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Project ID: 00057518/Award ID: 00047700
UNDP PIMS ID: 3696/GEF PMIS ID: 3173
**Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through
Strengthening Capacity to Implement Natural Resources
Legislation**

Final Evaluation Report

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July 2013

PROJECT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Project number/Award ID/ PIMS ID/GEF PMIS ID	00057518/00047700/3696/3173
Project title:	Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthening Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Natural Resources Management (MONRE) and United Nation Development Programme Lao PDR
Country:	Lao PDR
Region:	Asia and Pacific
Implementing Partner:	Department of Forest Resources Management (DFRM)
Other partners	Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE) Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Department of Forestry (DOF) National Forestry and Research Institute (NAFRI) Provincial office of Natural Resource and Environment (PONRE), District office of Natural Resource and Environment (DONRE), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC), Department of Environment and Social Impact Assessment (DESIA), IUCN
Donors:	GEF
Focal Area:	Multi focal area
Operational Program:	Capacity building

Project Document Signature:	31 August 2010		
Project Starting date	Project completion date		
Originally planned	Actual	Originally planned	Current estimate
1 June 2010	1 January 2011	31 May 2012	31 August 2013

Plan date of terminal meeting:	August 2013
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Total Budget (2010-2013)	Original Budget (US\$)	Last Budget Revision
	500,000	553,472

Resources	Donor	Amount at endorsement	Amount at completion
	GEF in-cash	500,000	500,000
	UNDP in-cash	0	53,472
	UNDP in-kind	400,000	400,000
	Government in-kind	49,850	49,850
	SDC (parallel)	100,000	100,00
	Total	1,049,850	1,103,322

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the 1990s, the Government of Lao PDR became a party to the three Rio Conventions promoting environment and conservation: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). In order to meet the obligations and better understand the environmental management context in Lao PDR, the government, with support from UNDP-GEF, conducted the National Capacity Self-Assessment project (NCSA) in 2003-2009 to assess the country's needs to meet its responsibilities and obligations associated with the three Rio Conventions in the areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.

In 2010, a follow up project, Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthening Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation (NCSAFU), was launched to directly address the capacity needs brought to light in the NCSA. NCSAFU's primary goal was to strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions. The project is coordinated by the Department of Forest Resource Management (DFRM), under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)¹, while collaborating with other departments within MONRE such as the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC), the Department of Environment and Social Impact Assessment (DESIA) as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The objectives of this evaluation report are to provide an independent, un-biased and in-depth assessment of project achievements, to provide lessons and feedback to inform other UNDP initiatives and maximize the sustainability of benefits from this project. Through document review, interviews with key informants, community consultations, and site visits to target provinces, the evaluation seeks to document and assess what was done during the project, and the progress made toward reaching the project objective of strengthening local and national capacity to implement natural resources legislation as it pertains to the Rio Conventions. The Final Evaluation Report content conforms to the rules and procedures as established by GEF and UNDP. The structure follows their outline requirements as laid out in the UNDP's *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects*². Findings are organized into the following criteria: **Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Impact.**

PROJECT RESULTS

The review of this project indicates a successful project that met its outcomes and demonstrated positive results of varying degrees at the national, provincial, and village levels. The project experienced significant delays due to restructuring of involved ministries and departments, in the finalization and publication of project outputs, and in the formation of the Project Board. Successes include strong partnerships, useful and appropriate tools, reports of increased capacity pertaining to natural resources legislation and the Rio Conventions, and community-led initiatives which laid the groundwork for greater awareness and compliance with natural resources legislation.

The main findings and conclusions of this final evaluation of the NCSAFU project are presented below.

¹ During 2009-2012, DFRM was under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). Due to institutional restructuring within MAF and the establishment of MONRE in 2012, DFRM, and the project, were transferred to MONRE.

²<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

Evaluation Criteria	Rating
Implementation	
Efficiency: Adaptive Management	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency: Partnership Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory
Efficiency: Project Finance	Satisfactory
Overall quality of M&E	Moderately Satisfactory
Project execution and contribution of UNDP and IP	Satisfactory
Assessment of Outcomes	
Effectiveness: Attainment of key results	Satisfactory
Relevance	Relevant
Impact	Significant
Sustainability	Moderately Likely

Adaptive management, a component of project efficiency, is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The project took advantage of the changing context, pursuing partnerships with newly created departments, contributing to revisions of relevant law and policy, and consistently using stakeholder input to modify project activities. In the case of development of Community Forestry Management Plans, the project adapted activities to what arose from community consultations.

