

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 and Oudomxay). The Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF-DOF) is the implementing agencies of F-REDD

5th Joint Coordination Committee Meeting

The Project F-REDD has one and a half years remaining (at the time of writing); it will finish in October 2020. The work plan and expected outcomes for the remaining period of the project were verified at the 5th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting.

Of just the major activities reviewed by the JCC, there are the formulation of Forest Strategy 2030, the development of Safeguard instruments^{*1}, linking-up the activities of capacity building on REDD+ in the provinces of Luang Prabang and Oudomxay and those of developing projects under the GCF^{*2} fund, setting-up institutions to officially participate in the FCPF^{*3} Carbon Fund, and applying for GCF results-based payment in conformity with the results of the first MRV^{*4}. Each of these are of great importance and interest for the Lao forestry sector.

F-REDD is committed to steadily implementing its planned activities. At the same time, we shall look ahead and provide proactive support which helps Lao PDR sustainably manage their forests even after completion of the project.

3rd National Forest Inventory survey launched

The third National Forest Inventory (NFI)^{*5} — a nationwide forestry survey — was launched in January 2019. The results will be used to estimate the forest carbon stock in Lao forests. The survey is being carried out using the methodology developed for the second NFI, also supported by F-REDD.

Besides understanding the state of forest carbon stock, another important purpose of this survey is to estimate greenhouse gas emissions from selective logging by measuring tree stumps. Persistent illegal logging in Laos (which at most times is selective logging) is the main source of a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions. As current satellite-based remote sensing technology does not allow for the effective identification of such emissions, Laos has been using tree stump measurement as an alternative method.

Laos plans to produce its first MRV report by the end of 2019.

From the provisional results of the tree stump survey, as of the end of March 2019 we are already seeing a certain amount of emissions reduction. This seems to reflect the effects of an order issued by the Prime Minister in 2016, which ensures timber legality and prohibits the export of wood products that have not been fully processed, including logs and sawn wood.



*1 Safeguards are measures to prevent possible effects on society and reduce environmental impacts when implementing REDD+.

*2 GCF (Green Climate Fund) was established in 2010 as part of the UNFCCC's financial mechanism to support climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in developing countries. Please see Newsletter, Vol. 12.

*3 FCPF (Forest Carbon Partnership Facility) is a global partnership — established under the WB and sponsored by developing countries and other partners — with the aim of promoting REDD+. Please, see Newsletter, Vol.4.

*4 MRV is a system to carry out the Measurement, Reporting, and Verification of the results of greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

*5 National Forest Inventory (NFI) is a survey to assess forest information at national level or the result. Laos has been conducted NFIs to estimate carbon stock of major forest types by sample surveys. The results are used for estimation of total forest carbon stock and its changes at national level for REDD+ purposes.



Testing the new deforestation monitoring system using satellite imagery



Forest monitoring classroom training (above) and field training (below)

In northern Laos, the conversion of forests into agricultural land is a major driver of deforestation and forest degradation. For the implementation of REDD+, there is an urgent need to establish a forest monitoring system to avoid the expansion of slash-and-burn agriculture, commercial crop cultivation, and concession areas into the forests that should be protected. In 2018, F-REDD started developing a near-real-time forest monitoring system using free satellite imagery. In January 2019, training sessions were provided for the provincial and district forestry officers of Luang Prabang Province — before testing the system in the provincial protection forests in the pilot sites during the dry season from January to April 2019.

The use of free satellite imagery makes it possible to provide far less expensive and more efficient, accurate information on deforestation. We are also developing an application which allows forestry officers in the field to input monitoring results into tablet devices for reporting. This will enable easier reporting of field survey data and control of the collected data through a unified management system. This monitoring system will also be tested during the 2020 dry season, and user feedback will be reflected in system improvement. In the future, it is hoped that the system will become a tool for participatory forest monitoring to reduce deforestation.

Main Activities Conducted

Output 1: Support forestry sector at the central level

- ◆ Drafting the revised Forestry Law (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Reviewing the Forest Strategy (*ongoing*)

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

- ◆ 3rd National Forest Inventory survey (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Development of Forest Type Map 2019 (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Development of NFMS Country Needs Assessment (*ongoing*)

Output 3: Support National REDD+

- ◆ 7th REL/MRV Technical Working Group meeting (*completed*)
- ◆ Follow-up actions upon selection of ER Program (*ongoing*)

Output 4: Support REDD+ Readiness in Luang Prabang Province and Oudomxay Province

- ◆ OJT training for PAREDD Approach expansion (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Test run of the Near Real-Time Provincial Deforestation Monitoring System this dry season (*ongoing*)
- ◆ Survey on eco-tourism potential (*ongoing*)

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Project Website

<https://www.jica.go.jp/project/english/laos/018/index.html>

Events in the Next Quarter

May.
Annual Workshop

Jun.
8th REL/MRV TWG meeting



MAF
Ministry of
Agriculture and
Forestry



Japan International
Cooperation Agency