

Country Name	Forest Strategy 2020 Implementation Promotion Project
Lao People's Democratic Republic	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>In Lao PDR, forest degradation caused by economic and population growth had been progressing while the Government of Lao PDR elaborated the “National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy” (2004). Under the situation, the government planned to prepare the “Forest Strategy 2020” in order to define long-term development goals and policies as well as key activities in the forestry sector as the forestry sector had played a vital role from economic, social and environmental perspectives. However, the Forest Strategy (FS) Secretariat did not have sufficient capacity to prepare a five-year plan in the forestry sector, to monitor implementation of the plan, and to conduct policy making activities including the “National Afforestation Development Plan”. In addition, capacity building on sector management and policy analysis and planning was essential for the FS Secretariat.</p>				
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through formulation and monitoring of implementation plans, dialogues with stakeholders and addressing of policy-related priority actions for the initial five-year period of “Forest Strategy 2020” implementation, the project aimed at developing capacity of forestry sector on planning and management, thereby contributing to promotion of sustainable and productive forest use in Lao PDR.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Sustainable and productive forest use in Lao People's Democratic Republic through appropriate sector planning and management is promoted. Project Purpose: Capacity of forestry sector on planning and management is developed through formulation and monitoring of implementation plans, dialogues with stakeholders and addressing policy-related priority actions for the initial five-year period of “Forest Strategy 2020” implementation. 				
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project Site: the whole of Lao PDR Main Activities: 1) Updating forest strategy/implementation matrix and monitoring, reporting and assessing FS2020 implementation, 2) Trainings on sector management, 3) Policy formulation and awareness raising activities, 4) Participatory land and forest use planning, 5) Pilot activities, etc. Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 4 persons Trainees received: 6 persons Equipment: vehicles, PCs, GPS, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> <p>Lao Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff allocated: 10 persons Land and facilities: a project office in Department of Forestry Local expenses: utility costs <p>Sweden International Cooperation Agency (SIDA) side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Local expenses: 110 million yen </td> </tr> </table> 			<p>Japanese Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experts: 4 persons Trainees received: 6 persons Equipment: vehicles, PCs, GPS, etc. Local expenses: cost for project activities 	<p>Lao Side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff allocated: 10 persons Land and facilities: a project office in Department of Forestry Local expenses: utility costs <p>Sweden International Cooperation Agency (SIDA) side</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Local expenses: 110 million yen
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Project Period	April 2006 – September 2010	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 183 million yen, (actual) 205 million yen		
Implementing Agency	Department of Forestry (DOF), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)				
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries				

II. Result of the Evaluation

<Constraints on Evaluation>

- As the project was jointly implemented with SIDA, it was necessary to undertake an ex-post evaluation considering the effects of activities performed by the organization. However, even though the Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has been in charge of coordination and management of all projects supported by development partners, they could not provide any information about SIDA's activities.

<Special Perspectives Considered in the Ex-Post Evaluation>

- The project set an indicator “Value-added per m3 of log from natural forest increases with a rate higher than GDP/capita increases” to verify the achievement status of the Overall Goal at the time of ex-ante evaluation. However, as also mentioned in the summary sheet of terminal evaluation (Japanese), the data on the indicator was not available even at the time of ex-post evaluation. Thus, instead of the indicator, this ex-post evaluation made use of “official price of timbers set by the Government of Laos” as an alternative indicator to verify the achievement status of the Overall Goal.

1 Relevance

<Consistency with the Development Policy of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion>

The project was consistent with Laos' development policies of the “National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy” (2004) setting an agriculture and forestry sector as one of the four central sectors at the time of ex-ante evaluation as well as “The Five-year Plan” (2006-2010) raising “sustainable forest management” as one of the four prioritized items at the time of project completion.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Laos at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion >

The project was consistent with Laos' development needs of capacity building of the FS Secretariat to plan and implement a five-year plan in the forestry sector and on sector management and policy analysis and planning.

<Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

The project was consistent with “The Country Assistance Programme for Lao PDR” (2006) focusing on “agricultural regional development and utilization of sustainable forest resource” as one of the priority areas.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The Project Purpose was achieved by the time of project completion. Through the project, an institutional framework to promote effective inputs to FS2020 implementation by stakeholders was established and started to be operational (Indicator 1). Also, FS2020 implementation was supported by improving a policy and legislative framework, undertaking public awareness activities, increasing the incomes of smallholders and communities from forestry, and supporting DOF in coordinating Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) initiatives (Indicator 2).