Partnership arrangements, a component of project efficiency, are rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. Roles and responsibilities were clear and established at the design phase. Once the ministerial restructuring took place, project implementation flowed smoothly. Even in light of the delay of the formation of the project board, the project took advantage of existing leadership capacities to fill the gap. The review indicated that although it took time to put together, a strength of the project was the inter-ministerial TWGs that played a big role in the design and implementation of project outputs, tools and community activities, which also allowed showcasing of expertise in government agencies. Other partners also contributed to the project throughout the duration.

Project Finance, as part of project efficiency, is rated as **Satisfactory**. By June 30, 2013, GEF's funds were approximately 88.7% (\$443,728) disbursed with two months remaining for the project. It is likely that most GEF funds will be spent by the end of the project in August 2013. Project co-financing was secured per the Project Document. Project expenditures were more evenly spread among outcomes 1 and 2. A project audit revealed minor issues which the project accepted responsibilities and pledged to address.

The M&E Design and Implementation is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**. A comprehensive M&E plan was developed, including reporting, meetings, the GEF scorecard, Strategic Result Framework (SRF) indicators, and a third party audit and evaluation. Some indicators in the original design were modified during the Inception Workshop, but were still difficult to achieve and measure for the staffing and resources of the project team. Indicators were never modified nor addressed so many indicators were not systematically collected. The GEF scorecard was administered in September 2012, which didn't allow for a baseline measure. Outside of these issues, the project team showed a high compliance with the M&E plan, instituting additional M&E for project site activities. Nevertheless, sufficient information existed to provide a good understanding of project progress.

The overall efficiency of UNDP as GEF-implementing agency and DFRM as the Implementing Partner is rated as **Satisfactory**. Both the IP and UNDP showed on-going communication throughout the project and were focused on results and outcomes.

Attainment of key results indicates the project met its objectives (effectiveness) and is rated as **Satisfactory**. Project activities spanned many different levels throughout the course of the project: national, provincial/district, and community. At the provincial level, changes in the implementation of laws, capacity, and increased coordination took place due to project interventions. At the national level, changes in capacity and increased coordination can be attributed to project activities. The project contributed to four (4) legislation revisions and/or plans during the project. One (1) is completed; the other three (3) are still in process. The project's contributions will conclude when the project finishes, though the legislative revisions will continue.

Owing to the harmonization with government priorities, GEF focal areas, and UN/UNDP Action Plans, the project is ranked as **Relevant**.

The potential for sustainable impacts due to this project is **Significant**. At the national level, legislation revisions and relationship building have the greatest opportunity for long-term impact. At the provincial level, increased implementation of legislation, community based natural resource management, and use of project tools have the greatest chance for long term impact.

The potential for sustainability is rated as **Moderately Likely** with moderate risks. Country ownership has been demonstrated. The project has supported for legislation revisions, which are sustained within the legal framework. Project tools were seen as useful and appropriate, but most project outputs haven't been published or disseminated. The Community Forestry Management Plans have a good chance for replicability in other areas, but the communities need more financial and technical support.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

National Level:

1. A greater awareness and understanding of the Rio Conventions is exhibited. Informants specifically mention climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, and deforestation, which are areas of importance for Lao PDR. E.g. one informant said he understood more about the effect that cutting forests has on the climate.
2. Technical Working Groups (TWGs), established by the project to support implementation, fostered information exchange and exchange of expertise amongst sectors (ministries and departments) and levels (national-provincial) during consultations and workshops.
3. The project contributed to on-going strategy, policy, and legislation initiatives in the sector, including supporting: consultations for Forestry Law revision, development of the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP), consultations for the National Land Use Policy revision, and a national consultant for the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Decree revision.

Province/District Level:

4. Greater awareness and understanding of Rio Conventions is exhibited, specifically relating to areas of importance for Lao PDR. Officials specifically note the primary issues relating to the Rio Conventions, such as climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, and deforestation. Officials also see a linkage of their work with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), saying when working in natural resources and conservation, "it's related to the objective of the Rio Conventions."

