of a “ta” depends in which house a child is born. Ta membership determines marriage choices and by association, property rights.

The Khmu are an ethnic group of Southeast Asia. The majority (88%) live in northern Laos where they constitute one of the largest ethnic groups, comprising eleven percent of the total population. The Khmu were the indigenous inhabitants of northern Laos. It is generally believed that the Khmu once inhabited a much larger area but after the influx of Thai/Lao peoples into the lowlands of Southeast Asia, the Khmu were forced to higher ground (Lao Theung), above the rice-growing lowland Lao but below the Hmong/Mien groups (Lao Sung) that inhabit the highest regions, where they practiced swidden agriculture. The Khmu of Laos resides mainly in the North, ranging across 10 provinces including Luang Prabang, Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Bokeo and Lung Namtha Provinces. The Khmu language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic language family, in which several closely related languages are grouped together forming the Khmuic branch. The Khmu are an agricultural society, although gathering, hunting, trapping and fishing are parts of the Khmu lifestyle. Khmu crops include rice (especially white and black sticky rice), corn, bananas, sugar cane, cucumbers, beans, sesame and a variety of vegetables. Most of the agricultural work in Khmu villages is done communally, so as to combine the strength and finish the work quickly. Harvesting of wild rice is generally performed by the village women. Rice is stored outside the village in elevated structures to protect from mice and rats. Khmu elders are traditionally the most important people of the village, and are responsible for resolving all village disputes. Village leaders included the shaman (knowledgeable in spiritual medicine), the medicine man (knowledgeable in herbal medicine), the priest (based on family lineage of priesthood), and the village headman (in modern times chosen by the Laotian government). Laotian Khmu communities generally have localized justice systems administered by the village elders. Although the Khmu is the second largest ethnic group in Laos, they are also the poorest. Throughout the history of Laos, the Khmu have lacked political power, education and a role in administration. The results of a study on Khmu women show that they experience barriers to participation in project activities. The barriers include language; education; cultural norms; health issues; workload; resettlement; poverty; low self-esteem; staff and project approach; the village administrative structure; fewer opportunities with development projects; and limited formal access and control over assets. To overcome these barriers and to participate in development projects Khmu women would benefit from greater support from project staff such as teacher/trainer; learner; follower; advisor; demonstrator/role model and advocate. To empower women to overcome barriers themselves and participate more fully in community development requires both men and community to provide support and acceptance.

- **Akha**



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The Akha consists of about 14-15 subgroups that share similar livelihoods, but then wear different clothing and have a distinct social structure. Akha women are easily recognizable by their traditional hat, covered with coins representing the wealth of the household. Their villages are situated in remote/isolated areas and up until very recently one would not have found two ethnic groups, including the Akha's subgroups, inhabiting the same village due to their remote location and limited access to government services. This factor is one of the main reasons why most of the Akha ethnic group often have very high illiteracy rates and are unable to understand the Lao language. The Akha subgroup called the Muchi in Phongsaly said in an interview that they don't understand the Language of the Akha subgroups called the Kor in Oudomxay and Luang Namtha. Akha language is part of the Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family.

▪ **Phong**

The Phong only presence in Houaphan, Vientiane and Xiengkhouang provinces and made up only about 0.5% of Lao population, but it's one of the main targeted ethnic groups covered by the project in Houaphan province. There are four subgroups: Phong-Phane, Phong-Lan, Phong-Pieng and Phong-Poung. They live in isolation and have their own language. Due to living in isolation for many years, and despite being a small group, each subgroup has slightly different dialects. Same as the Khmu and other Mon-Khmer groups, the Phong in still preserve their traditional social structure and distinct ethnic characteristics. It is interesting to note that while their livelihoods and the use of land and forest resources are similar to that of the ethnic groups belong to the Mon-Khmer, they share many characteristics with the Tai and the Lao instead of the Mon-Khmer groups. These include their housing designs, waving styles, religion (Buddhism), ritual ceremony and follow matrilineal clan/custom instead of the patrilineal clan.

▪ **Yao**

The Yao ethnic group has two distinct subgroups within the Yao ethnic group in Lao PDR, which are known as Yao and Lanten respectively. The subgroups speak different languages, although some of the words are the same, but they may have slightly different meanings. The lowland living Yao speak Kim Mun (also known as Lanten) and the highland Yao speak Lumien. Lumien is very distantly related to the Hmong language. Together they form the Hmong-Mien language family. The Yao men and women cover their head with a black or red scarf. Instead of a scarf, some women wear a turban that may have different forms. The traditional suit of women is long and of bright colors. On their shirts they also wear decorations made of metal, copper and/or silver. Although some Yao have converted to Buddhism philosophy and Christian religion, many still remain practicing their traditional beliefs in seven principle spirits representing humans, animals, fields, forests, sky, water, and earth.

▪ **Trieng**

The Trieng ethnic group is mostly found in Salavan and Yae, Katu and Ha Luk are mostly found in Sekong. These ethnic groups share similar key characteristics including languages, land, ceremony, beliefs (animism), language, and community cohesion. One of the core beliefs of animism is the worship in ancestral spirits and cemeteries. The cemeteries are mostly forested area and are sacred as a burial place of the deceased from the villages. People are prohibited from entering for any kind of activities such as hunting or collecting timber and NTFPs. In the cemeteries, there are usually small huts of the deceased where the local people believe the spirits of the deceased live. Local villagers offer food, tools, and other worshipping materials to the deceased at these small huts. Each year, villagers perform rituals to pay respect to ancestral spirits, forest spirits, land spirits, village spirits, and evil spirits that can make people fallen ill. Poles located in the middle of the villages are used for securing animals and serve as a place for performing animal sacrifice. In some villages, the sacred houses or Salakuan in the middle of villages are used for performing animal sacrifices. Women and outsiders are strictly forbidden from





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entering Salakuan. The forest is believed to be inhabited by spirits, one of them is a ghost known as Phi Bang Bot who can make people fall ill and/or die for not asking its permission.

The Trieng, Yae, Katu and Ha Luk believe in asking permission from the spirits prior to doing something, this includes prior to getting marriage and/or having children. When a marriage couple have a child (pregnant) without a proper ritual ceremony with a suitable animal type/size and/or a woman is pregnant without a father, it is considered sinful (*pidhid*) and the woman must leave the village during the childbirth for at least about one to three weeks, depending on their committed sin. During this time, the outcasted woman will live and/or stay in the forest where outsiders, other villagers and men are not allowed to go near her and only a sister or a mother is allowed to visit once every few days to check on her. Poverty also plays a critical role in making woman to suffer this custom belief, the more couples cannot effort a suitable animal such as buffalos, cows, and pigs for the marriage ritual, the more women continue to suffer. Other event involves animal sacrificed is funeral, while dying from old-age is considered a normal event, sudden dead caused by an accident and/or sickness is also considered a sin and requires animal sacrificed. The body from a sudden dead caused by an accident outside the village is not allowed to enter village.

#### **3.1.4 Food consumption and food security**

The composition of food expenditure changed slightly between 2012/13 and 2018/19. Overall, households spent a slightly smaller share of their food costs on rice and fish and a greater share on milk, cheese and eggs, vegetables and tubers. Urban households devote a larger share of total food expenditure on beverages, restaurants meals and takeaways (12 percent) than rural households (2.5 percent). Conversely, **shares of rice and fish in total expenditure are higher among rural households** than urban households.

Almost 20 percent of the population experienced moderate-to-severe food insecurity in 2018/19. In 2018/19, **10 percent of the population experienced moderate food insecurity**, meaning they reduced the quality or quantity of their food, and were uncertain about their ability to obtain food due to lack of resources. **This increased their likelihood of malnutrition, including the risk of stunting in children.** In addition, **9 percent of the population faced severe food insecurity, meaning they ran out of food altogether and/or went for a day or more without eating.**

Poor households also spend more on vegetables and tubers while non-poor households spend a greater share on meat, beverages, and restaurants/ takeaway meals. Food poverty and food insecurity are regular occurrences. **Almost 20 percent of the population experienced moderate to severe food insecurity in 2018/19, particularly in rural areas and the central region.**

#### **3.1.5 Household assets and living conditions**

Poverty reduction across Lao PDR over the past six years has involved significant improvements to household living conditions. Ownership of consumer durables increased significantly between 2012/13 and 2018/19. Among poor households, possession of a motorbike, a refrigerator, a steam rice cooker, a television and a mobile phone significant increases – as observed between 2012/13 and 2018/19.

Lao households, including the poor, typically invested in more expensive and better-quality housing materials since the last survey. **Between 2012/13 and 2018/19, poor households typically swapped their roofing material from grass, leaves or wood to metal sheets, while non-poor households upgraded from metal sheets to roofing tiles.**

#### **3.1.6 Access to services**

There was a remarkable improvement in access to basic services between 2012/13 and 2018/19. In 2018/19, 92.9 percent of households had access to safe water throughout the year, increasing from





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83.8 percent in 2012/13, and approximately 82 percent of households had access to improved sanitation facilities. However, access to all services is significantly lower among the poor when compared to the non-poor. **Access to improved sanitation facilities was 74.3 percent among poor households**, well beneath 97 percent access among the non-poor. The gap is narrower for access to safe water and electricity, however.

Table 2 – Household Access to Improved Water, Sanitation Facilities and Electricity by Province (2018/19)

	Poor				Non-poor			
	Gas and electricity for cooking	Improved sanitation facilities	Safe water	Electricity for lighting	Gas and electricity for cooking	Improved sanitation facilities	Safe water	Electricity for lighting
Borikhamxay	0	100	100	100	6.2	99.4	98.6	99.7
Vientiane Capital	8.3	94.6	100	100	34.9	99.7	100	99.7
Xayabury	0	92.9	100	96.8	2.1	98.8	97.8	99.6
Xaysomboun	0	81.8	93.9	100	6.8	95.9	98.4	99.7
Bokeo	0	75.5	78.7	92.2	11.6	97.6	91.9	100
Xiengkhuang	2.1	74.8	98.1	77	12.8	93.3	96.8	96.9
Luangnamtha	4.5	71.6	98.5	70.4	13.6	90.2	96.9	90.9
Champasack	0	65.1	92.4	97.3	2.9	85.9	96	99.4
Huaphanh	14.7	62.1	100	63.8	10.2	93.8	99.7	91
Oudomxay	4.1	51.9	86	63.9	12.1	81.5	90.4	79.5
Luangprabang	3.4	44.3	91	67.1	10.2	80.8	95.9	87.8
Vientiane	3.8	44.2	95.3	96.7	8.9	98.8	99.6	99
Khammuane	10.7	42	79	91.9	15.1	80.1	95	98.1
Sekong	0.9	37.7	81.7	58.6	1.2	73.9	95.8	75.2
Attapeu	7.5	35.5	87	85.4	13.7	70.2	87.2	93.8
Phongsaly	0	29.7	100	42.3	6	67.7	97.7	77.9
Savannakhet	4.5	28.1	51.4	67.3	12.5	69.3	81.7	93.2
Saravane	6.1	22.3	82.8	80	5.5	64.7	83.9	96

### 3.2 Social capital

“Social capital refers to the internal social and cultural coherence of society, the norms and values that govern interactions among people and the institutions in which they are embedded. Social capital is the glue that holds societies together and without which there can be no economic growth or human well-being. Without social capital, society at large will collapse, and today’s world presents some very sad examples of this” (Grootaert 1998, p.iii). Social capital is a concept that “describes circumstances in which individuals can use membership in groups and networks to secure benefits” (Sobel 2002, p.139). It is used to explain how problems of selfish incentives could be overcome to achieve a mutually beneficial cooperative way of getting things done (Ostrom & Ahn 2003, p. xiv). Social capital implies voluntary cooperation, which is self-enforcing based on informal, unwritten institutions. Voluntary organizations among farmers can help lower the costs thanks to informal transactions, which are not formally sanctioned, and it is not necessary to monitor and enforce all the transactions (Svendsen & Svendsen 2004, p.27).

“Social Capital refers to the norms and networks that enable collective action. It encompasses institutions, relationships, and customs that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions” (World Bank 2008). “Social capital represents the degree of social cohesion which exists in communities” and that “it refers to the processes between people which establish networks, norms,



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and social trust, and facilitate co-ordination and co- operation for mutual benefit. Social capital is created from the myriad of everyday interactions between people, and is embodied in such structures as civic and religious groups, family membership, informal community networks, and in norms of voluntarism, altruism and trust. The stronger these networks and bonds, the more likely it is that members of a community will co-operate for mutual benefit. In this way social capital creates health, and may enhance the benefits of investments for health” (WHO 1998).

Assessing the stock of social capital in Laos, Sounthone Phommason and Phosy Chanhming (2014) noted that social capital in Lao is still strong, indicative of network mechanism, ritual activities, social trust, norm, value, and livelihood being interwoven into a strong social texture. Social system functions as a pre-requisite for the formal administrative authority. Both informal and formal organizations play very significant roles of strengthening, developing, and passing social capital from generation to generation. In particular, they noted that:

- Mutual support among rural people is still strong. This is Supporting mechanism for social ties
- Mutual help system has been created and passed on from generation to generation (e.g. house building, and other activities that need mental and physical support)
- Communal agriculture work (mutual support albeit) is till practice despite increasing hired of labor among ethnic minorities to rotate the plantation or harvesting from one family to another, particularly in relatives and close acquaintances.
- Seniority support: conflict resolution, mental and physical support.
- Informal social support on birth, death, marriage, illnesses. Strong support from the
- villagers, relatives, friends, and the whole community have been practiced.