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Project Effects have been continued since the project completion. At the beginning of the project, the FS Secretariat planned to take a responsibility for the institutional framework established by the project, but in fact it did not function well. Thus, the Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF took over the institutional framework during the project and has undertaken the necessary activities to support the implementation of FS2020 thereafter. For example, the division develops a law and a policy to promote sustainable forest management, forest industry development and biodiversity conservation while receiving supports from each donor.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal has been partially achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. As mentioned above, the Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has taken the necessary activities to support the implementation of FS2020 (Indicator 1). According to the report on the assessment of forest cover and land use of Lao PDR during 1992-2002 and the same report during 2002-2010, the rate of forest loss between 1992 and 2002 was 134,330 ha./year, and then, decreased to 33,963 ha./year. between 2002 and 2010 (Indicator 2). According to the data on official price of timbers set by the Government of Laos, the price has been static since 2014 (Indicator 3).

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

No other positive or negative impacts were observed at the time of ex-post evaluation.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is high.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Project Purpose) Capacity of forestry sector on planning and management is developed through formulation and monitoring of implementation plans, dialogues with stakeholders and addressing policy-related priority actions for the initial five-year period of "Forest Strategy 2020" implementation.	1. An institutional framework to promote effective inputs to FS2020 implementation by stakeholders is established and operational, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the collaborative relationships among different relevant stakeholders; Providing more comprehensive information and monitoring on forest sector collaboration, issues and developments; and Mobilizing more financial resources to support forest sector development 	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (Continued) (Project Completion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish the institutional framework and make it operational, the following activities were undertaken. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative relationships with a number of different stakeholders on different issues were developed, such as the Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group (with donors), the national REDD Task Force (among concerned MAF departments, National Land Management Authority (NLMA) and Water Resource and Environment Authority), support from technical advisors from different donor-assisted project, development of the Participatory Land Use Planning manual (working with NLMA), and several partners supporting development and certification of teak smallholders in Luang Prebang district. Relevant information on forest sector collaboration, issues and developments was shared through the above-mentioned collaborative relationships. More funds were mobilized for the forest sector, especially for climate change, forest carbon, and REDD initiatives. (Ex-post Evaluation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has been in charge of the institutional framework established by the project and has undertaken the necessary activities to support the implementation of FS2020.
	2. FS implementation is supported through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and legislative framework, Broad public understanding and support, Pilot efforts to increase rural smallholder and community incomes from forestry, and Coordination of efforts to respond to climate change, through REDD initiatives. 	Status of the Achievement: Achieved (Continued) (Project Completion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of FS2020 was supported by the following activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and legislative framework: revision of the Forestry Law and adoption of the new Wildlife Law in 2007 and other key regulations. Broad public understanding and support: publicizing and dissemination of related laws by national lawmakers and DOF officials, preparation of a village manual on the related policy and laws, and other public awareness activities. Pilot efforts to increase rural smallholder and community incomes from forestry: implementation of pilot projects with teak and NTFPs in Luang Prebang district. Coordination of efforts to respond to climate change through REDD initiatives: holding of REDD Task Force meetings, preparation of the REDD Readiness Preparation Proposal, and etc. (Ex-post Evaluation)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of FS2020 has been promoted by the following activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and legislative framework: further development of FS2020 to ensure sustainable forest management, forest industry development and biodiversity conservation. Broad public understanding and support: planning to publicize the new improved forestry law printed in Lao and English in 2020 and to organize dissemination session of the new improved forestry law in Northern province, Central province, and Southern province in 2020. Pilot efforts to increase rural smallholder and community incomes from forestry: planning to create and improve legislation for the village-level management for forest NTFPs and disseminate and publicize it, to provide trainings on management, preservation, development and use of NTFPs for villagers, and to promote the planting of trees and NTFPs by villagers as commodities. Coordination of efforts to respond to climate change through REDD initiatives: management of highly accurate forest resources information based on analysis of satellite images, development of a law and a strategy, and cooperation with various donors in order to timely and accurately secure budgets related to REDD+.
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(Overall Goal)
Sustainable and productive forest use in Lao People's Democratic Republic through appropriate sector planning and management is promoted.

1. Institutional framework for sector planning and management is effective at mobilizing and coordinating all stakeholder inputs to support the entire forest sector and comprehensive FS implementation.

(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved

- The Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has taken the necessary activities raised in the indicator 2 of the Project Purpose in order to support the implementation of FS2020.

2. Rate (ha./year) of forest loss/degradation between Year 2002 and 2012 is smaller than that of between Year 1992 and 2002.