5. A greater awareness and understanding of natural resource laws is reported, mostly Forestry Law and Wildlife and Aquatics Law, but also Environmental Protection Law, Pest Management Law, and Fishery Law (laws summarized in the Land Handbook).
6. The project fostered communication at the national level in joint workshops where it allowed in person contact. It also fostered communication amongst different provinces, and between the provincial levels to communities, where officials provided support to community plans.
7. Officials involved in the project defined their roles in implementation as disseminating relevant laws to communities, and supporting target communities in the formulation of Community Forestry Management Guidelines.
8. An increased implementation of laws at the province/community level was reported, notably in target communities, but also dissemination and awareness-raising about natural resource law to other villages in district. One province reported disseminating materials to 40 villages in the province. Another province reported disseminating materials to 4 villages.
9. The project enjoys high levels of engagement with provincial officials.

Community Level:

10. Communities report being supportive of Community Forestry Management Plans, and they see that “laws that give them benefit,” including more NTFPs and allowing wildlife populations to increase, reflecting a more positive attitude towards the law.
11. Community Forestry Management Guidelines initiated and adopted by Ban³Tha (Kham District, Xiengkhouang Province) and Ban XayXee(Xiasettha District, Attapeu Province) target communities.
12. Villagers in Ban Tha report a clear understanding of different zones, differing between strictly prohibited, buffer, and community use areas. Ban XayXee has signed regulations regarding the establishment of the community forestry management plan.
13. Community and provincial officials give anecdotal reports of decreased encroaching, slash and burn, illegal logging, and illegal wildlife hunting at target villages due to project activities.
14. Villagers report increased understanding of natural resources, biodiversity and climate change, describing it in terms of larger patterns (i.e. mentioning catchment areas, changes in weather and rainfall patterns).

LESSONS LEARNED

Capacity building and awareness-raising about natural resources legislation at all levels was seen as important, demonstrating the project objective aligned with stakeholders’ perceptions of needs and was relevant to stakeholders.

- Awareness-raising at the community level is regarded as very important by all levels for this project and for future directions.
- More capacity development regarding natural resources legislation, the Rio Conventions, and the use of project tools is regarded as important.
- Awareness-raising about the importance of the environment, resources, and how deforestation, biodiversity, and land degradation affect economic development is needed at upper levels to leverage strategic support and include key environmental issues into national level policies.

³ Village

Addressing implementation of natural resources legislation and issues pertaining to the Rio Conventions is a cross cutting issue.

- Involvement of different ministries, departments, sectors and levels all contributed to the successful outcomes of the project.
- There was no clear mechanism for forming cross-ministerial working groups, however, cross sectoral communication was highly regarded and worth the time and effort.
- Exchanges of expertise at different levels built relationships among different departments and ministries and allowed for information exchange.

Communities exhibited high levels of ownership in managing their protected areas, however, clear linkages between natural resource management and benefits to communities need to be clearly established.

- Having communities and local officials work together to design activities and management plans pertaining to their local area conferred a high level of ownership, which was revealed in high levels of engagement.
- Consultations revealed support for Community Forestry Management and clear understanding of the need for protection, however, the need for livelihood support was a consistent theme.
- If communities perceive they will receive tangible benefits from natural resources conservation and protection, such as increased non-timber forestry products (NTFPs) or livelihood projects, there is likely to be higher compliance.
- If benefits are perceived as more abstract (for future generations or to sequester carbon), there might be less support of regulations in times of need.

Revision of legislation, national level plans and policies operate according to the government timeframe, not a project timeframe. Project timelines should take into account government procedures and protocols.

- Expectations of revisions/changes should be aligned with national procedures.
- The Compliance Strategy developed by the project also needed to follow government protocols and procedures for approval through different departments and ministries as it covered responsibilities of different government officials. Soon to be published, this and other project outputs that are being published at the end of the project, are at risk for not being tested or used.
- Contributions to legislation revision and strategic planning are an important opportunity to leverage natural resources and Rio Convention content into national policy, with a long-term potential for impact. The project employed a flexible and pragmatic approach in joining with other on-going initiatives.

The term “implementation” of legislation is general and can mean many things, including top-down enforcement through penalties for breaking the law, dissemination of laws, provision of permits for use, or bottom-up participatory community agreements to increase compliance.

- Outcomes in this project didn't clarify what type of implementation was intended; no documentation was provided explaining the rationale of how or why project activities focused on dissemination of laws.
- Clarifying what type of implementation is intended for an initiative during project design or very early on in the project will make it easier to measure if and how implementation has changed.

