

F-REDD Newsletter

Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ Support Project

Nov 2015 - Oct 2020

Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ Support Project (F-REDD)

The purpose of F-REDD is to enhance the capacity of forestry sector through strengthening policies, effective incorporation of REDD+, and improvement of forest resource information as the foundation of sustainable forest management (SFM) in both central and provincial levels (Luang Prabang as the pilot province). The Department of Forest Resource Management, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE-DFRM), and the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF-DOF) are the implementing agencies of F-REDD.

Deforestation and Forest Degradation Drivers Analysis

The Deforestation and Forest Degradation Drivers Analysis was launched in December with an expected duration of two months. This analysis is an important step for the development of the National REDD+ Strategy, and is jointly supported by F-REDD and FCPF Readiness Support Project which both support building the capacity for REDD+ of Lao PDR.

The purpose of the analysis is to identify the hotspots of deforestation and forest degradation, and analyze the drivers (direct and underlying causes) using remote sensing technology. First, one forestry officer from each province—with extensive local knowledge—gathered in Vientiane, and collaborated with FIPD staff to identify the hotspots and analyze the drivers of each province. The preliminary results showed the major hotspots and the chief drivers at the national, regional and forest-type levels could be clearly identified.

After completion of the analysis, a stakeholder consultation will be organized at the central and local levels to further the analysis. As the drivers in different provinces and regions have differing characteristics, the results are expected to provide valuable and diverse inputs to the National REDD+ Strategy.



Upper: Demonstration of the drivers analysis
Lower: Training the provincial forestry officers remote sensing skills

Trainings on REDD+ Basics, Gender and Safeguards in Luang Prabang

Through the JICA-RECOFTC Partnership Programme, F-REDD and RECOFTC (<http://www.recoftc.org/>) are collaborating to strengthen the capacity for REDD+ in Luang Prabang Province. In this quarter, the collaboration especially focused on REDD+ safeguards to enhance measures to avoid and mitigate possible negative environmental and social impacts of REDD+ activities.

First, in October, a basic-level REDD+ Safeguards Training was organized for the local forestry officers of the 12 districts (in Luang Prabang Province), and the importance of gender mainstreaming and community participation was discussed. In December, a training for the Provincial REDD+ Task Force members was held, to facilitate their basic understanding of REDD+. Furthermore, another advanced-level REDD+ Safeguard Training was organized for the district officers who participated in the basic-level training in October.

For instance, in the gender mainstreaming session, the participants had a group work to discuss what kind of roles males and females have in forest management resource use. This was a good opportunity for them to better understand and recognize the need for males and females to cooperate, and particularly the importance of females' participation in protecting the forests.

The knowledge acquired through the series of training courses is expected to be utilized for the upcoming development of the Provincial REDD+ Action Plan and the implementation of pilot activities.



Upper: Presentation on the safeguard issues to be considered by different sectors
Lower: Participants discussing the importance of REDD+ and social equity

Survey of years taken for forest regeneration in NFI 2016-2017

The National Forest Inventory (NFI) survey for the dry season 2016-2017 started at the end of October after the classroom and field trainings. As in the previous (2015-2016) dry season survey, forest resource information is collected with a focus on forest biomass. The NFI will enable estimation of the carbon stock in Lao forests; and hence, will also facilitate estimations of the amount of CO₂ emitted to or removed from the atmosphere.

REDD+ requires the participating countries to clearly distinguish non-forest and forest according to the national forest definition. However, in Lao PDR where slash-and-burn agriculture is widely practiced, accurate interpretation of the transition (regeneration) from slash-and-burn land (non-forest) to forest on satellite imagery has been a big challenge.

To cope with this, a supplementary survey is ongoing in five provinces to clarify the number of years abandoned agricultural lands would need to regenerate to forests (threshold year) after being slashed and burnt. The survey for investigating the threshold year consists of two components: a combination of tree crown cover analysis from aerial photos taken by Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), or so called "drones", and field measurement of diameter at breast height (DBH); and assessment of abandoned year of the sites. As Lao PDR does not have clear information on the number of years for slash and burn land to regenerate to a forest, the survey is vital for Lao PDR to improve its forest carbon stock estimation.

This survey of forest to non-forest change is also working on measuring the biomass of the lands which do not yet meet the national definition of forests, but have potential to regenerate to forests in the future (so called "potential forests"), through sample collection of above-ground vegetation. This will improve the estimation of biomass and carbon stock of non-forest lands.



Upper: Survey using a UAV

Left: Aerial photo taken by a UAV; agricultural land after being abandoned one year (lower part), and newly cleared land for agriculture (upper part)



Right: Sample collection of biomass



Main Activities Conducted

Output 2: Support measurement of emissions reduction and removal through implementation of REDD+

- ◆ NFI survey for the dry season 2016-2017 (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Establishment of the REL Drafting Team and the 1st meeting (*completed*)
- ◆ Deforestation and Forest Degradation Drivers Analysis (*ongoing*)

Output 4: Support Luang Prabang Province REDD+ Readiness

- ◆ PaMs Workshop for reducing deforestation and enhancement of forest conservation (*completed*)
- ◆ Trainings on REDD+ Basics, Gender and Safeguards in Luang Prabang (*completed*)

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Events in the Next Quarter

- Jan.**
3rd meeting of REL/MRV Technical Working Group
- Feb.**
2nd Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting (tbd)
13th meeting of the Forest Sub-Sector Working Group (tbd)
3rd meeting of the Provincial REDD+ Task Force in Luang Prabang
Consultation workshop at district and village cluster levels for drafting PRAP



MONRE
Ministry of Natural
Resources and Environment



MAF
Ministry of Agriculture
and Forestry



Japan International
Cooperation Agency