### 3.3 Gender

#### 3.3.1 Gender lessons learned from PRF III-AF

Based on the World Bank’s 2022 Gender Analysis for Lao PDR’s CLEAR project, the following key lessons learned have been drawn:

**Decision-making.** The Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) project, which has been implemented for over twenty years, introduced critical innovations to increase women’s participation in economic benefits and engagement in local decision-making. It includes separate village development planning meetings for men and women to facilitate women’s communication in settings where they feel more comfortable exchanging views. Larger community meetings require at least one representative of each household (with a minimum representation of 80 percent of households) and at least 50 percent of women participants (two out of 3 hamlet representatives must be women). To ensure women’s needs are identified and prioritized in the village development planning process, three of the top five priorities selected for investment are required to come from women groups. Two out of three facilitators hired at the community level were women. However, according to an evaluation of PRF I and II conducted by IEG linguistic and cultural barriers to a fuller engagement of women and especially from ethnic groups remained and limited their participation<sup>56</sup> and was also pointed out by PRF staff.

**Economic opportunities.** Under PRF III (2020-present), women have been mobilized into dedicated Self-Help Groups (SHG) which focus on opportunities for increased household income. More than 972 SHGs have been established, with 12,145 members, most of whom have been women (81 percent). Loans have been used to start pro-nutrition livelihood activities such production of small livestock and

<sup>56</sup> Poverty Reduction Fund Project, PPAR, IEG, 2016



horticulture for own consumption and sales. Monthly household income is reported to have increased from USD 8.75 in 2017 to USD 75 in 2018.<sup>57</sup>

**Similarly, under PRF II, a Road Maintenance Group (RMG) program prioritized women's enrolment, allowing to increase women's access to paid work and earnings.**<sup>58</sup> Viewing the labor-intensive task of carrying out road maintenance as a way to create jobs for women from vulnerable households and in villages where earning opportunities were limited; women were organized in RMGs. These were trained and provided with basic hand tools with wage payments were paid monthly at a fixed-daily rate. According to an Impact evaluation conducted the program had positive impact on women's decision-making<sup>59</sup> within the household and voice in the community but was found not to impact their ability to influence non-farm investments. Women from and saving; the risk of losing investments and their ability to maintain them; lack of poorer households saw a lower increase in income compared to women from less poor households. Relatively fewer poor RMG women allocated more of their hours to the program while their households as a whole diversified their income. Poorer households may not have been able to reallocate women's labor hours from other pursuits to RMG work.<sup>60</sup> Constraints to women enjoying the full benefits of the RMG program included: the trade-off between using income for consumption versus investing markets and inputs, including labor and land; women's lack of knowledge.<sup>61</sup>

**Endowments. The project also enrolled 1,000-day women into farmer nutrition groups.** In these peer-learning groups the PRF tested innovative ways of learning for women E.g. peer-to-peer learning was tested through multi-media peer learning by having women produce community videos in their local languages, e.g. on new recipes, and new crops they planted. These community videos complemented technical message delivery from the Ministry of Health. Also, fact sheets on nutritious crops were produced as audio materials in local languages, which women could play on their phones. The PRF also found that men change behavior if they see benefits and are given a clear role. For example, men appreciate more diversified and tasty meals as well helping their wives during the 1,000 day window after understanding the risks from too heavy workload. Up until now, the power from spousal communication remains untapped in SBCC delivery.

It is noted that two main gender gaps will be addressed through project activities, through fully-fledged gender results chain and outcome-level indicators:

1. **Inequality in community leadership positions and participation in local decision-making between women and men.** The first gender results chain will be pursued through a phased roll-out of a community-strengthening training program, while strengthening existing participatory processes in community decision-making.
2. **Unequal vulnerabilities in health and nutrition between women and men due to women's biological role in reproduction.** The second will be pursued through strengthened nutrition-related social and behavioral change communication and capacity building on food production and processing.

### 3.3.2 Gender Analysis

**According to the World Bank's 2022 Gender Analysis for Lao PDR's CLEAR project, Lao PDR achieved rapid growth and significant poverty reduction before the COVID-19 pandemic, though inequality widened.** The national poverty rate fell from 24.6 percent in 2012 to 18.3 percent in 2018 and access

<sup>57</sup> PRF III, 2019

<sup>58</sup> The additional income complemented other income sources.

<sup>59</sup> Increase in decision-making was significant in one dimension: increasing the likelihood that they are final decision-makers in at least on decision.

<sup>60</sup> IE: Maximizing benefits of public workfare programs for the poorest in Laos, EAPGIL, 2020

<sup>61</sup> Ibid



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to basic services, education, and health outcomes improved (World Bank 2022). However, poverty remains high by regional standards and concentrated among subsistence farmers and minority ethno-linguistic groups, who are among the targeted beneficiaries of CLEAR. The CLEAR project area covers Laos' Northern and Southern rural mountainous areas, which are home to many ethnic groups, whose socio-economic status is poorer than for those living in the lower Mekong Corridor. A combination of land tenure insecurity, lack of employment and livelihood opportunities (with additional pressures brought about by climate change), and increased investment by foreign-operated agribusinesses are believed to be additional risk factors in the CLEAR project provinces, particularly for women and girls.

**Gender-based violence remains a significant risk in Laos, which is also perpetuated by child marriage, high adolescent birth rates, and harmful social norms**—and further exacerbated by COVID-19 lockdowns. In Laos, it was shown that girls who marry before the age of 18 are at increased risk of experiencing violence, as they lack status and bargaining power within the household. They are more likely to be physically and mentally abused by family, their husbands, or in-laws, and more likely to be isolated from the community (World Bank Lao PDR CGAP 2017). Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a priority for the Government of Lao PDR, as indicated in the Fourth Five Year Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021-2025 and the National Action Plan on Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Violence Against Children in for 2021-2025, but the challenge is complex and new risks are increasing. Accelerated regional integration and cross-border movement has brought about increased risk of human trafficking for rural women and girls. The Lao PDR-Thailand is one of the main regional migration corridors. According to the US State Department 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report for Laos, the country “does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking”, and there was a lack of progress in the last reporting period. Communities in proximity to large-scale infrastructure projects are at elevated risk of forced labor in relation to the environment.

**Education plays a significant role in protecting women and girls from EMAP risk, improving health and nutrition outcomes, and providing girls with better economic opportunities.** Girls and boys are enrolled equally in early childhood education in the Lao PDR (34 percent female and 30 male) and the country has nearly achieved gender parity at the primary school level. However, a lower proportion of girls attend each stage of secondary school, with 91 girls attending upper secondary for every 100 boys. In 2017, 41.8 percent of girls aged 15–17 were in school. Girls—especially those from ethnic minorities and poorer families—leave school early at higher rates than boys at every school level, and girls from the lowest wealth quintile are significantly underrepresented in upper secondary school. Adult literacy is also lower among women than men, with a 10.6 percentage points difference; the gap is more pronounced among ethnic groups and older age groups. These gender differences in educational attainment and literacy affect women's economic opportunities and participation in decision-making. A lack of off-farm employment opportunities drives young people to migrate to cities.

**Women are active participants in Lao PDR's labor force; however, wage gaps and occupational segregation by gender persist.** The labor force participation of women has improved but remains slightly lower than men's, with 76.5 percent among females and 79.8 percent among males. There is also a significant gender wage gap, with female employees earning an average of 20 percent less than men. The relatively high rate of female labor force participation is driven to a large extent by women's engagement in agriculture, often in subsistence farming. Women are more likely to work in the informal sector, engaged in subsistence-level activities working under precarious working conditions with little to no protection and representation (81.3 percent women and 67.5 percent men). Most of the unpaid workers are women; in 2015, 61 percent of unpaid workers were female compared to 26 percent of men. Men compose the majority of civil servants, professionals, technicians, and other positions that require higher education. Conversely, women are overrepresented in low-skill occupations, comprising 71.8 percent of the workforce in the service sector and 63.36 percent in the retail sector.



**Women play a key role in the agriculture sector in Lao PDR; they comprise a little over half of the agricultural workforce and contribute to all parts of agricultural production.** The majority of agricultural production in Laos is driven by smallholder farmers. In 2019, of all women in the labor force, 63.5 percent were employed in agriculture (versus 59.4 percent of working men). Traditionally, women work in the fields (planting, weeding, and harvesting crops) and look after livestock (mostly animals such as pigs, poultry, and goats, while men tend to larger livestock such as cattle). Lowland or upland, decision-making with regard to irrigation and water resource management is often considered men's work, even though in most cases women manage water at the household level. Division of labor is also apparent in fisheries: women engage in fishponds and fish culture in rice fields and play a key role in fish processing and marketing. Even though women play a significant role in agriculture, they have unequal access to micro-level agricultural investments. On average, female-headed households have less household labor and productive assets than male-headed households and have a less diversified crop base than male-headed households. An agricultural issue that has emerged and which is most pressing for women is the level of toxic chemicals that are being used in commercial agriculture, with severe effects on women's health including reproductive health and on children. This is particularly problematic in highland provinces (for ethnic minorities) due to poor soil quality and mountainous terrain (requiring fertilizers).

**Laos is transitioning from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, which has brought benefits for some but also exacerbated gender disparities and power imbalances in other communities.** Many rural communities are benefitting, as new opportunities for women to undertake paid employment outside the family farm opened, particularly through participation in 'non-traditional export crop production', as contract farmers or direct wage employees. While some work has been done to ensure that local-level contracts between investors and communities are fair and transparent, efforts to ensure that women are meaningfully included in contract farming negotiations and benefit equally are still nascent. For women in poor rural areas, who have lost access to productive land and have not been able to find employment off-farm, commercialization has increased vulnerability. It has also disadvantaged women in non-Lao Tai ethnic groups, who may have limited Lao language skills and lack experience conducting business in a cash economy.

**The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) faces significant sustainability and environmental challenges that are amplified by climate change; Laos' female farmers are less resilient to climate change.** Laos' limited economic resources create challenges for disaster management and climate change adaptation. Hydrological hazards such as flooding, droughts, and storms frequently impact rural areas, affecting the agricultural livelihoods on which most of the population relies. They also cause disease outbreaks, threaten food security, and force communities to migrate due to concerns for personal safety and the security of their livelihoods. Most of the land in the Lao PDR is degraded due to the impacts of droughts, flooding, and landslides, as well as the unsustainable use of natural resources, which has been accelerated by the marketization of agriculture. Female-headed households tend to have less diversified crop production, rendering them less resilient to the adverse effects of climate change and disasters. Also, their limited mobility and voice in community and household decision-making makes them more vulnerable than men to the effects of climate change.

**Traditional gender norms prescribe women's primary role as carers for children and the household in rural areas, limiting their ability to engage in paid productive activities and affecting their "time poverty".** Traditionally, women carry out most tasks within the private sphere (household chores, child-rearing, subsistence farming, etc.), living a life of drudgery while men have greater opportunities to seek paid work outside the household. Women's access to income-generating labor, when it takes place at all for example as a result from increasing agricultural investment, has not lightened these household burdens, creating an unbalanced division of labor in the household. Women are more likely to carry a triple burden of productive, reproductive, and community work, whether paid or, as in most cases,





unpaid. Women devote a disproportionate share of their time on unpaid care work, 1.4 times as much as men. In 2018, rural women spent over four times more time on household chores compared to men (208.6 minutes per day versus men's 44.8 minutes per day), limiting their ability to engage in both formal and informal work at the same level as men's. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the disproportionate burden on women of unpaid care work and agricultural labor, as school closures and reduced remittances from migrant workers redefined household structures.

**Under the law, women, men, boys, and girls have equal rights to own and inherit land, but in practice, unequal customary traditions prevail.** Land titling remains limited to urban and peri-urban areas, leaving most rural land untitled and unregistered. Many rural land users, especially women, lack legal documentation for their tenure security. Women are usually not registered on land titles to marital property. While under Lao law men and women have equal status regarding land ownership and land-use rights, and women have the legal capacity to enter into contracts or sign legal documents, in practice it is often the head of household (usually a man) who signs the tenure document, whether a temporary certificate or a land title. In the 2003 National Land Law, there was a provision requiring both husband and wife to sign a land title or document. However, in 2019 women's land rights have been weakened in the new Land Law (2019) by the removal of dual names (wife and husband) on land titles (from the 2003 Land Law, Article 43) which is a setback for securing land rights for women. With the loss of land, there is the risk of creating unequal gender stereotypes, e.g. women given lower-valued tasks as a housewife and caregivers than in productive agriculture activities.