- Clarifying what type of implementation is intended during project design or very early on in the project will also make it easier to target tools and activities at the correct officials, as well as indicators and baselines to measure change.
- Provincial stakeholders in this project saw their role in implementation as dissemination of laws, and the project developed tools to help them disseminate laws and create participatory community agreements.
- Interviewed national level officials did not perceive themselves to have a role in implementation of legislation, which could have made the project less focused at the national level. Some informants suggested that participants with backgrounds in policy or legislation would have been helpful.

Project outcomes relating to legislation implementation and capacity building at national and provincial levels had limited connection to outcomes related to legislation revision.

- Activities relating to legislation revision were unconnected to other activities, making the project less focused.
- Adaptive management used by the project allowed activities to be driven more by provincial and local needs, contributing greater ownership and positive outcomes. This increased the project's success, but it reduced some of its focus at the national level.

Data on some project indicators were neither systematically collected nor collected at all, primarily due to lack of human and financial resources. Indicators could have been revised or removed when the project began gathering momentum at the midterm review; capacity development indicators weren't collected over key stakeholders at the beginning of the project, making quantification of capacity changes difficult, as no baseline was measured.

The project took advantage of existing leadership capacities within its partnership structure when the formation of the project board was substantially delayed.

- Due to government restructuring, the project board wasn't formed until the third year.
- The UNDP took on a greater role by providing some directional decisions.
- The national level Technical Working Group helped set the direction at the national and provincial levels.
- This informal process wasn't systematically documented. TWG meeting minutes weren't available, so it wasn't possible to conduct a systematic assessment of discussions, inputs, quality of interaction, and level of guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In finalising the exit strategy, some areas the IP may want to focus efforts on to increase chances for sustainability include:

- Develop a plan for appropriate departments and divisions to use the Review of Legal Framework and Compliance Strategy. There is a risk that these outputs will not be used after publishing.
- TWGs provided a good platform for inter-ministerial and inter-departmental sharing at all levels. The exit strategy should include options to keep the TWGs active, or to use other existing TWGs related to the Rio Conventions. The formalities for nominating the members were time consuming, however, once the relationships are established, communication between the departments can be less formal.
- Communities need additional support to realize their plans and implement activities. Community and provincial support for their management plans is currently very high,

and in the first three months of implementation at the community level, a lot of progress has been made, but it's too short for long term sustainability at this point. There is great opportunity as communities have concrete plans for next steps but lack relatively small amounts of funding.

Linkages with other initiatives may increase the chance for sustainability.

- The exit strategy should closely examine other initiatives or funding opportunities including DPC funding, the Asian Development Bank-Biodiversity Conservation Corridor project (in Champasak Province) currently being implemented, the World Bank's second Laos Environment and Social project (LENS2) which is in the project preparation stages.
- GEF/World Bank's International Development Assistance's planned Protected Area and Wildlife Project (PAWP), with a proposed development objective of strengthening participatory and trans frontier management of national protected areas and improve law enforcement against illegal wildlife trade. This project is designed to enhance the capacity of DFRM and DOFI and might find some of the NCSAFU project tools, such as the poster, Law Handbook, and NTFP guidelines, useful.
- The Community Forestry Management agreements developed by the project align closely with the goals of the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). Linkages with RECOFTC may strengthen community forestry management in project communities.

Next steps to increase implementation and compliance with natural resources legislation in Lao PDR:

- Other tools stakeholders felt would help them to implement laws include: summary handbooks of different laws in a concise and usable format as developed in the project and other awareness raising tools like Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or radio spots to disseminate laws at the community level.
- Provincial officers would like to have specific guidelines for law enforcement; suggestions include specific fines or penalties for encroachers, illegal hunters and harvesters that would give them guidance on the spot.
- Natural resources management at the community level needs to be linked to some income-generating component, either NTFPs or other livelihood initiatives. One informant at the national level noted: There is a "big risk to implementing the Rio Conventions – forest conservation, biodiversity conservation" because "at the same time, we have to be working on incomes at the village level." When times get difficult, the villagers will go back to the forest. They don't have the luxury of adhering to management plans if they have no other source of income.
- Engage with the private sector to increase awareness of, and compliance with, natural resources legislation. While this is beyond the scope of the current project and the mandate of the IP, higher level contacts in MONRE, MAF, MEM, or MOJ facilitated through the national TWG might be an entry point for discussion.

