

# Terminal Evaluation

## Asia

### 1. Outline of the Project

**Country:**

Laos

**Project title:**

The Forest Conservation and Afforestation Project Phase 2

**Issue/Sector:**

Extension of Technique

**Cooperation scheme:**

Project-type Technical Cooperation

**Division in charge:**

Forestry and Environment Division, Forestry and Natural Environment Department

**Total cost:**

630 million yen

**Period of Cooperation**

16 July 1998 - 15 July 2003

**Partner Country's Implementing Organization:**

Vientiane Province, Department of Forest (DOF), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

**Supporting Organization in Japan:**

Forestry Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

**Related Cooperation:**

Development Studies; "Study on Watershed Management Plan for Forest Conservation in Vangvieng District, Lao PDR", Project-type Technical Cooperation "The Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand Phase 2"

### 1-1 Background of the Project

In Lao People's Democratic Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Lao PDR"), mountainous terrain accounts for 80% of the total land of the country, and forest resources are relatively abundant compared with neighboring countries. However, based on the Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP), the forest, which accounted for 70% of total land of the country in the 1940s, decreased to 47% by 1989. In the Nam Ngum Dam watershed, northern Vientiane, forest degradation progressed rapidly because of disorderly slash-and-burn agriculture and inappropriate deforestation.

Taking this situation into account, the government of Lao PDR made a request to the Japanese government for technical cooperation on forest conservation and afforestation based on participatory method, with the aims of prevention of water source depletion and afforestation of deteriorated forest. In response to the request, the government of Japan and the government of Lao PDR implemented a two-year Project-type Technical Cooperation; "The Forest Conservation and Afforestation Project in Lao People's Democratic Republic," and developed the participatory activity plan in the field of target villages in Vientiane Province. Based on the plan, which was developed through the technical cooperation, the government of Lao PDR requested technical aid from the government of Japan.

### 1-2 Project Overview

#### (1) Overall Goal

The trend of forest degradation in the lower part of the Nam Ngum Dam water shed area and its vicinity is reduced.

#### (2) Project Purpose

The capacity of the local administrators for promotion of participatory forest management is strengthened in order to reduce the trend of forest degradation.

### (3) Outputs

- 1) Village Forest Management Plan (VFMP) is formulated based on the review of "Regulations of Land and Forest Utilization (RLFU)" at the village level.
- 2) Forest management methods are established by the villagers using the techniques developed by the project.
- 3) The income generation models introduced by the project are practiced by the villagers.
- 4) The recommendation report on village-level forest management in terms of administrative, technical and financial matters is prepared.
- 5) Skills and knowledge of the local administrations, especially the project counterparts, are improved.

### (4) Inputs

Japanese side:

Long-term Experts	11	Equipment	51 million yen
Short-term Experts	20	Local Cost	128 million yen
Trainees received	18		

Lao PDR side:

Counterparts	32		
Land and Facilities			
Local Cost		497 million kip (approximately 6 million yen)	

## 2. Evaluation Team

### Members of Evaluation Team

Team Leader: Hideki MIYAKAWA, Managing Director, Forestry and Natural Environment Department, JICA  
Forest Management: Takashi, TOMINAGA, Assistant Director, Forestry and Environment Division, Forestry and Natural Environment Department, JICA  
Participatory Forest Conservation: Yoshihiko NISHIMURA, Professor, Graduate School of International Department, Nagoya University  
Planning Evaluation: Motonori TANAKA, Forestry and Environment Division, Forestry and Natural Environment Department, JICA  
Evaluation Analysis: Toshiko SHIMADA, IC Net Limited

<b>Period of Evaluation</b>	5 January 2003 - 24 January 2003	<b>Type of Evaluation:</b>	Terminal Evaluation
-----------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------

## 3. Results of Evaluation

### 3-1 Summary of Evaluation Results

---

#### (1) Relevance

The project is evaluated as highly relevant since the sustainable management of forest resources and the promotion of decentralization were regarded as major development issues in the Social and Economic Development Plan of Lao PDR. The content of the project was also consistent with the policy of the Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Lao PDR. Therefore, at the end of the project the relevance of the cooperation could be regarded as high.