**According to national policy, women and men have equal access to markets and finance, yet women face constraints in accessing loans and credit.** In 2021, 36.75 percent of men and 37.85 percent of women had an account; the lowest in the region. Women are deterred from accessing credit and loans due to reasons that are both self-imposed and external. Lack of education and literacy, and the lack of confidence and access to Banks and information, create constraints that limit women, particularly ethnic women, from accessing loans. Although 41 Banks operate in Laos, 83 percent of these banks only have branches in the Capital Vientiane. Local-level banking mechanisms remain difficult for those in rural areas to access, Bank processes are complex and burdensome, and women, therefore, do not engage. The challenges women face in attaining documentation for land ownership contribute to women's lower levels of access to credit, as they lack collateral and thus have more limited opportunities to invest in agricultural tools, technologies, and climate-smart agricultural practices.

**COVID-19 has created new economic inequalities.** The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI) survey on the impact of COVID-19 found that women respondents are slightly more likely to perceive a high risk of ceasing business operations (52 percent versus 48 percent for men). A World Bank survey from July 2020 suggests 8.4 percent of household businesses (and 15.4 percent of small household businesses) are temporarily or permanently closed and many are experiencing a fall in revenue. The same survey found fewer women are remaining with the same job as compared to men, with more women changing their jobs (4.5 percent versus 3.2 percent for men) or currently not working (12.6 percent versus 9.7 percent for men). Of those who stayed employed (non-farm employees and own account workers), more women had a lower income (35.7 percent versus 26.3 percent men).

**Women in Lao PDR remain underrepresented in decision-making institutions, particularly at the local level and in rural areas.** In terms of women's political representation, Lao PDR ranked 102nd out of 188 countries with a 27.5 percent representation of women in Sapha Heng Xat, its national Parliament, in 2020. Women accounted for 31.5 percent of provincial assemblies in 2018. In 2021, Lao PDR had the first female Vice President in its history and the share of women in the civil service reached 46 percent in 2018. Female civil servants work mainly for the Ministry of Public Health (65 percent of its employees are women) or for the Ministry of Education and Sports (51 percent). Taken together, these ministries make up about half of all civil servant positions for women, suggesting large inequalities in other areas, including the sub-commissions for the Advancement of Women across all ministries.



**Women's engagement in political decision-making on issues of rural development, natural resource management, and livelihoods has been limited.** In rural areas, decisions are taken through a village committee comprising the Nai Ban and elected representatives from the village. In 2013, only 1.7 percent of Nai Ban and only five percent of deputy heads were women. The village chief and council hold the power to make decisions within the community, and fewer than three percent of village chiefs are women, and the remaining majority are men. Villages also have a variety of additional committees, focusing on issues such as trade, agriculture, health, education, and security. The Lao Women's Union (LWU) also has a village-level body, which is the main avenue through which village women participate in the village committees. With the exception of the LWU, other committees are almost exclusively composed of men. Within LWU, staff members who work directly on women's empowerment do not feel confident to speak up at meetings and hesitated to express their voices. In cases where women were elected to local community or project committees, they often just play a "quota role" but are not given the chance to actively advance rural women's concerns and aspirations.

**Women's active participation in local decision-making is hindered by a range of constraints.** First, legal and institutional constraints. Law on Local Administration provides that village meetings must be attended by household heads, who are traditionally men. Also, the land title may be considered a prerequisite for participation in community decision-making and resource management, limiting women's opportunities to participate and lead. While not universal, perceptions about land ownership rights also influences whether women have their names on a land title - women from ethnic groups are most likely to refuse to have their name on the land title, believing that land management is a man's role.

**Second, skills and often language skills pose barriers, especially among some non-Lao Tai ethnic groups.** A significant barrier to participating in and influencing decision-making processes is posed by a lack of fluency in the national language. About 70 percent of the population does not speak Lao as their first language. Ethnic minority women face disadvantages stemming from lower education level, high school drop-out rates among girls, and widespread illiteracy. Approximately 41.8 percent of girls aged 15-19 are out of school due to early marriage, preventing them from developing proficiency in the national language and fulfilling their social and economic potential [add data by ethnic group]. The Chinese-Tibetan ethnic group is the least literate, 50 percent rate for men and 35 percent rate for women, followed by the Mon-Khmer (67 percent for men and 38 percent for women) and the Hmong-Mien (71 percent for men and 40 percent women), in comparison to Lao-Tais' 84 percent for men and 76 percent for women.

**Third, traditional culture and engrained gender norms prescribe women vs men's roles in the community.** These play out in two ways that affect women's participation in community decisions. On the one hand, women's responsibilities for childcare and the household, in addition to other livelihood activities, limit the time they have available to engage in other activities. In Laos, women's share of unpaid care work is four times that of their partners. Engrained social norms discourage women to voice their needs and concerns. At the community level, women are often not trusted that they have the skill set to analyze problems and propose solutions, therefore if not both husband and wife are called for community meetings, it is usually the men who will attend.

### **3.3.3 Gender-Based Violence**

Laos has developed relevant laws on preventing and combating violence against women and children (2014) but levels of conceptual and practical understanding of the issue are low. At the same time cultural tolerance for certain forms of violence against women is high. Several areas of concern are identified: (i) consulted local authorities, village outreach, young graduates and ethnic group communities accept and justify certain forms of gender-based violence and sexual harassment; (ii) despite Lao PDR having substantial legal frameworks to safeguard the rights and interests of women



and children, services and help systems are limited; and (iii) the issue is only vaguely understood at all administrative levels and at the individual level.

## 1.1 Key Findings from Mid-term Review of RPF III-AF

### 1.1.1 Nutrition Status and Maternal Care

This section is drawn from the key findings of the Mid-term Survey Report (2022) prepared by Indochina Research (Laos) Ltd for the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the World Bank. This report covers the results of the Nutrition Convergence Program that is being carried out by the World Bank and IFAD in four Northern provinces that CLEAR covers.

- **Stunting levels**

Stunting among children under 2 (CU2) and children under 5 (CU5) have remained the same or deteriorated slightly with a total of 35.9% of CU2 and 43.7% of CU5 showing signs of stunting (compared to 31.8% and 42.5% at baseline, respectively). The increase in children with signs of stunting is highest in Phongsaly province where there was an increase of 7% in the proportion of CU2 stunted and of 3.8% in the proportion of CU5 stunted.

The proportion of stunted CU2 continues to be highest among the Hmong- Lu Mien ethnic group (42.2%) although the increase in the proportion of stunted children was the lowest since baseline (41.8%). The highest increase in the proportion of stunted CU2 was observed among the Lao-Tai ethnic group with an increase of 7.4% from 18.5% at baseline to 25.9% at mid-term. There was also a much higher increase in the proportion of boys under 2 with signs of stunting than among girls.

Among CU5 there was a slight increase in the proportion of children stunted in Xiengkhouang province (1.1%) and in Phongsaly province (3.8%). CU5 from the Lao Tai saw the highest increase in the proportion of stunted children with a 3.3% increase.

The causes for these increases in stunting are not clear and require further investigation, but could include the restrictions in movement imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 which limited the access to health care and markets in many parts of the country, as well as the recent spike in food prices.

- **Child Growth**

Growth charts were available and up to date for over half (59%) of children under two years of age which is a considerable decrease from the almost 80% reported at baseline. All provinces saw a reduction in the proportion of CU2 with a growth chart, but this was particularly stark in Xiengkhouang (33% reduction) and in Phongsaly (21.4% reduction). Hmong-Lu Mien less frequently had a growth chart (45.4%) compared to Lao-Tai children (70.5%).

This could also be related to the restriction on movement and the more limited access to health care staff and health centers during COVID-19.

- **Exclusive breast feeding**

Exclusive breast feeding is widely practiced, with 83% of mother of children aged 0-5 months of age indicating that they were not providing anything other than breastmilk to their child, but this is a decrease from the 87% reported at baseline. There was no difference observed between provinces, and there is still a lower rate of exclusive breast feeding seen amongst Lao-Tai mothers (80%) compared to mothers from other ethnic groups. The reasons for this need to be further explored and addressed.

- **Vitamin A supplementation**

Vitamin A supplementation in the past 6 months was done in over 67.5% of children aged 6-59 months ranging from a low of 57% of Chinese-Tibetan mothers, to a high of 77% of Lao-Tai mothers. Iron folic acid was taken for at least 90 days by 73% of pregnant women, which is an improvement from the 54.7% of mothers taking iron folic acid at baseline. Most Lao-Tai mothers (87.2%) compared to only





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62.6% of Chinese-Tibetan mothers took adequate iron folate during their pregnancy, although the latter saw a notable increase from the 30% of mothers that had taken iron folic acid for at least 90 days at baseline.

- **Antenatal Care**

Antenatal Care (ANC) attendance at least four times during pregnancy occurred for 79% of mothers of children under two, with a slight improvement from baseline. However, Chinese-Tibetan and Hmong-lu Mien mothers were still less likely to attend (66%) than Lao-Tai mothers (93%).

- **Minimum Dietary Diversity**

The minimum dietary diversity (MDD) score was met by 21% of children aged 6-23 months, which is a decrease from the 27% of children meeting MDD at baseline<sup>2</sup>. Children from Chinese-Tibetan and Hmong-lu Mien groups had the lowest dietary diversity, with scores of 18% and 15%, respectively, but with significant improvements from baseline for the latter. Children routinely consumed rice, with dark green vegetables and occasional flesh meats. Few children ate eggs, fish or organ meats as protein sources and there was a decrease in the proportion of children that did so from baseline. Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables were rarely consumed. However, for most households in all provinces, except for those on the lowest wealth class, their diets were adequately diverse.

The causes for this deterioration in the dietary diversity of children under 2 years of age is not clear by the survey findings, especially as most other convergence indicators saw an improvement. Likely causes can include the recent spike in food prices or the restriction in movement imposed to control the spread of COVID-19, which limited access to health sector services where children at risk could have been identified and attended and to markets. In-depth research on the causes of this deterioration in dietary diversity is needed.

### 1.1.2 Water and Sanitation

**Improved sanitation levels** are still lower in Phongsaly where 62% of households have access to improved sanitation, compared to over 92% and 86% of households in Houaphanh and Xiengkhouang, respectively. However, there was an improvement from the 55% of households with access to improved sanitation in Phongsaly at baseline. Overall, almost 80% of households have access to improved sanitation. The differences between Chinese-Tibetan households where only 40% have improved sanitation to Lao-Tai household at 96% is still notable.

**Access to clean water** varies from province to province and between ethnic groups. Overall, there was an increase from 87% to 90% in the proportion of households with access to clean water. However, only 86% of households in Phongsaly, and 76% of Chinese-Tibetan households have access to water from a protected source. More households relied on a public tap in Phongsaly than in other provinces. Around 17% of households there continue to rely on surface water for drinking, which is an increase from the 10% seen at baseline.

The treatment of drinking water occurs every time in 79% of households, and sometimes in 12% of households. In Phongsaly, 18% of households do not treat their water, which is an increase from the 16.9% observed at baseline. The most commonly reported method of water treatment was boiling for 99% of households. Households rarely strain water through a cloth (3.2%), or use a ceramic or sand filter (1.3%).

- **Hygiene**

**Handwashing with soap** is reported to be done frequently. However, upon inspection, only 32% of households actually had access to soap and a handwashing station, although this is an improvement from the 27% found at baseline. As observed in the baseline survey, Lao-Tai households more often (46%) had access than Chinese-Tibetan households where only 23% of households actually had soap



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available, despite the progress made. Handwashing before eating is reported by 77% of households, but less frequently before preparing food, after farming, and even more rarely after defecating or before feeding young children, or after touching an animal.

**Access to bathing facilities** has improved, with 56.2% of households having access to facilities at home. Xiengkhouang still has the highest proportion of homes with access to a bathing facility as part of their toilet with 53%, or more rarely as a separate room. Only 37% of households in Phongsaly have access to a bathing facility, although this is an improvement from the 31% found at baseline. Most households still bathe at community water sources, or in rivers and streams.

**Disposal of children and animal feces** occurred correctly in 37% of households, a small improvement over the 36% reported at baseline. Child feces disposal continues to result in open defecation, particularly in Phongsaly where 23% of mothers still leave child feces in the open, with no progress made in this area since baseline. About one third of children use the toilet or latrine and overall, less than half of the households appropriately dispose of children's feces, except in Houaphanh where 65% of households dispose of child feces appropriately.

### 1.1.3 Household Diet and Food Security

**Household dietary diversity** was high with 78% of households consuming foods from four or more food groups in the past 24 hours, which is the same proportion found at baseline. All ethnic groups and provinces show highly diverse diets. These rates contrast sharply with the dietary diversity of children aged 6-23 months which saw a clear deterioration between baseline and mid-term, and suggest that access to a diverse diet is not the limiting factor for child feeding.

**Food availability** was assessed based on the diversity of crops and livestock raised by farmers. Farmers who raised one type of animal, and one type of fruit or vegetable in addition to rice were considered to have food availability. In general, diverse nutritious food was available to 90% of households with no evident wealth gradient and very small differences by ethnic group.

### 1.1.4 Consumption, Savings, Borrowing and Remittances

**Consumption of nutritious food (expenditure per capita)** varies by province and ethnic group, and as would be expected, varied substantially by wealth category. Overall, the consumption of nutritious foods per capita increased by 91%, from 392,075LAK to 749,864LAK which could reflect the high inflation experienced by the country in recent years. The increase is most accentuated in households in Phongsaly where the expenditure on consumption of food doubled from 365,794LAK to 733,734LAK.