In order to better address the commitments of Lao PDR to the Rio Conventions at the national level, key issues and concrete outcomes should be mainstreamed into national and ministry plans.

- Support inclusion of key issues, notably land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change, into the 8th National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2016-2020 and other five-year strategy documents. Planning for this period will be done in the next couple of years, so now is the time.

- Support concrete outcomes to increase concrete results. For instance, the revision of the EIA decree was included in 7thNSEDP, and it is being performed (with project support). Only including the words “climate change” or “land degradation” in a strategy can be too abstract to for implementation.
- UNFCCC and climate change are well represented in Lao PDR policy and planning, especially the Strategy on Climate Change, the Second Five Year Environmental Action Plan (2011-2015) and the Natural Resources and Environment Sector Plan (2011-2015). Providing support for the implementation of the NAPA and the Strategy on Climate Change of the Lao PDR (in which adaptation and mitigation options for key strategic priorities in different sectors are laid out) is a next step.
- UNCBD and biodiversity are addressed to a certain extent, through the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) (supported by the project), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Additionally NGOs are active in biodiversity issues. Supporting implementation of the NBSAP or PBSAP is a next step.
- UNCCD and land degradation is addressed in national policy and planning primarily through government policy related to preventing slash and burn. Integrate issues relating to the prevention and/or reduction of degraded land and rehabilitation of partially degraded land into related sectors (agriculture, forestry, sustainable land use and management, climate change adaptation) and policies (National Land Use Policy).

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Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her gratitude and thanks for all the stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation mission, from government officials in Vientiane to communities and officials in the target provinces. Everyone was generous with their time and experience, providing information, facts, suggestions, and publications that were invaluable to the evaluation.

A special thanks is also due to the staff of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who provided insight and key contacts. The Project Team, Ms. Phetmany Sanasisane, Assistant Project Manager, and Ms. Dada Bacudo, Technical Assistant, were professional and obliging and provided tremendous support in arranging interviews, meetings, and consultations in Vientiane, Xiengkhouang Province, and Attapeu Province and answering endless questions regarding the project. Their project background and logistical support contributed greatly to a successful mission in Lao PDR that couldn't have been carried out without their help. Thanks also to Mr. Vilaysack Thongkhamhan and Mr. Douangphachanh Khanthaly who provided essential translation services throughout the mission.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

APM	Assistant Project Manager
APR	Annual Project Report
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CPAP	UNDP country programme action plan
CPD	UNDP country programme document
CO	UNDP country office
DESIA	Department of Environment and Social Impact Assessment
DFRM	Department of Forest Resource Management
DOF	Department of Forestry
DOFI	Department of Forest Inspection
DONRE	District Office of Natural Resources and Environment
DPC	Department of Planning and Cooperation
ESIA	Environmental Social Impact Assessment
EPL	Environmental Protection Law
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GOL	Government of Lao
IP	Implementing partner
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MEAs	Multilateral Environment Agreements
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mines
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MSP	Medium sized project
NAP	National action programme on combating desertification
NAPA	National adaptation plan of action (for climate change)
NBCA	National biodiversity conservation area
NBSAP	National biodiversity strategy and action plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NCSAFU	Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthened Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation (project title)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NLMA	National Land Management Authority
NPD	National Project Director
NRM	Natural resources management
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
PA	Protected area
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PBSAP	Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
PIF	Project identification form
PM	Project manager
PONRE	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRF	Strategic Result Framework
SEM	Strengthening Environmental Management Project
TOT	Training of Trainer
TWG	project technical working groups
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification and Land Degradation
UNDAF	United Nation Development Assistant Framework

UNFCCC
WREA

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Water Resource and Environment Administration

I. Country Context and Project Description

The Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthened Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation (NCSAFU) project has the objective of strengthening national and local capacity to implement natural resource legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions. Starting officially in January 2011, the project is scheduled to finish in August 2013.

The Government of Lao became party to all three Rio Conventions in the 1990s, which along with other MEAs and sustainable development conventions, collectively set the overall context for Lao PDR's global environmental management. The Project aligns with the Government of Lao's (GoL) priorities by strengthening capacities related to the Government's obligations to the Rio Conventions.

Aligned with the United Nations Development Assistant Framework (UNDAF) Action and UNDP Country Program Document (CPD), the following outcomes for Lao PDR are relevant:

- By 2015, the government promotes more equitable and sustainable growth for poor people in the Lao PDR
- By 2015, the government ensures sustainable natural resources management through improved governance and community participation
- By 2015, the government and communities better adapt to and mitigate climate change and reduce natural disaster vulnerability in priority sectors.