However, it was found that the original project design matrix (PDM) was not appropriately formulated. The project purpose was set higher, and activities, outputs and project purpose did not correspond with one another. Thus, these points were adjusted at the mid-term evaluation and terminal evaluation.

## (2) Effectiveness

Since the recommendation report on forest management at the village level, which was supposed to be one of the main outputs, has not been completed yet and has not been adopted as a guideline in Vangvieng district and Hinheup district, the project purpose could not be achieved as expected. However, most of other outputs are understood to have been accomplished through the project activities, including the development of forest management methodology for the people, and acquisition of necessary knowledge/skills for forest management by administrative officers and staff of regional governmental organization.

## (3) Efficiency

Most of the inputs from the Japanese side were provided as planned. However, since the chief advisor was also responsible for the Forest Management System at the beginning of the project, there was significant delay in the preparation of VFMP. It should have been understood that long-term expert in the Forest Management System needed to be dispatched from the beginning of the project, or that short-term experts in that field needed to be secured for efficient activities. This is because of the following two points: the development of VMFP should be given priority since its output is the foundation of the project; and the planning of the VMFP took more time than other activities because it required the participation of the local residents and the project had to be in line with the relevant laws and regulations. As for the inputs from the Lao PDR, they were efficient in quality, quantity and timing, although it would have been better if the Laos side could have contributed more in covering the local cost.

## (4) Impact

Meeting the overall goal of reducing degradation requires time. It must be understood that there are many causes for degradation and that various countermeasures would be necessary. Therefore, whether the project brought about direct impacts toward the reduction of forest degradation could not be measured at the time of the terminal evaluation, and the aim of the project was to improve the capacity of local administrations on such issues. However, based on the impact assessment carried out by the short-term experts, the cash earning activities implemented in the project provided the supplementary support to the target villagers, as they were provided with new means of making their living. Simple waterworks, developed with the help of the water source forest also helped the life of the villagers. Other donor and district officials became interested in forestry Profit Sharing System (PSS), which was carried out in the project, and may spread to other areas in the future. Furthermore, with the public relations activities through mass media and invited visitors, people of Laos deepened their understanding of participatory forest conservation activities.

## (5) Sustainability

Local administrators, including the counterparts, have improved their knowledge and skills on participatory forest management significantly through the project activities and various training courses. Therefore, the technical sustainability of the project effects was evaluated highly.

Even though the decentralization was promoted by the government, there were only a limited number of projects for which the local government could be active counterparts in Lao PDR. Against this background, the project focused on the capacity building of the local administrations through the collaboration and communication at prefecture and district levels and it encouraged the active participation of village organizations and the residents. However, the administrative and institutional aspects of the Afforestation Center were managed mainly by the project. Therefore, the organizational sustainability, including the management of the Center, was not so high.

The financial sustainability of the project, which includes the operation and management costs of the Afforestation Center, was regarded as questionable. This was because the Afforestation Center had been managed and maintained with the assistance of the project, and only 4.4.% of the total budget for the project and 15% of the electricity bill were being paid by the Laos side. Although this is because only a small budget was being allocated to prefecture and district agriculture and forestry offices, it can be a hindering factor with regard to the sustainability of the effects of the project.

## **3-2 Factors that promoted realization of effects**

---

### (1) Factors Concerning the Planning

The content and implementing method of the project were relevant to the priority development issues of the Lao PDR regarding forestry preservation and decentralization. This led to the achievement of the project purpose to some extent.

### (2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

- 1) On the Laos side, there were high levels of commitment and sense of ownership. A budget was allocated to PSS despite the harsh economic conditions, which enhanced the efficiency of the project.
- 2) Through the project, the knowledge and skills of the counterparts have improved, and their independence and autonomy

were strengthened, which made the implementation of the project activities more effective. Information sharing through weekly meetings in each section, including the Japanese experts, confirmed the progress of activities and enhanced efficiency. This also led to the achievement of the project purpose and the enhancement of technical sustainability.