### 1.1.5 Land and non-land assets

**Land and home ownership rates** were high with 97% of families owning agricultural land, and 92% owning their home. Only 34.1% of households had title for all their land however, and most owned 2 hectares of land or less.

Most households (68.9%) own 3 plots of land or less with little difference between provinces. The average size of the land owned was 3.5 hectares. In Xiengkhouang, 26.7% of households had more than 4 hectares, with farms as large as 50 hectares reported in Phongsaly, Houaphanh and Oudomxay. On average, each household cultivated 2.2 hectares in the past 12 months.

**Livestock** of some type were raised by most farming households, despite the decrease in livestock raising reported since baseline. Apart from rainfed rice grown by half of households, other common crops are sweet corn, maize and to a lesser degree cardamom and cassava.

### 1.1.6 Women's Workload

**Women's Workload** was assessed based on the time spent carrying water. Since most households have access to water very near, or inside their house, the time spent carrying water was very limited for most women. Most households rely on firewood for cooking, which must be collected in the forest, most often by women, so this aspect of women's work remains unchanged.



### 1.1.7 Saving and Remittance

**Saving** was possible for 23% of households, and decrease from the 26% of households that were reported to be able to save some money at baseline, with the highest proportion of households in Xiengkhouang, and in Lao-Tai households.

**Borrowing** among households increased from only 15.6% of households borrowing at baseline, to almost a fifth of households (19.8%) borrowing money in the last year. Families borrow mainly to buy food.

**Remittances** were received by 13% of households, and increase from the 9.2% of households that reported receiving remittances at baseline. Households in Xiengkhouang and Lao-Tai households were more likely to receive remittances than in Phongsaly or from Chinese-Tibetans ethnic groups. Overall, the results of this mid-line survey suggest that despite the progress made in some areas, a multifaceted, convergent approach remains necessary. Special emphasis should be made on addressing the lack of improvement in dietary diversity of children and the limited progress made in some WASH indicators.

## 1.2 Key Findings from Consultation under RPF III – Additional Financing

Below are key points from the consultation (See also the summary in Annex 1 of this report).

### 1. Overall sub-project Information:

- Of 36 targeted villages, currently 26 villages have returned the first set of revolving funds and 10 villages are collecting funds
- 39 self-help groups under the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF)
- At least 1 Nutrition group per village (four groups formed in Ban Nong-Lea and one group formed in Ban Pha-Lin)
- 27 subprojects related to infrastructure development were delivered by PRF in Nonghet District

### 2. Project Management – Implementation Team (see registration forms)

#### a. District Implementation Unit (DIU)

The DIU, consisting of district government assigned staff and project hired personnel, is responsible for implementing subproject activities in the entire Nonghet district (four PRF direct hired staff per district, and they work together with district government staff). In Nonghet following staff joined interviews (see attendants' sheet).

1. District coordinator / overall management (1 person - male)
2. Infrastructure development / engineering / environmental management and monitoring (2 persons - males)
3. Livelihood support program / social development and inclusion / ethnic groups development / microfinance (2 persons - males)
4. Food and nutrition service delivery / training / mother and child health / home gardening (2 persons - males)
5. Admin / finance / logistical arrangements (1 person - female)

#### b. Village Outreach Team

A total of 9 Village Outreach workers (VOs) /Young Graduates (YG) joined interviews (6 persons for livelihoods support program and 3 persons for nutrition intervention program)

##### i. Outreach workers (Vos) /Young Graduates (YG) (Ban Nong-Lea)



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1. Livelihood support program / social development and inclusion / ethnic groups development / microfinance (1 person - female (Suphab) responsible for six villages)
2. Food and nutrition service delivery / training / mother and child health / home gardening (1 person – male (Ying-Yang) responsible for 12 villages)

**ii. VO / YG (Ban Pha-Lin)**

1. Livelihood support program / social development and inclusion / ethnic groups development / microfinance (1 person - male (Zuha) - six villages)
2. Food and nutrition service delivery / training / mother and child health / home gardening (1 person - female (Manichanh) - 11 villages)

**iii. Village Implementation Team (see registration forms)**

1. Village authority: Oversees village development planning, responsible for infrastructure development, coordination, etc.
2. Village self-help groups - livelihood support programs through the village development fund
3. Village nutrition groups - mostly pregnant women and young mothers

**c. Capacity to manage the project by the implementing teams**

All consulted district authorities and responsible villagers reported that the management of subproject activities and construction works are not an issue.

The issues and challenges are often not caused by the project, and if any there are minor and/or indirectly caused by the subproject/activities.

**Capacity-building**

- All informants reported that they have received the following training:
  - Social and environmental code of practice
  - Culture and gender sensitivity
  - Finance management, procurement and accounting
  - COVID-19 risk and measures
  - Groups formation
  - Food preparation – at least eight courses
  - Home gardening techniques
  - Ban Ning-Lea said they have been informed about safe use of chemicals but Ban Pha-Lea said that the district official only told them not to use chemicals.

**Lengthy documentation (not ESF risk related but constantly brought up as an issue):**

- Too much paperwork and too many forms to complete; official documentation takes too much time; too many signing steps from the village level up to the district Vice-Governor (only a signature from the Vice-Governor is accepted, others cannot sign on his behalf).
- There is no copy of any documents/form leave at the village level, all the forms are collected and kept at the district level.



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- Forms include ES screening forms, financial and procurement related, bidding related documents. Many of the heads of the groups, are unable to understand, read and write Lao language. In many cases, village authority members are assigned to help fill out forms.

**Language and cultural barriers (not project caused but may impede project performance):**

- All informants said that most of the Hmong women, especially older ones (40+), are unable to understand, speak, read, or write Lao language. Hmong men and women from villages which are not located directly next to the district vicinity and/or along a main road are unable to understand, read or write Lao. District staff reported almost all of the Phong ethnic groups do not understand, speak, read and/or write Lao. The targeted Khmu villagers tend to understand and be able to speak Lao compared to the Hmong and Phong ethnic groups.
- All of the consulted informants reported that there are no culture barriers and/or difficulties working with the project teams and government staff. Most of the project and government staff consist of Hmong ethnic group.
- Young Hmong VOs said they are not confident that other people will understand them due to their accents and that they can't pronounce some Lao words correctly.
- District Lao Lum officials don't feel that there is an issue working with the community. However, they acknowledge that an interpreter is needed to work with Phong and Hmong ethnic groups.

**Community engagement / social inclusion / exclusion (issues brought up at all levels and discussed in all interviews)**

- District staff reported that villagers are willing to join meetings and take part livelihood support and nutrition intervention programs
- The engagement of women is encouraged by the project and some villages have about 50–80% females participating. Most, if not all, targeted villages have a higher rate of female participation than male.
- According to district staff, about 80% of village households participate in each PRF meeting
- Poorer families often do not join meetings nor take part in project activities. The reasons include: (i) lack of confidence; (ii) inability to pay membership fees; (iii) adverse experiences when they do join a meeting, such as being excluded / not being respected by other members of the groups / being discouraged from joining the discussion by other members.
- In mixed ethnic groups villages, the minority group(s) are being left out. The reasons include: (i) claims that it is too difficult to include them, and that the minority groups often do not contribute to discussions; (ii) members of the main group only work with each other / talk among themselves.
- Both district staff and VOs share the same views when asking about the reason for being poorer than others. These include: (i) lack of labor, meaning a family has old age people and/or young children without any supports, (ii) lack agriculture land, (iii) poor house conditions, (iv) being lazy, not motivated to work and/or participate in development programs.

**The VOs/YG concerns and suggestions**

- Travelling on a motorbike by themselves for more than 10km (up to 90km) on rural bad road conditions sometimes involved accidents and feeling unsafe (scare), they prefer to travel in a group.



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- Village workers are also proposing to work in a group of 2 to 3 people for the reasons: (i) safety, (ii) have colleagues support when men are not listening to them, (iii) exchange learning, (iv) cover villages and (v) fun/enjoy working.
- Issues which are not caused by the project but may impede project performance:
  - Men, especially older men do not listen to them and often challenge their capability and knowledge. Some YG have to get help from district and/or village authority in the first few months of engagement with the project implementation team
  - Women are more open to information, opinions and engagement but women's views are often not taken seriously by the men. In this regard, similar to the village women, they requested that men should also be targeted for gender related trainings.

**Gender-related aspects (Discussed at the district and village level):**

- District staff, VOs / YGs and villagers were consulted, and all share the view that women and women have equal rights and access to all provided facilities and project benefits
- They all also say that women and men have different roles to play in participating in project development-eg. More than 90% of women engaged in the Self-Help Groups and 100% women in the nutrition groups, while most men engaged in infrastructure development.
- While all informants accepted that men and women have equal rights, many of them pointed out issues such as: (i) men not allowing their wives to attend a meeting and/or join a group and/or take a leading role in a group; (ii) women refusing to participate in a meeting / group discussion as their husbands and/or mother in-law reject their request to join a meeting or a group.
- All consulted people also accept that women lead and take care of household matters while men lead public matters. They also accept that it is fine for a young (single) woman to be called by a man (including village authority, project staff, etc.) to serve alcohol and entertain guests.
- Some of the district and VOs said that serve alcohol and entertain guests is an effective way to create trust / familiarity with each other and maintain good relationships with villagers; meanwhile those who are being called to perform such jobs state that they do not like to do those jobs and would rather not be asked to do so.

**Grievance Redress Mechanism**

- Traditional village grievance redress mechanisms are used by the villagers.
- District staff reported that are many verbal complaints / requests by the villagers on what they want the project to support. Written complaints are not made, and written requests are included in the village development plan.
- Both villages reported that they have been informed of the complaint system but they have nothing to complain about.

**3. Project Activities**

**a. Establishment of village groups**

**Village Implementation Team (VIT)**

This team mostly consists of village authority members. The team structure follows the traditional village authority arrangement, where the group leader is the village head, and two deputies are responsible for: (i) finance / economic development; and (ii) infrastructure development. The Village Women's Union (LWU) still oversees women's engagement and development. Members of the self-





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help groups (SHGs) are assigned to assist the deputy-finance to oversee microfinance/the revolving fund.

### Self-help groups

There are eight SHGs in Ban Nong-Lea and four in Ban Pha-Lin. Assisted by the VOs / YGs, these groups are made up of about 8–15 members. Each group assigned six people to manage works: a team leader and two deputies/assistants, two accountants, one procurement officer, and one microfinance officer.

- The team members are also responsible for collecting, distributing and managing the group's fund as well as communicating with other project-assigned staff / VOs / YGs.
- The groups are only open to women. However, in Bam Pha-Lin, only a Village Women's Union member can understand and speak Lao and she is leading a group. Three other groups have selected men to be their team leader so that he can help to communicate with the project staff / outsiders.
- Ban Nong-Lea has eight groups.

### Food and Nutrition Support Group

Each targeted village has established a nutrition group, and they are made up of young mothers and pregnant women. Assisted by the VO/YG, the groups meet between 2 and 4 times per month to learn how to cook, and share food; and receive food supplements and seeds for home gardens.

### Production group

At the time of visiting, there is no production group yet.

#### b. Component 1: Provision of Infrastructure Development

Both villages – Ban Nong-Lea and Ban Pha-Lin – reported that the PRF has worked in their villages for many years (since PRF I, II, III, and III-AF) and with each version of the PRF, they have received different infrastructure support (up to \$14,500 per village under PRF III-AF). Discussions in the two villages revealed that the following support had been received:

1. Ban Nong-Lea: (i) a primary school (classrooms, toilet and sports playground); 140 rolls of barbed wire to fence community grazing land/forest for livestock.
2. Ban Pha-Lin: World Food Program supported the development of an access road (16 km from main road No. 7 in 2006). PRF supports fencing nets (Tanang), primary classrooms, a gravity-fed water supply, and a 2 km access road.

In Ban Nong-Lea discussion focused on fencing and in Ban Pha-Lin on the 2km access road. These were just provided in 2022. In both villages the provided infrastructures are for communal use. The fence for the communal grazing land/forest is open to all households that have cattle (only cows); however, identified poor households do not have cattle and are therefore unable to use the communal grazing land. The 2 km access road is a communal road that connects the village to agricultural areas. However, since it is only 2km, the rest of the road still needs to be repaired / develop.

### Community engagement for infrastructure work

- Assigned district officials visit villages during village planning/design for development.
- VOs and YGs continue to engage/work with the communities and assist them with organizing meetings, collecting membership fees, planning for microfinance contributions, collecting returned funds and assisting individual members to select livelihoods options.



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- Village meetings and focus groups discussions: ((i) women's groups, (ii) district officials, (iii) village authorities and (iv) VOs/YGs all reported that they have engaged in village meetings on village planning/requests for infrastructure from the PRF.
- Ban Nong-Lea reported that the poorer households often do not attend village/activities meetings and that the authorities often have to encourage them to join meetings; in contrast, at Ban Pha-Lin, all consulted groups reported that the poorer families/households are keen to join meetings.