Problems the Project Sought to Address

This project builds upon the National Capacity Self-Assessment project (NCSA) for Global Environmental Management carried out from October 2004 to April 2009 by Lao PDR. NCSA sought to identify areas where targeted capacity building and program assistance can help Lao PDR to honour its Rio Conventions commitments, specifically addressing issues of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation

As indicated in the NCSAFU Project Document, NCSA and other national studies found “the existing legislative framework, although imperfect, provides an adequate basis for substantially improving natural resource management. However, many capacity barriers exist at the national and provincial/district levels for the implementing the existing legislative framework.” NCSAFU seeks to address these capacity barriers so that implementation of existing legislation and natural resource management will improve, leading to increased implementation of Rio Conventions.

Expected Results

NCSAFU has three main outcomes to support its objective.

(1) Key stakeholders in three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation. To support this outcome, national policies, laws, regulations, and decrees related to natural resources management were reviewed and prioritized, and a compliance strategy for implementing priority laws at the provincial level was developed. A set of operational tools was modified/developed, trainings were held, and tools were tested at the provincial/district level.

Outputs for this outcome are:

- An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles;

- A compliance strategy for the provincial level;
- A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement targeted for provincial authorities and local communities; and
- Documentation of the impacts of tools on compliance across the project.

(2) National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation, and in particular are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement. For this outcome, national policies, laws, regulations, and decrees related to natural resources management at the national level were reviewed and prioritized, and a compliance strategy for implementing priority laws at the national level was developed. A set of operational tools was modified/developed for use at the national level and trainings held on using the tools.

Outputs for this outcome are:

- An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles;
- A compliance strategy for the national level;
- A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement targeted for national authorities; and
- Documentation of the impacts of tools on compliance across the project.

(3) Legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive. Activities to support this objective included, supporting the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC) of MONRE to integrate Rio Conventions into relevant planning and guidelines, supporting strengthened coordination through line agencies participation in TWGs, and supporting other agencies, such as Department of Environment and Social Impact Assessment (DESIA) to improve legal framework and mainstream the Rio Conventions.

The **outputs** for this outcome were legislative/policy/planning revisions. It takes into account the primary and secondary obligations to the Rio Conventions.

Main Stakeholders

The implementing partner (IP) for NCSAFU is the Department of Forest Resources Management (DFRM), under the MONRE⁴. Other key stakeholders include: the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), DPC – MONRE, DESIA – MONRE, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the members of the project-initiated TWG at the national level and the 3 TWGs at the provincial levels.

⁴ During the fourth quarter of 2011, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment was created, and some departments formerly under MAF were renamed or reassigned according to their mandate. Thus, WREA, the Water Resources and Environment Administration, originally under the mandate of MAF, became defunct, and its officers were assigned to other relevant departments accordingly. The Department of Forest Resources Management (DFRM) was named as the implementing partner, under MONRE.

II. Evaluation Plan and Scope

This section outlines the evaluation methodology and scope, evaluation plan, approach and tools used.

This report is a result of the Final Evaluation for the UNDP-GEF Project *Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthened Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation* (NCSAFU) undertaken by GoL. The evaluation was conducted by Ms. Lesley Perlman (international consultant) on behalf of UNDP and carried out from 3 June 2013 through 14 July 2013, with a 15-day in country mission.

The evaluation seeks to document and assess what was done during the project, and the progress made toward reaching the project objective of strengthening local and national capacity to implement natural resources legislation as it pertains to the Rio Conventions by specifically assessing the main outcomes of NCSAFU.

Scope and Methodology

The Final Evaluation Report conforms to the rules and procedures established by GEF and UNDP and the structure follows outline requirements as laid out in the UNDP's *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Projects*⁵. Results are organized into the following criteria: **Relevance**, **Efficiency**, **Effectiveness**, **Sustainability**, and **Impact**.

Relevance looks at how well the project relates to the main objectives of the GEF focal area and to the environmental and development priorities of the Government of Lao.

Efficiency examines if the project is implemented efficiently, and in line with national and international standards, focusing on management and partnership arrangements, the degree to which adaptive management was used, financial aspects including budget, expenditures, and co-financing, and the efficient use of resources, such as national expertise, in achieving project outcomes.