(Ex-post Evaluation) Partially Achieved

- The amount of forest loss between Year 2002 and 2010 was smaller than that of between Year 1992 and 2002.

from 1992 to 2002	from 2002 to 2010
134,330 ha./year	33,963 ha./year

Note: although the indicator assumed to compare the rate of forest loss between Year 1992 and 2002 and Year 2002 and 2012, the data was not available. Therefore, this ex-post evaluation used the data on the amount of forest loss as a complementary information. Additionally, the 2011 and 2012 data was not available, so the data from 1992 to 2002 was compared to the one from 2002 to 2010.

3. Value-added per m³ of log from natural forest increases with a rate higher than GDP/capita increases

(Ex-post Evaluation) Not achieved

- The data on value-added per m³ of log from natural forest was not available. Instead, the data on official price of timbers set by the government was utilized to verify the indicator.
- The official price of timbers set by the government (Million KIP) has been static since 2014.

(Alternative Indicator: official price of timbers set by the Government of Laos).

Item/Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Forbidden type	540	540	540	540	540
Special type	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7
Protection type	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1

Source : Terminal Evaluation Report, Interview and questionnaire with DOF

3 Efficiency

Although the project period was within the plan (ratio against the plan: 100%), the project cost slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 112%). The outputs were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is fair.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

FS2020, which is a national policy, promotes the development of planning and management capacity in the forestry sector through formulation and monitoring of implementation plans, dialogues with stakeholders and addressing of policy-related priority actions. As the project aimed at developing capacity of forestry sector on planning and management, it has been backed up by the national policy.

<Institutional Aspect>

There have not been any major changes in the organizational setting for the implementation of FS2020. The Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has been responsible for overall activities pertinent to FS2020 such as drafting of five-year annual plans, implementation and monitoring of planned activities, and coordination among a wide range of stakeholders. 12 staff have been assigned to the division, and according to the division, they have been overloaded with their responsibilities so that the division is requesting DOF to recruit more staff. On the other hand, major problems in their work have not occurred so far.

<Technical Aspect>

The Staff of the Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has sustained the necessary knowledge and skills for the above-mentioned activities. This is because DOF organizes internal trainings twice a year for the staff. However, according to the division, further training is needed for the staff to fully perform their responsibilities given. The following topics were raised as contents of the training: 1) project cycle management, 2) monitoring and evaluation, and 3) English skills.

Budget of DOF

(Unit: Million Kip)

<Financial Aspect>

The data on the specific budget of the implementation of FS2020 was not available. However, according to the Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF, a certain amount of budget has been allocated from DOF for their activities. Taking into account the fact that the division has had a certain number of the staff and conducted their activities to some extent as described above, the allocated budget is considered to be partially sufficient. However, the overall budget of DOF has been reduced since the project completion due to more budget allocation to related agencies to take measures against sporadic natural disasters. Although the trend is expected to continue, the minimal amount of budget for the implementation of FS2020 will be continuously secured.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 (Plan)
12.1	11.8	9.5	7.1	6.6	5.9	8.4	3.3	2.3	1.8

<Evaluation Result>

In the light above, some problems have been in the financial aspect. Therefore, the sustainability of the effects through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved the Project Purpose aiming at developing capacity of forestry sector on planning and management and partially achieved the Overall Goal aiming at promoting the sustainable and productive forest use in Laos. As for sustainability, the overall budget of DOF has been reduced since the project completion, and in the future, the likelihood is implied that DOF cannot secure the necessary budget for the implementation of FS2020. As for efficiency, the project cost slightly exceeded the plan.

Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

- The institutional framework for the implementation of FS2020 was established by the project, but some staff who received the training and improved their skills and knowledge were transferred to other offices or promoted to higher position. DOF organizes internal trainings twice a year for the staff to maintain the necessary knowledge and skills for the activities. On the other hand, some new staff have very limited capacity for the implementation of FS2020. Therefore, in order to enhance the sustainability of the project, it is recommended that DOF consider to spend part of the financial resources for REDD+ expected to be allocated from United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and others on capacity enhancement of their staff from a long-term perspective through holding of trainings for technical transfer within the organization and etc.
- The Planning and Cooperation Division of DOF has a role to coordinate and manage all of the projects supported by development partners. However, information related to SIDA, a joint implementer for the project, is not properly stored and not available. Considering large dependence on foreign ODA, it is better for the Government of Laos to establish a structure to store and open basic information about the development partners in order to avoid overlapping and produce synergistic efforts between the partners.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

- As mentioned above, DOF organizes internal trainings twice a year for the staff to maintain the necessary knowledge and skills for the activities while new staff have very limited capacity for the implementation of FS2020. Therefore, in order to further enhance the sustainability of the project, it is recommended to discuss from the project planning stage how to encourage those well trained to be continuously involved in the activities and how to support the development of human resources continuously in the organization.



Forest Investigation



Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group