### Selection processes

- Villagers have received training on safeguards (negative list, social and environmental code of conduct and compensation/voluntary contribution rules, mitigation of impact on physical resources and inclusion of vulnerable ethnic groups). This includes awareness about the need for sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment and social cohesion.
- Prior to selection process, DIU provided them with negative list so that the proposed infrastructures are not included in the negative list.
- With support from the DIU, community consultations were conducted, and a list of priority infrastructure / needs was proposed and selected by the villagers. Both villages reported the consultations were carried out 2–3 times and that all households, including vulnerable / poor households, participated before they decided on the infrastructure. Note that since there was a list of things the villagers want, the selection process was through a majority voting process.
- The selected infrastructure went through the processes of land donation and has already been agreed by the land/property's owner (see land acquisition section).
- As group discussions reported that some poorer families did not join the meeting, it is assumed that they were not involved in the voting on infrastructure (see Community Engagement section).

### Planning and design

- District reported that all impacted assets were screened, dealt with and solved before the proposals are submitted. Any impacts were internally solved by the villagers.
- The design process included suitable geo-localization collection of environmental data, (land information, watershed, etc.), cultural resource, disaster risk assessment and consideration.
- District often communicated with the villagers, conducted meeting to endorse the village development plan (VDP); reviewed on the design respect based on the resettlement framework standards; reviewed if there is any impacted land and impacted households; review any other potential issues related to safeguards; and endured final design and gave permission for villagers to proceed with their plan.
- Documentation of the infrastructure/financial requests of both villages was assisted by the district official and the DIU. The requested were signed by: (i) VIT, (ii) DIU, (iii) District Deputy Governor and (iv) PRF. Both villagers and district staff reported that these processes take time and involve lots of requests for approval documents and screening for impacts.





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- Since all of the provided infrastructures are for community and use communal land/forest, there was no land acquisition nor voluntary contribution required from the community, accepting minor temporary disturbances.

#### Land acquisition and compensation

- **District Officials reported:** Land acquisition does not occur as the constructions are located on communal land. However, some irrigation and water supply subprojects in Mok District such as laying pipe systems sometimes run through an individual household's property and cause temporary disturbance and minor impacts during the construction period, but the land can be reused as normal after the construction. This has been verbally agreed by the owners to let the project work without any compensation.
- **Villagers reported:** All land used for construction, water supplies, schools, etc. is communal land, which is mutually selected by the community. Community did not ask for compensation. Instead, they want the PRF to allocate more support to improve infrastructures; and especially improve road conditions, repair bridges, water systems, etc.

#### Procurement works

- District procurement officials received training from the project on financial management, procurement-related work and accounting.
- Both villages reported that procurement-related work was new to them and therefore they were assisted by the district officials during the document preparation and bidding processes.
- Both villages reported that they have received training on procurement-related aspects: distribution of bidding envelopes; and collecting, analyzing and selecting the shops / providers. Both villages requested three quotations from different providers / companies. They selected the cheapest offer.

**Management of environmental risks during the construction phase:** The project has resulted in some mostly minor injuries caused by construction and road accidents. Most risks are not directly caused by the project.

#### Project related risks:

- Interviewed village outreach workers reported that they have had motorbike accidents few times due to bad road conditions. Some of the access roads from district to the project targeted villages are up to 40km in Nonghet, Xiengkhuang and up to 90km in Huamuang, Huaphan. Whenever, an accident occurred, a village outreach worker bears the cost by themselves and did not claim for their insurance due the lengthening documentation processes and sometimes the reimbursement money is too small and not worthwhile spending time on the claiming processes.
- Travelling on a motorbike by themselves for more than 10km (up to 90km) on rural bad road conditions sometimes involved accidents and feeling unsafe (scare), they prefer to travel in a group.
- Village workers are also proposing to work in a group of 2 to 3 people for the reasons: (i) safety, (ii) have colleagues support when men are not listening to them, (iii) exchange learning, (iv) cover villages and (v) fun/enjoy working.

Not Project related but often discussed/raised by the informants



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- Other identified environmental risks not caused by the project include: (i) encroaching on and using forest land; (ii) heavy use of chemicals / pesticides / herbicides; (iii) travel between areas / villages is time-consuming; and (iv) bad road conditions.
- At the district level, project staff said that waste is becoming a big issue. The discussion on waste included the following issues: (i) lack of proper landfill at the district and village levels, (ii) chemical / pesticides / herbicides, wrappers / bags / plastic containers, and (iii) poorer family members often take jobs as chemical sprayers / weed killers, which is harmful for their health; and (iv) the amount / volume of chemical use is increasing, especially regulated / permitted ones. This increases waste in the district but there is not waste treatment system and proper disposal site.

### Construction

- Subcontractor for school construction and machine owners for the 2km access road improvement villagers were informed of the social and environmental codes of conduct prior to construction/commencement of works.
- District reported that training related to the monitoring and mitigation of environmental and social safeguards during infrastructure implementation and how to conduct the accountability meetings were provided by the project.
- All of the provided infrastructure from the visited sites has not caused any temporary disturbance related to noise, dust, transportation and road safety, domestic waste or construction waste. For example, the schools are located at the far end/corner of the village and are built on communal land allocated specifically for school development.
- Villagers are involved in labor works such as fencing, digging earth and removing waste (e.g. tree roots, rocks) from access road construction. Only adults and household representatives (either a man or a woman from each household) are asked to work. No children are involved in the construction.
- District PRF's engineer conducted monitoring with VIT and check compliance with environment and social safeguards and reported the central level.
- Minor impacts and temporary disturbances during school construction such as air, noise, community health and safety due to construction activities and transportation of materials. These had been managed based on the ECOP; for instance, no transportation during the traveling time of students and farmers going to schools and/or farms, speed control, installation of warning signs, public information on work during and schedule, and no working on big buddha days.
- Resource efficiency and pollution prevention and management: no wastewater was discharged into the natural stream or community land as the worker camp was provided with temporary toilet and waste bins. Solid waste collected and burned; however, the worker camp is located about 500m from the community.
- Biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of living natural resources: no impact because (i) subprojects were not located in the protected areas; (ii) negative list covered forestry operations, including logging, harvesting or processing of timber and non-timber products (NTFP); and (iii) workers were trained on no killing wild animals, no cutting forest.
- Some subprojects involving access roads also have some minor impacts (land deposition/landslides and waste) but these issues are naturally recovered.



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- Labour and working conditions: (i) workers for road improvement, primary classrooms, a gravity-fed water supply, irrigation system were voluntary workers (without paid) from villages through rotation amongst households. Workers were informed of ECOP. No outstanding risks were identified; however, on a few occasions some villagers suffered minor injuries such as cuts from sharp tools, which can be easily treated with bandages under expense of an individual village worker. All informants reported that PPE are only provided to the core village construction technicians or supervisors, but not for general villager workers as the budget was not allocated for buying the PPE for the involved villagers.
- There are no reported issues related to ii) employment discrimination, (iii) labor related disputes and (iv) Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) and child labor.
- Villagers are villagers who were informed of risks related to COVID-19 transmission.
- Infrastructure hand over to the community is conducted through official village meeting with the representation and participation of village households.

**Operation & Maintenance (O&M)**

- Each village has established an O&M committee and they are often the traditional village authority. One person is assigned to be the coordinator and the Village Women's Union looks after women's interests.
- The schools are overseen by a village education development committee.
- Water supply systems and access roads are managed by village O&M committee – the village authority.
- A six and 12 months monitoring is performed by district, accompanying by village appointed engineer and young graduates to check whether there are environmental or social issues related to the infrastructure operations.
- District official reported if there is any identifies issue, they would help to in place a mitigation action plan. However, so far, there is no issue.

**Monitoring and reporting**

- The district official bears the monitoring and reporting tasks as part of quarterly, six-monthly and yearly reporting.

**c. Component 2: Community Livelihood Enhancement**

There are eight SHGs in Ban Nong-Lea and four in Ban Pha-Lin. Only group members are entitled to Community Livelihood Enhancement benefits, that is the distribution of the village revolving fund.

**Community engagement for accessing to microfinance and livelihoods development**

- Village meetings and focus groups (women's groups, district officials, village authorities and VOs/YGs) all reported that the membership of SHGs is voluntary.
- Ban Nong-Lea reported that poorer households often do not attend village/activity meetings and that the authorities often have to encourage them to join a meeting; in contrast, at Ban Pha-Lin, all consulted groups reported that the poorer families/households are keen to join meetings.



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- Both villages share the view that poorer households do not join the project revolving fund due to lack of cash to pay for membership (minimum of 5,000 Kip per month). A few families joined and then left due to inability to pay for membership.
- While Ban Pha-Lin reported that some better-off households are content with not joining SHGs, Ban Nong-Lea reported that the better-off households are keen to join as they seek the opportunity to get more support and hope to borrow cash from the revolving fund. They are also keen to establish a production group with PRF.
- Both villages reported that a representative of each household is asked to join community work in: (i) fencing grazing land with barbed wire in the case of Ban Nong-Lea; and (ii) removing tree roots and rocks in the case of Ban Pha-Lin.
- Villagers in Ban Pha-Lin also provided food to the subcontractors who stayed in the village for a few days during road repairs.

### Production

- The main crops produced currently are **corn/maize, cassava, rice, beans, seasonal fruits and green vegetables.**
- Livestock – poultry, cattle/cows, goats and especially pigs – are preferred livelihood enhancement options. For instance, in Ban Pha-Lin, only one family used microfinance to raise ducks, all other members used it to raise pigs.
- A few SHGs suggested that the revolving fund should cover other activities such as investing in running a small shop that sells household goods and dry food (eggs, candies, instant noodle, etc.)
- At the time of visiting, many villagers were selling oranges and cherry blossom trees to the Vietnamese to be used for the New Year Celebration
- Production groups are being discussed, but were not yet finalized at the time of the village visit. It is worth noting that most of the interested villagers are those who are already members of an SHG.
- Both visited villages still rely on forest products, livestock and non-timber forest products
- Home garden are supported and practiced by the villagers but only very small patches. They plant vegetables during cold/dry season (this time of year). Only a few families have a reasonable size home garden and they are used as a module for other families to learn from.

#### **d. Component 3: Community Nutrition Interventions – addressing inclusion and fair distribution of benefits**

- The nutrition groups are open to pregnant women and young mothers and the groups are formed voluntarily
- All of the district nutrition intervention activities have changed members' behaviors in the following ways:
  - From being unsure about whether to join to constantly participating in the cooking groups; from not wanting to eat the food to liking the food
  - Villagers are interested in new food menus



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- From having gardens in the fields to establishing home gardens
- Children like to eat the food
- Seeds and other supplementary foods are found to be useful and they are asking for more.
- All of the consulted women said they understand the information provided because the VOs speak Hmong language with them.
- Most women said the short video clips are very helpful in learning how to cook and for learning new information.
- While none of the identified poor families in Ban Nong-Lea joined the nutrition groups, poorer families in Ban Pha-Lin join the group and said that they enjoy meeting with each other during the cooking class.
- Home garden classes focus on vegetable planting and making homemade fertilizers. Chemical use is discouraged by the staff.
- While Ban Nong-Lea said information on the safe use of chemical has been provided, Ban Pha-Lin said they have only been asked by the district staff not to use them and no safety instructions have been provided yet.

**e. Cross-cutting issues**

**Benefit sharing**

- The infrastructure provided by PRF to the visited villages is for communal use (schools, water systems, access roads, barbed wire for fencing grazing areas) and while the villagers at the village meeting reported that everyone have access to and use those provided facilities, they also said that some families do not have the means to use those facilities. For instance, poorer families from Ban Nong-Lea are unable to equally use the water supply, school and barbed wires that fenced the grazing areas. The reasons given were: (i) their houses are located in the corner of the village, far from the school and water supply; (ii) they do not have cattle to put in the communal grazing areas.
- In both villages, poorer families are not members of SHGs.
- Poor families in Ban Nong-Lea do not join nutrition groups, despite having young children and pregnant women
  - The ESF preparation team visited four identified poorer households. Observations suggested that the following: poor housing conditions and built on the hill, three families have lots of young children, ages below 6yo and they were in poor/ruined clothes, and older people, three families located in the same areas, far from school and water supply. Two of the families have lots of chemical plastic containers
- Interviewed poorer family members also confirmed that are too poor, too shy and have no money to pay for membership fees. They also said that they often spend overnights at the place where they work, mostly at a corn farm and have no time to join a meeting.
- Some better-off families are voluntarily not joining SHGs.

**Gender sensitivity/GBV**



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- Women's groups discussions revealed that although women are encouraged to join meetings and take decisions, their decisions are sometimes disregarded and have been asked to be dropped by their male partners/authorities and male elders.
- Women asked whether the project could ask more men to engage in gender equality / women's / men's roles in household training.
- Women said that video on gender equality is very useful but the men were not watching, only women; meanwhile men are not taking the information they pass on seriously. The women asked to have more men watch the gender equality videos.
- While almost all consulted men and women saying that having young women serve alcohol and entertain guests is normal, the young women who have been asked to do so disagree with the statement and prefer not to do this job.