3) With the efforts and indirect support of those related to the project, the project helped to enlighten the people in the target villages and to encourage them to participate in the project activities. This contributed to the smooth progress of each activity and resulted in a highly efficient progress of the project in general. It has to be understood that nothing will change in Laos PDR if there is no sense of ownership and responsibility by the village people toward the activities, under the severe budget shortage and lack of personnel in the local administrations. The project enhanced the sustainability of future activities at the village level through the active participation of the villagers.

### **3-3 Factors that impeded realization of effects**

---

#### **(1) Factors Concerning the Planning**

The project plan was unclear in the beginning of the project which hindered the effectiveness of the project on several points; 1) the development of forestry management plan, which should have been the pillar of the project, was delayed, 2) part of the activities took place without a clear understanding of the project purpose, 3) in the end, the outputs were not related to each other enough to achieve the project purpose.

#### **(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process**

- 1) The knowledge of the introduction process regarding some of the activities could not be accumulated or shared, since the monitoring system utilizing the PDM was insufficient. In addition, the effects brought about by the activities could not be measured because the indicators of the PDM were being determined without enough consideration.
- 2) The efficiency of the project was hindered due to several points. First, the Japanese expert on forestry management system was assigned mid-way through the project, which caused a delay in developing the VFMP. Second, a provincial order on village forestry management was issued in June 2001, and this delayed the development of VFMP because it needed to be made consistent with the order. Although the output on VFMP was achieved according to the indicators, the realization of the effects to the project purpose could not be clearly observed.
- 3) Although Afforestation Center is owned by the Vientiane Province, its management and operation were highly dependent on the project side and it did not have any clear, concrete vision regarding its role and functions. This has hindered the organizational sustainability.

### **3-4 Conclusion**

---

Most of the project activities were implemented as planned. However, one of the major outputs of the project, the recommendation report on village level forest management, was underdeveloped and in that regard, the project purpose was not met. Since six months remain till the end of the project, a report is expected to be completed as a summary of the project.

### **3-5 Recommendations**

---

(1) To disseminate and apply the techniques developed or transferred in the project to other areas in the future, the recommendation report on village level forest management should summarize the results of the activities of the project. The report should include a process analysis on developing VFMP, a cost-effective analysis on cash income activities and PSS, and manuals on forest management techniques.

(2) Since PSS brings profit to the people only 15 years after planting, it needs to be combined with agro-forestry activities (land usage method which allows for crops, livestock and timber in the same land) and non-timber forest projects such as rattan and herbal plants that can assure short-term income.

(3) In order to develop village level forest management guidelines, it is necessary regularly monitor VFMP, PSS and income generation activities developed by Hinheup and Vangvieng DAFOs regarding their feasibilities. To disseminate these activities widely, they should be endorsed officially not only by the regional authorities but also by the central authorities.

(4) All outputs produced by the project should be continuously disseminated and applied through the initiatives of the central government to other areas, especially to the northern region of Laos. Northern Laos is similar to the target areas of the project with regard to its socio-economic and natural environment. There is severe forest degradation and poverty as a result of the slash-and-burn cultivation method.

### **3-6 Lessons Learned**

---

(1) It is important to develop a clear project framework by prioritizing within the limited five-year span to cope with large-scale development issues, namely forestry devastation, which have various contributing factors. The framework needs to be clarified at the planning stage including activities, outputs, project purpose and overall goal with effective indicators. When project

activities are carried out at village level without clear framework or indicators that reflect the project purpose and outputs appropriately, the activities tend to be carried out by way of trial-and-error, similar to a process-oriented project. It becomes difficult to understand the approach taken in the project and to achieve the project purpose. Regular monitoring is necessary to revise the PDM including indicators as needed.

(2) It is necessary to find alternative income resources for the village people in order to reduce forest degradation caused by such activities as slash-and-burn cultivation. The income generating activities should not be a prototype, but rather, the socio-economic and natural conditions of the communities must be taken into account

### **3-7 Follow-up Situation**

---

N/A.