**Ethnic groups/cultures differences and barriers**

- While cultural differences are not an issue, language is one of the issues mentioned by all consulted informants at all levels.
- Older women in group discussions said that they mostly do not understand the information in a meeting (even when conducted in Hmong language). They prefer project staff to communicate with them directly (not in a public meeting).
- The consulted minority group, the Khmu, said that they are willing to attend meetings, but mostly they have nothing to ask.

**Vulnerable households/people – special support**

- Currently there is no special treatment toward vulnerable and poorer families
- Most cannot join the SHG and therefore do not have access to group support, which includes: (i) microfinance support at 1% interest, (ii) emergency fund, mostly due to sickness, accidents and costs related to children's education.

**Communication/coordination – best communication tools for a particular group**

- All of the consulted women villagers in Ban Pha-Lin and older women prefer to be communicated with directly in their local language; meanwhile some men and women said they are willing for communication be in Lao.
- Video in their own language is effective, but not many older women and men have mobile phones or other tools to watch a video.

**1.3 LESSON LEARNT FROM PRF III**

In general, environmental and social safeguards review were conducted quarterly and annually. During the implantation of the PRF III-AF, an Environmental and Social Specialist (ESS) and a Quality Assurance Advisor were recruited to conduct due diligence of the construction of the 53 subprojects in the 6 Provinces. While there was no outstanding issue related to environmental and social impacts, issue on UXO clearance has brought up for discussion and asking PRF to pay special attention to the matter. To address the issue, PRF has coordinated with the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) on the process for obtaining a UXO clearance certificate from UXO-Laos even if the subprojects are small and focusing on rehabilitating and improving existing infrastructures for all 10 provinces. PRF paid specific focus on its current target 4 Provinces: Pongsaly, Oudomxay, Houaphan, and Xiengkhouang (and the 7 targeted



districts) under PRF III-AF. Under CLEAR, ESMF have also included measures specifically to address issues related to UXO.

### **1.3.1 Infrastructure development**

- The type of infrastructure work in the subprojects that were selected/provided were mostly small in size. The impacts of civil works are minimal. For instance, of a total of about 1,400 subprojects implemented, 120 (8%) involved a minor loss of private land or assets, mostly under road and water supply subprojects. All project-affected persons were classified as direct beneficiaries.
- A due diligence conducted in late 2021 on 53 sub-projects in the 6 Provinces revealed no outstanding on environmental and social issues, but issue on UXO clearance has been discussed and addressed.
- No physical relocation of households or business entities occurred during the implementation of PRF II and PRF III-AF.
- There are some houses that had their small part of their land and some agriculture products effected by infrastructure sub-projects -rural road, irrigation system, water supply system, However, no household lost more than 5% of total productive assets. All such impacts were addressed through voluntary donation in line with the provisions of the Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework.
- The evaluation confirmed that potential benefits versus negative impacts on land or household livelihoods and assets related to infrastructure construction had been discussed. Measures to minimize impact had been developed and agreed within the communities and by affected households. In all cases, affected persons directly benefited from the infrastructure construction that caused the loss.
- The technical implementation team reported that the Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework is followed well. However, documentation and monitoring need to be strengthened. They suggest that the reporting system/documentation needs to be improved with simplified forms and documents for practical implementation on the ground. This issue was identified during PRF II and reported as improved during the implementation of PRFIII-AF. Under CLEAR implementation, ESF-related documents should be revised and simplified to ensure adequate monitoring and documentation and ease of follow up by officials at the provincial and district level. Reporting related to social and environmental issues should also be updated to align with World Bank safeguards policy and national policy Decree 192/PM to follow E&S instruments, –specifically ESF 5 and Decree 84/GoL on land acquisition and compensation.
- Project implementation experience shows that affected households may not be fully aware of their rights and able to make an informed choice to receive compensation at replacement cost. Lessons learned from PRF II stated that some local PRF staff consider that affected people are entitled for compensation at replacement cost only if they lose more than 5% of their total land and less than 5% is to be donated/contributed to the project. PRF technical teams reported that project-affected persons are often willing to contribute their lost assets in exchange for better infrastructure such as rural access roads, water supply and irrigation systems.





- During implementation of PRF II, project reports stated that PRF district staff did not have the necessary capacity to provide support related to proper land acquisition processes and that affected persons may be forced to donate assets because beneficiary communities cannot technically prepare the land acquisition report. This issue has been addressed during implementation of PRF III, through the recruitment of both environmental and social safeguards officers and a monitoring and evaluation officer who are based at the central level and oversee overall project reports and documentation. However, interviews with the technical team suggest that improvements are required in the core staff to oversee all environmental and social issues. PRF III currently has combined roles (e.g. the infrastructure and environmental officer is combined, social development is combined with social safeguards/gender/ethnic groups, and a monitoring and evaluation is combined with grievance redress mechanism). The recommendation is to have specific environmental and social officers instead of these combined roles.
- For the management of rural water supply and latrine improvement activities, especially under PRF III, impacts are addressed through the Environmental Code of Practice developed by Nam Saat. For CLEAR, the code of practice will be updated to align with the World Bank ESF and will be applied to all subprojects that involve civil works.
- Although PRF does not allow the physical relocation of households or businesses under its support program, one of its main focused components is infrastructure development. In addition, although the construction, improvement or rehabilitation of community infrastructure is small in size, impacts on small strips of land and other assets are likely to occur. PRF requires that all proposals involving civil works (regardless of the size) within the existing target areas and new provincial and district PRF offices, have updated land acquisition procedures to meet the ESF 5 and Decree 84's requirements.
- Activities to support livelihood and nutrition activities and nutrition enhancement did not result in any loss of private land or assets. Livelihood/nutrition grants provided under the pilot were typically used for the production of small livestock such as poultry and catfish, for weaving activities and the provision of special meals for pregnant/lactating mothers and malnourished infants. Some small structures such as village nutrition centers were built on public spaces within beneficiary villages. Because activities also included the promotion of crop production, safeguard instruments including the simple Pest Management Plan were prepared and used to minimize and mitigate environmental and social impacts associated with livelihood and nutrition activities. The safeguard assessment under PRF III did not find any outstanding safeguard issues associated with livelihood/nutrition activities.
- PRF technical teams are of the view that community-driven activities under PRF III are effective in improving public health, hygiene and community well-being through better latrine systems, water supply and other community initiatives. CLEAR also intends to continue this approach and activities will be implemented at the village, cluster village (kumbans) and district levels in targeted provinces. The RPF therefore will be made available in Lao language to be accessed and used by the local community.



- PRF has developed a negative list, which will also be updated and incorporated in all E&S instrumentss.
- A feedback and resolution mechanism were developed under PRF. However, the evaluation for PRF III document preparation found that, while beneficiaries are well aware of the purpose and function of the mechanism, it is rarely used for anything other than thanking the project for its support or requesting more support. To strengthen the mechanism, PRF has initiated every six months follow-up visits during PRF III implementation to ensure that no outstanding grievances or impacts of land acquisition remain unaddressed. These face-to-face follow-up visits are facilitated by kumban facilitators (KBF), and may very well help overcome social and cultural barriers to utilization of the feedback and resolution mechanism, These barriers include: (1) illiteracy – people who cannot write their complaint; (2) language – people who cannot speak Lao and therefore cannot use the hotline; (3) traditional preferences to resolve any conflict without interference from outside the village – usually conflict resolution is facilitated by the village chief and village elders (*Neo Hom*); (4) the custom of paying a fee if requesting support from a higher level; and (5) loss of ‘model problem-free village’ status – a prestigious recognition from local government.

#### Grievance Redress

The existing GRM used by PRF was designed based on the WB Safeguards Policy and the GoL Decree 192/PM, specifically Article 13, which requires an investment project to establish an effective mechanism for grievance resolution. The Project has set up Feedback and Resolution Committees (FRCs) at the village, kumban (note that this administrative has been dissolved in most local areas), district and provincial levels, composed of concerned departments, local officials, and village chiefs. The Feedback and Resolution Mechanism Guideline states that all feedback should be properly documented by the FRC at the respective level and addressed through consultations in a transparent manner aimed at resolving matters through consensus. The steps are involved:

- All complaints should firstly be handled and resolutions should be sought at the village level. If the problem cannot be solved in the village, complaints and legal action against these guidelines. The implementation of agreements found in the minutes, or other grievances can be filed according to the procedures summarized in this section and detailed in the Project Operational Manual dealing with the Feedback and Resolution Mechanism.
- The complaint, if the resolution at the village level is unsatisfactory, will be brought up to the district authorities (District Government Office in consultation with concerned line agencies). If the resolution at this level is not satisfactory, the complaint will be lodged with the Provincial Court of Law, whose decision will be final.
- In addition to the feedback and resolution mechanism described above, complainants may also (or permit representatives on their behalf) voice their concern or complaints with the PRF team at the central level or use the hotline of the National Assembly if complainants are still not satisfied with the resolution of their complaints at the project and provincial level.



- All legal and administrative costs incurred by complainants and their representatives at the FRC are to be covered by the project proponent.

Under PRF III-AF, the PRF required that FRC should have at least 50% women and they should be trained to perform social audits. Responsibilities of the social audit committee are as follows:

- Ensure that all committees and the leaders of the committees function in a just and fair manner.
- Where discrepancies and malpractices are noted, report them to the wider representative meeting of the village.
- Perform an internal audit of all records and accounts of the organization and other committees, at least once every two months.
- Ensure adherence to PRF principles, rules and concepts such as transparency in the functioning of committees.
- Identify weaknesses and take remedial measures.
- Report on remedial actions taken at the general meeting of the village.
- Social audit committee should meet at least once a month and inform the village organization management about any issues.

Discussion with the PRF technical teams<sup>62</sup> suggest that the current GRM process and management is somewhat effective but needs improvement, especially on assigning a key person to implement/ operationalize the GRM. In general, all of the targeted and beneficiaries' villages are familiar with the traditional government policy on handling of petitions, which follows formal processes from the village to the district, provincial and national courts. This mechanism is communicated by the district authorities to the village authorities as part of their oversight roles. However, at the community level, villagers are often unfamiliar with specific project-related grievance processes and often bring unrelated issues to discuss with the project. Examples include but are not limited to: (i) just want to talk to the person from end line because it is free; (ii) issues related to contract farming; (iii) use of unregulated chemicals/pesticides/herbicides and their impacts.

The technical teams also report that while the availability of a GRM – including a hotline – is important, a more immediate need is a resource person to operate the GRM and communicate with key stakeholders on how to process grievances and petitions at various levels. This is to avoid receiving calls and complaints that are unrelated to the projects.

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<sup>62</sup> Discussion with teams working in the areas of: (i) infrastructure improvement and environment management; (ii) socio-economic development/livelihoods support programme; (iii) secure food and nutrition security; and (iv) M&E on 25 November 2022.



### **1.3.2 Engagement of women and vulnerable groups**

Beside environmental and social safeguards related matters, PRF has set up a set of Core PRF Principles and Community Development Rules to guide its implementation on the ground. There are six core principles and ten rules. The principles are: (i) simplicity (ii) 2) community participation and sustainability, (iii) transparency and accountability, (iv) wise investment, (v) social inclusion and gender equality, and (vi) siding with the poorest. According to the discussions with the PRF management and technical teams these core principles are proven to be very effective as they are not only motivating project staff and its local coordinators, but also gaining trust and commitment from the targeted khumbans, villages and communities. CLEAR will, therefore, continue to apply these core principles and rules.

The principle of simplicity, it aims to ensure greater transparency and provide easy steps guidance to engage its stakeholders in project development and planning; ensures people understand project/subproject objectives by using local communication methods and avoid complicated administrative procedures.

The principle on community participation and sustainability address community incentive and ownership in participation, especially in the planning and designing of subproject infrastructure development (rural access roads, small bridge, irrigation systems, etc) in a way that it would benefits all involved stakeholders. This includes shares responsibilities (working with/for the subproject) and costs (usually 10% of the total subproject costs). To ensure subproject sustainability, the project requires all community members, including the marginalized groups, to have the right to suggest how grants should be used and to voice their opinions and express their needs. To this end, the PRF has developed various community engagement guiding manuals for various project's components and for interacting with different groups.

The principle on transparency and accountability addresses accurate information and satisfaction of project activities and on the use of funds/small grants. All proposed subprojects are required to conduct public meetings and stakeholders' questions, concerns, feedbacks are records, and the decisions are made collectively. The Feedback Resolution Mechanism (FRM) was developed and revised during PRF III-AF. It was communicated to all subprojects' stakeholders during implementation. Village Mediation Committees/Social Audit Committee are informed of the FRM during subproject preparation stage. For the implementation of CLEAR, although the existing FRM is functioning, a lightly updated version is developed and included under SEP and this ESMF.

The principle on wise investment addresses the effort to use PRF resources wisely so as to ensure the widest possible coverage and the best possible cost-effectiveness. Most of the resources are designed to be used and spent on the Kumban and village levels and the management and administration costs are designed be kept to a minimum. This guiding principle will also be used under CLEAR, meaning that most of the resources will be allocated directly to the local levels and CLEAR will require targeted Kumbans and villages to open Bank Account and receive financial management training. Wise investment also involves mutually selecting an investment/infrastructure that it is cost effective and allow the targeted villagers to gain maximum and sustainable benefits from the subgrant allocated to them.



Principle on social inclusion and gender equality will also be strictly applies to CLEAR. A social inclusion and gender equality action is being developed (updating from PRF III-AF) to ensure that no members of the community can be excluded from participation in CLEAR activities regardless of production/income levels, gender or ethnicity, disability or age. Same as PRF III-AF, special efforts will be made to reach out to the most vulnerable groups of the community such as (i) households with the poorest, single headed men/women, ethnic groups (ii) people with disabilities, (iii) landless, labourless, and (iv) aged groups. This principle also includes measures to overcome linguistic obstacles, gender disparities and any other economic, social and/or cultural barriers during the planning and implementation phases to enable vulnerable people's voices to be heard in terms of proposing, prioritizing and implementing subprojects.

The principle on siding with the poorest goes hand in hand with the principle on social inclusion and gender equality that requires all PRF staff and facilitators to work for the poorest and ensure that at least two-third (66%) of the subprojects benefited to the poorest villages within each participating Kumban.

These principles have been translated into ten actionable community development rules for working with communities on a day-to-day basis and they are:

1. Unity ("samakee")
2. Equity ("samerphab")
3. Pro-poor ("haiokattukngak gone")
4. Women empowerment ("haixitkaemaeying")
5. Correct vision ("tongmeevixay that")
6. Bottom-up planning ("vangphaenchak khan ban")
7. Ownership ("kanchaokan")
8. Self-confidence/self-esteem ("kuampeneng")
9. Transparency ("kuampongxay")
10. Wise Investment ("khan long tuentongkumkha")

These principles and rules are praised by the technical implementation teams and they will be incorporated in the community driven development (CDD) planning process for all project and subproject activities under CLEAR.

Other lessons learned seem to also revealed positive impacts. For instance, despite Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the implementation of various activities involved direct physical contacts, much progress has been achieved during the course of 2020-2021, especially on establishing and providing training to targeted Farmer Nutrition Groups (FNGs). The MIS system of FNG had also been developed and is currently functioning. This system shows that by the end of 2021, 249 FNGs in 231 villages have been established and benefits a total of 9,928 members from 5,632 households. On the gender equality and social inclusion, PRF III-AF has incorporated gender aspects in all PRF's activities such as village planning, implementation, operation, and maintenance. PRF has also re-set up the Focal Point staff in October 2021 with roles and responsibilities to help in developing the gender equality and social inclusion strategy



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and promote women inclusion and empowerment. As a result, PRF III-AF managed to recruit a total of 215 staff which included 95 females (44.19%). This number/percentage is about 14.19% higher than project targeted/expectation and the number of women involvements is much higher in 2021 and 2022 compared to the previous years. The project also managed to have higher percentage of female representatives in the leading positions. For instance, the percentage of village Self-Help Groups (SHG) management committee is 81% and percentage of women involved in decision-making is 50%.

### 1.3.3 Land acquisition

Lessons learned from PRF, PRF II and PRF III include the following:

- The type of infrastructure work in the subprojects that were selected/provided were mostly small in size. The impacts of civil works are minimal. For instance, of a total of about 1,400 subprojects implemented, 120 (8%) involved a minor loss of private land or assets, mostly under road and water supply subprojects. All project-affected persons were classified as direct beneficiaries.
- A due diligence conducted in late 2021 on 53 sub-projects in the 6 Provinces revealed no outstanding on environmental and social issues, but issue on UXO clearance has been discussed and to address this issue, PRF has coordinated with the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) on the process for obtaining a UXO clearance certificate from UXO-Laos even if the subprojects are small and focused on rehabilitating and improving existing infrastructures for 10 provinces. Special attention on UXO clearance was paid to the current target 4 Provinces: Pongsaly, Oudomxay, Houaphan, and Xiengkhouang.
- No physical relocation of households or business entities occurred during the implementation of PRF II and PRF III-AF.
- Some houses had a small part of their land and some agriculture products effected by infrastructure sub-projects -rural road, irrigation system, water supply system. However, no household lost more than 5% of total productive assets. Compensation was made addressed through voluntary donation in line with the Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework.
- The evaluation confirmed that potential benefits versus negative impacts on land or household livelihoods and assets related to infrastructure construction had been discussed. Measures to minimize impact had been developed and agreed within the communities and by affected households. In all cases, affected persons directly benefited from the infrastructure construction that caused the loss.
- The technical implementation team reported that the Compensation and Resettlement Policy Framework is followed well. However, documentation and monitoring need to be strengthened. They suggest that the reporting system/documentation needs to be improved with simplified forms and documents for practical implementation on the ground. This issue was identified during PRF II and reported as improved during the implementation of PRFIII-AF. Under CLEAR implementation, ESF-related documents should be revised and simplified to ensure adequate monitoring and documentation and ease of follow up by officials at the provincial and district level. Reporting related to social and environmental issues should also be updated to align with World Bank safeguards policy and national policy Decree 192/PM to follow E&S instruments, – specifically ESF 5 and Decree 84/GoL on land acquisition and compensation.
- Lessons learned from PRF II stated that some local PRF staff consider that affected people are entitled for compensation at replacement cost only if they lose more than 5% of their total land and less than 5% is to be donated/contributed to the project. PRF technical teams reported that





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project-affected persons are often willing to contribute their lost assets in exchange for better infrastructure such as rural access roads, water supply and irrigation systems.

- This issue has been addressed during implementation of PRF III, through the recruitment of both environmental and social safeguards officers and a monitoring and evaluation officer who are based at the central level and oversee overall project reports and documentation. However, interviews with the technical team suggest that improvements are required in the core staff to oversee all environmental and social issues. PRF III currently has combined roles (e.g. the infrastructure and environmental officer is combined, social development is combined with social safeguards/gender/ethnic groups, and a monitoring and evaluation is combined with grievance redress mechanism). The recommendation is to have specific environmental and social officers instead of these combined roles.
- For the management of rural water supply and latrine improvement activities, especially under PRF III, impacts are addressed through the Environmental Code of Practice developed by Nam Saat. For CLEAR, the code of practice will be updated to align with the World Bank ESF and will be applied to all subprojects that involve civil works.
- Although PRF does not allow the physical relocation of households or businesses under its support program, one of its main focused components is infrastructure development. In addition, although the construction, improvement or rehabilitation of community infrastructure is small in size, impacts on small strips of land and other assets are likely to occur. PRF requires that all proposals involving civil works (regardless of the size) within the existing target areas and new provincial and district PRF offices, have updated land acquisition procedures to meet the ESF 5 and Decree 84's requirements.
- Activities to support livelihood and nutrition activities and nutrition enhancement did not result in any loss of private land or assets. Livelihood/nutrition grants provided under the pilot were typically used for the production of small livestock such as poultry and catfish, for weaving activities and the provision of special meals for pregnant/lactating mothers and malnourished infants. Some small structures such as village nutrition centers were built on public spaces within beneficiary villages. Because activities also included the promotion of crop production, safeguard instruments including the simple Pest Management Plan were prepared and used to minimize and mitigate environmental and social impacts associated with livelihood and nutrition activities. The safeguard assessment under PRF III did not find any outstanding safeguard issues associated with livelihood/nutrition activities.
- PRF technical teams are of the view that community-driven activities under PRF III are effective in improving public health, hygiene and community well-being through better latrine systems, water supply and other community initiatives. CLEAR also intends to continue this approach and activities will be implemented at the village, cluster village (kumbans) and district levels in targeted provinces. The RPF therefore will be made available in Lao language to be accessed and used by the local community.
- PRF has developed a negative list, which will also be updated and incorporated in all E&S instruments.
- A feedback and resolution mechanism were developed under PRF. However, the evaluation for PRF III document preparation found that, while beneficiaries are well aware of the purpose and function of the mechanism, it is rarely used for anything other than thanking the project for its support or requesting more support. To strengthen the mechanism, PRF has initiated every six months follow-up visits during PRF III implementation to ensure that no outstanding grievances or impacts of land acquisition remain unaddressed. These face-to-face follow-up visits are facilitated by kumban facilitators (KBF), and may very well help overcome social and cultural





barriers to utilization of the feedback and resolution mechanism, These barriers include: (1) illiteracy – people who cannot write their complaint; (2) language – people who cannot speak Lao and therefore cannot use the hotline; (3) traditional preferences to resolve any conflict without interference from outside the village – usually conflict resolution is facilitated by the village chief and village elders (*Neo Hom*); (4) the custom of paying a fee if requesting support from a higher level; and (5) loss of ‘model problem-free village’ status – a prestigious recognition from local government.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

As the World Bank focuses on the development effectiveness, and project’s impact, it’s important the following aspects be considered and mainstreamed throughout the project implementation.

### 4.1 Inclusion Approach

- **Inclusion.** Part of vulnerable households, particularly those who are disadvantaged may be potentially left out of project planning and project benefits. Given this, criteria should be developed to provide opportunities for the disadvantaged group, which is a subset of poor and vulnerable group.

The World Bank Group defines social inclusion as:

1. The process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and
2. The process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.

Social inclusion is an integral part of—and vital to—achieving the World Bank Group’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. To ensure the project promote social inclusion, the following aspects should be implemented carefully and consistently over the course of the project:

- **Consultations.** Meaningful consultations can contribute to improved design, implementation, and sustainability of development interventions. The objectives of consultation with project stakeholders, particularly with project beneficiaries include receiving input for improved decision-making about the design and implementation arrangements of a development project, to contribute to improved results and sustainability. In this context, consultations can potentially give voice to the needs of different target groups, including vulnerable and marginalized groups; improve risk management by identifying opportunities and risks from and to a project (World Bank, 2012b); and increase transparency, public understanding, and citizen involvement in development decision-making. Consultations with key stakeholders also including project-affected people and civil societies. While consultations are frequently used during World Bank project preparation, engagement is less systematic during implementation.

The Bank suggested that consultation should start with clear subject and purpose, adequate stakeholder representation and methods of consultation, and disclosure of and timely access to understandable, relevant, and objective information and documentation. Meaningful consultations also require stakeholder identification and analysis, including due consideration of representativeness and inclusion of women, disadvantaged, vulnerable groups, ethnic minority peoples. In addition, safeguard policies require adequate documentation of consultations as part of the project documentation. Consultation should also be informed well ahead of the event to enable participants to prepare themselves.



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Governments need to make relevant information available to citizens in accessible and understandable formats, and to build the capacity and systems to provide adequate responses to citizen feedback. Citizens need to acquire minimum skills to engage, and they need to be interested in the issue.

- **Information disclosure.** Open access to information does automatically lead to participation and impact, which also depend on such context factors as enabling legislation and grassroots activism. Information formats and activities need to be part of the design of citizen engagement processes and be based on an understanding of the target audience. Project information will be posted at community centers as well as disseminated through community meetings to ensure farming households who are potential beneficiaries of the project could study and participate as they wish. The Bank will ensure people in the project area have access to project's information to determine how they participate in the project activities. As a good practice, the Bank's suggested that the information provided be relevant (responsive to citizens' interests), timely (sufficient notice), and understandable (language, format, and local context).
- **Languages.** Ethnic minority groups may be potentially excluded simply because the language used during information sessions, consultation meetings, trainings, project planning sessions are not in the language that they use on a daily basis. According to World Bank (2013, Inclusion Matters), language is an important aspect of identity and claim to political and cultural space. Language can thus be an important driver of both exclusion and inclusion. Thus, consideration should be given to frequent use of local languages during consultation, meetings, and trainings with the participation of ethnic minority groups.
- **Sociocultural norms.** Social norms can considerably affect that way men and women participate in training. Social norms contribute to establishing farming practices. Thus, changing a current farming practice mean changing a social norm that is deeply rooted in one's belief system, which may affect farmers' social network that is close to them, such as their family members, relatives, friends, neighbors, their business partners. Women in Laos spend remarkable amount of time doing house chore and farm works. They are considered more appropriate for the household role. As such, more men (than women) attend an event (meetings, trainings, etc.) outside their home. Under the project, depending on the training topics, women should be encouraged to participate as they apply the knowledge to make a joint decision with their husband.
- **Specific ways to to reduce barriers to participation of ethnic groups:**
  - **Recruitment of a social development/ ethnic groups specialist:** also specialized in gender to work part-time throughout the life cycle of the project and conduct social risk screening for each new proposed subproject site. The specialist should help with designing consultation methodology suitable for ethnic groups, monitor remote community participation levels, collect disaggregated information and data on gender and ethnicity relevant to aspects of project activities. S/he should also help the project to develop a set of training with measures to improve access of the vulnerable groups, poor, women, etc., as well as facilitate delivery of the gender/SEA/VAWC training, addressing risk management and awareness raising.
  - **Identify ethnic interpreters to overcome language barriers** (eg. Include Khmu, Phong, Akha, Yao, etc. YGs) disseminate information in clear and simple local language to support comprehension by those who are less literate. This may include individual face-to-face communication with the illiterate at the designing and/or group formation stages.



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- **Develop/incorporate cultural awareness messages in a field guide for all groups** that incorporates the concept of sensitivity to ethnic groups (cultural responsiveness) and inclusive consultation/social inclusion. These messages can also ensure that the project and its staff and subcontractors respect ancestral and spiritual land and forest use and remain sensitive to customary use of land by the community, especially ethnic groups.
- **Preference selection of ethnic groups representatives, men and village elders for training under project components**, promote better understanding on gender equality, project administrative procedures (processes and steps involved) so that village outreach/young graduates as well as village women can feel more confident to participate in project activities.
- **Prioritize distribution of equitable benefit sharing**. develop special measures towards the vulnerable groups and this may include extra effort and budget to tailoring livelihood/income generation activities to bridge the gaps and response to actual needs of the poor households, people with disabilities, female headed households, etc.

## 4.2 Improved Farming Practices

Livelihood Improvement that is initiated and owned by project's target households themselves is fundamental to increasing household income, nutritional status of their children, and their well-being. The Table below summarizes key constraints that ethnic groups typically in household agricultural production and proposes practical ways to address such constraints to improved farming productivity at household level (through promoting adoption of new technologies) and at community level (through select value chain).

Constraints to ethnic smallholder farmers	Proposed actions under CLEAR project
<b>Culture, Social Norms, Farming Practices</b>	
<b><i>Ethnic Languages</i></b> Each ethnic groups such as Akha, Khmou, Phong, etc., have their own language. Even though some could speak the national language, their daily spoken language is their mother tone.	<b><i>Promote use of ethnic languages</i></b> It is important that local EG language be used, whenever possible, in meetings, workshops, trainings, etc. where all participants are from the same ethnic group. Where written language is available, written language should be used, particularly in project's media such as leaflets, posters, etc.
<b><i>Traditional Farming practices</i></b> Changing farming practice, from an existing tradition which is deep rooted (e.g. slash and burn agriculture), takes time. In addition, adopting a new farming technique (e.g. climate smart technologies, pest management...) may require both husband and wife to learn and <b>commit to application. Some techniques may require extra time and effort which requires EG people to learn and adapt over time.</b>	<b><i>Promote use of high-yield farming techniques grounded on existing farm system and practices</i></b>  <b>Before training:</b> Extension agencies need to make special effort to sensitize farmers on the benefits and application of the newly introduced technologies, particularly to check if the planned technologies are suitable to local farming system, culture, and marketability, etc. This is critical to promoting adoption of the introduced technologies. The following should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainings (agricultural extension...) should be organized by ethnic group so that local language could be used (e.g. ideally by trainer/facilitator speaking the same language, or with an interpreter's assistance).</li> </ul>



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Constraints to ethnic smallholder farmers	Proposed actions under CLEAR project
<p>Therefore, training events should be followed with technical support, hands-on guidance in the field (e.g. demonstration site, on-field workshop during cropping season/harvest) to draw lessons learned and promote interest of the trained and EM neighbors to trial out the new techniques/technologies. Participants in stakeholder meetings also expressed the lack of adequate sensitization and awareness raising on new technologies thus hampering the adoption of such technologies and practices. This hampers widespread adoption of new technologies, limiting their uptake and affecting improvements in agricultural productivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for use of ethnic languages will be assessed for each target group – well in advance, to allow sufficient time for training preparation.</li> <li>• Where possible, training and extension materials should be summarized (in key points) in target group's written language (if any), for their reference following the training, and for sharing with other members of the same ethnic group (particularly those who do not have the chance to come to the trainings/workshop).</li> </ul> <p><b>After trainings:</b> All trainings should be organized with a clearly prepared plan for post-training technical support. Such follow-up support is fundamental to promoting the trial of the new training knowledge that later leads to adoption on the part of the trained farmers.</p> <p>The following key steps could be followed when an agricultural extension training program is planned for a village:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct training needs assessment;</li> <li>• Prepare training materials (considering use of ethnic language in classroom and in training leaflet ...)</li> <li>• Deliver training and conduct post-training evaluation</li> <li>• Set up demonstration sites (e.g. using farm of a trainee)</li> <li>• Organize on-field follow-up technical support. Where possible, Farmers Field School should be used to take advantage of crop growth and field observation)</li> <li>• Provide customized technical support for trained farmers to promote trial of newly introduced technology</li> <li>• Continue the process to assist farmers to make progress – from learning, trial, early adoption, and full adoption.</li> </ul>
Production Assets	
<p><b>Lack of security of tenure</b> According to a survey conducted by Indochina in 2022, in four project provinces, it was found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 69% of households own 1-3 land plot(s). Although the average farm size is 3.5 hectares, only 2.2 hectares, on average, is cultivated in the past 12 months (only 63% of each household's land is farmed).</li> <li>• For those who have land, they may own 2 or 3 plots that are scattered.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Enhance land access and land tenure</b> Since 1989, Laos has been accelerating its transformation from a centrally-planned economy towards a market economy. Considerable success in the reorganization of its legal and regulatory framework has been achieved within a short period<sup>64</sup>. It is important that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land-based income be promoted through farming that takes into account farm size, land distance from home, labor availability, market for the target crops, adoption of improved farming techniques, etc., including nutrition benefits for project's beneficiary households;</li> </ul>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/W4760E/w4760e0c.htm>



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Constraints to ethnic smallholder farmers	Proposed actions under CLEAR project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 1/3 has land title<sup>63</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For landless households, other income generation activities that are not land-based need to be explored;</li> <li>Land titles be provided to farmers (under other government programs) for secured land tenure which promotes investments on land.</li> </ul>
Household Labor	
<p><b>Lack of Labor</b> According to a survey conducted by Indochina in 2022, in four project provinces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average household size: 6 people</li> <li>81.2% of household members work as unpaid (own-account) workers.</li> <li>Only 10% are paid workers.</li> </ul> <p>This above finding suggests that there is a lack of home labor that affects agricultural productivity at household level.</p>	<p><b>Refine household labor division &amp; promote labor exchange</b> <b>Home labor</b> Domestic labor division may need some adjustment thereby women are more involved in paid work than unpaid home chore. Women participation in farm labor would not only ease the lack of labor for farm works but also promote their role in income generation activities. This is an important start for households to prepare themselves for better use of training knowledge, effective use of loan, etc.)</p> <p><b>Labor Exchange</b> Current labor exchange among a small group (2-3 households) are still adopted. This practice should be leveraged to overcome the lack of labor when project interventions are unfold and upscaled that require farming intensification for increased income.</p> <p><b>Mechanisation</b> Where possible, mechanisation should be promoted to overcome the lack of labor and allow consistent quality output of certain stages over crop cycle. Use of ploughing machine, seed spreader, small tractors are essential to leveraging labor shortage meanwhile saving cost if adopted for a larger group of households.</p> <p><b>Conduct campaigns for public awareness raising for change of attitude and practice</b> The following steps are suggested to gradually promote the participation of women in economic activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare IEC materials (leaflet, training materials that promote gender equality through equal economic participation)</li> <li>Conduct annual IEC program, workshops, to raise awareness of the community in terms of the role and potential of women in improving economic situation of households.</li> <li>Involve mass organizations, including Women' Union, Farmers Association, particularly Youth Union, to get the message across.</li> </ul>

<sup>63</sup> Source: Indochina Research, 2022, Nutrition Convergence Monitoring Mid-term Survey Report (prepared for the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and the World Bank.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Organize contests on knowledge on gender equality, and sharing success story of the women’s improving economic activities, including story about husband sharing household chore to enable his wife to join him in family’s income generation activities (e.g. farming, non-farm business…)</li><li>Loan application process requires signature of both wife and husband, with written commitment of husband sharing chore works to enable his wife time for income generation activities and effective loan use.</li></ul>																																																								
Loan Access																																																									
<p><b>Loan</b></p> <p>On-going RPF-III (Additional Financing) has a loan program. As of June 2022, there are total of 8,557 individuals who are using loans provided through SHG.</p> <table><tr><th>Rank</th><th>Activity</th><th>Members</th><th>%</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>Pig raising</td><td>2,904</td><td>43.99%</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Chicken raising</td><td>1,437</td><td>21.77%</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Goat raising</td><td>591</td><td>8.95%</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Weaving and sewing</td><td>468</td><td>7.09%</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Duck raising</td><td>448</td><td>6.79%</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>Cultivation (ginger, corn, vegetable, cassava, mushroom, fruit)</td><td>440</td><td>6.67%</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>Fish farming</td><td>164</td><td>2.48%</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>Retailed Trading</td><td>101</td><td>1.53%</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Trading (animal, vegetable)</td><td>28</td><td>0.42%</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>Galangal</td><td>10</td><td>0.15%</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>Buying grass seeds</td><td>5</td><td>0.08%</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>Growing brooms</td><td>2</td><td>0.03%</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Grand Total</td><td>6,601</td><td>100.00%</td></tr></table> <p>Source: PRF’s Bi-Annual Progress Report (Jan-June 2022)</p>	Rank	Activity	Members	%	1	Pig raising	2,904	43.99%	2	Chicken raising	1,437	21.77%	3	Goat raising	591	8.95%	4	Weaving and sewing	468	7.09%	5	Duck raising	448	6.79%	6	Cultivation (ginger, corn, vegetable, cassava, mushroom, fruit)	440	6.67%	7	Fish farming	164	2.48%	8	Retailed Trading	101	1.53%	9	Trading (animal, vegetable)	28	0.42%	10	Galangal	10	0.15%	11	Buying grass seeds	5	0.08%	12	Growing brooms	2	0.03%		Grand Total	6,601	100.00%	<p><b>Customize Loan Items</b></p> <p>To ensure effective loan use, it’s important that loan be provided based on crop cycle. This allows loan borrower to access the right amount of loan timely to make timely investment in the crop. Example include loans for investment in agricultural inputs such as seeds, trees, fertilizers, pesticide, etc. Loan group may be based on group that adopt labor exchange to build on existing strong bonding social capital.</p> <p>Loan should target long-term plan including agroforestry, particularly those who are allocated with forest land that need intensive and investment in the first few years of the crop cycle. Further, lending institutions must also explore the possibility of designing loan instruments that do not require land as a collateral but explore the possibility of accepting group guarantee as an alternative option.</p> <p><b>Provide Basic Financial Literacy to Loan Members</b></p> <p>To promote effective use of loan, loan members should be trained on how to use their loan effectively. Effective use means their loan is used to support effectively the purose for which loan is borrowed, such as for cultivation, animal husbandry, retailed trading, etc.</p>
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<b>Market Linkages (value chains)</b>	<p><b>Participation in select value chains through contract farming</b></p> <p>With the above preparation in place, following activities should be promoted:</p>																																																								





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Constraints to ethnic smallholder farmers	Proposed actions under CLEAR project
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good, trained farming households will be invited to join commodity specific value chain initiated and led by PAFO, DAFO</li> <li>• Close monitoring of household production will be done to build good reputation for both farmers and private sectors in the value chain.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate attention and lack of support and promotion of local niche products</b></p> <p>Bamboo shoot and rattan processing, weaving, basketry and wickerworks, wild medicinal herbs, particularly natural dyes and weaving, offer opportunities for developing niche products</p>	<p>Given the potential of ‘unharnessed’ promising products and value chains, project may commission a few small studies to document wild edibles, animal produces and herbal medicines that are available in the project districts, together with the range of local/indigenous knowledge associated with their cultivation/rearing as well as their traditional use. Such studies could lay the foundation for developing new products and value chains which can add to the existing agricultural production portfolio of project district/village that promote income for poor householdss.</p>
Knowledge for Improved Production	
<p><b>Training Topics</b></p>	<p><b>Conduct Training Needs Assessment</b></p> <p>Conduct topic-specific trainings on select commodities (based on local needs &amp; market demand/analysis)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Soil fertility management &amp; effective use of fertilizers;</li> <li>➢ Plant protection &amp; effective use of pesticide and other agricultural products;</li> <li>➢ Water management, coordination, and water saving technologies;</li> <li>➢ Labor safety measures to protect farmers and their health (e.g. use of protective measures when spraying pesticide...)</li> <li>➢ Post-harvest technologies (e.g. warehouse, storage, maintenance...), particularly for perishable farm produce such as fruit...)</li> <li>➢ Good agricultural practices for select commodities for awareness raising and promoting technology adoption</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Supporting Infrastructure for Improved Production	
<p><b>Limited rural infrastructure that supports agricultural production</b></p> <p>Limited access to basic infrastructure for agricultural production such as tertiary <b>road, on-farm irrigation, food processing facilities ...)</b></p>	<p><b>Identify small-scaled infrastructure that is still bottleneck to agricultural production</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify bottlenecks that affect transportation of farm product and adoption of post-harvest techniques;</li> <li>• Invest in identified bottlenecks (small-scaled infrastructure)</li> <li>• In rainfed area where irrigation is not possible, identify feasible water harvesting methods to help improve</li> </ul>





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Constraints to ethnic smallholder farmers	Proposed actions under CLEAR project
	home production, including animal husbandry that help improve family nutrition, and household health.

*Source: Adapted from Tuan Anh Le, Alessandra Gage, Dhrupad Choudhury. 2022 (Indigenous People Development Plan).*

Please refer to SEP for more details on the consultation results at local and national levels.