Effectiveness looks at to what extent the project has reached its objective and outcomes, and to what extent the project outputs have been used, specifically the tools and documents developed and updated by the project.

Impacts are the potential and long term effects of the activities on project stakeholders and beneficiaries, on legislative and strategic planning changes, and local environment.

Sustainability relates to aspects of the project which have been institutionalized or the potential to be institutionalized and which aspects have the potential to remain after the project is completed.

The objectives of the evaluation are to provide an un-biased and in depth assessment of project achievements and to provide lessons and feedback to inform other UNDP initiatives and maximize the sustainability of benefits from this project. The evaluation examined project design and formulation, implementation, and results, focusing on progress towards achieving outcomes, and documenting what was done at the national level and project sites. It also examined key challenges and gaps in implementation while examining the role of partners, the project team, and different stakeholders.

⁵<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

The evaluator also applied the following principles during the data collection and analysis to produce a rigorous, unbiased, and accurate Final Evaluation Report: *Triangulation of data*, multiple sources and measures of data were collected in order to assure that findings were valid and accurate; *Integrity*, any issue that could include conflict of interest was brought to UNDP and the project team; and *Confidentiality*, informants were given the opportunity to provide information confidentially and community consultations were held in confidence.

Approach

The evaluation used the following structure:

Table 1: Evaluation Structure

	Days
1. Document review and preparation of Inception Report	5
2. Data collection: Mission to Lao PDR	15
Interviews with key stakeholders at the national level in Vientiane	4
Site visits to two provinces, for community consultation and interviews with key stakeholders at the provincial, district and village levels.	5
Collect additional documentation and information from the project team	3
Mission debriefings with project team and UNDP	1
3. Analysis of data	5
In-depth review and analysis of data	
Collection of follow up information if necessary	
Prepare draft evaluation report	
4. Finalize Evaluation Report	2
Submit to UNDP/relevant stakeholders	
Integrate comments and submit final draft.	

Outcome 1: Key stakeholders in the two/three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation.

Through interviews, community consultation, documentation and two (2) site visits, the evaluation examined what was done in the provinces throughout this project, including:

- perceptions of what legislation, if any, has been implemented and enforced to a greater extent due to this project,
- perceived changes in the implementation/enforcement of natural resources legislation, specifically looking at changes in the “drum” (outreach/awareness raising), the “carrot” (compliance, permitting, mapping, guidelines for natural resource use) and the “stick” (enforcement and penalties),
- perceived levels of institutional capacity via self-ratings on the GEF scorecard,
- perceptions of what worked best to achieve those changes,
- perceptions of what effects, if any, those changes had,
- what activities were undertaken at the project site level.

Outcome 2: National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation, and in particular are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement.

Through interviews with a selection of key stakeholders in relevant government departments and documentation, the evaluation looked at what was done at the national level during this project, including:

- perceptions of what legislation, if any, have they been able to implement and enforce to a greater extent due to this project,
- perceived changes in the implementation/enforcement of natural resources legislation at the institutional (national) and provincial levels, specifically looking at changes in the “drum” (outreach/awareness raising), the “carrot” (compliance, permitting, mapping, guidelines for natural resource use) and the “stick” (enforcement and penalties),
- perceived levels of institutional capacity via self-ratings on the GEF scorecard,
- perceptions of support they were able to provide to provincial and local counterparts,
- perceptions of what worked best to achieve those changes, and
- perceptions of what effects, if any, those changes had.

At both the national and provincial levels, project outputs were examined and included what types of capacity building/support stakeholders received, what project tools they used, and how they were used, and any other perceived benefits of the project.

Challenges, obstacles and progress toward targets were examined by comparing project activities and outcomes with the project framework and indicators, perceptions of what is needed, if anything, for increased implementation and enforcement of natural resources legislation, and perceptions of difficulties encountered during the project. The potential for sustainability was examined through perceptions of ownership of project components, what remains and what tools may continue to be used after the project is completed.

Outcome 3: The legislation and policy with regard to the Rio Conventions on Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive.

This was examined through are view of legislative revisions and strategic plans, which the project contributed to, as well as interviews with stakeholders in relevant government departments and NGOs.

As indicated in the NCSAFU Project Document and NCSAFU Inception Report, the most important environmental issues in Lao PDR concerning the Rio Conventions are: **land degradation** due to deforestation and forest degradation driven by agricultural expansion, shifting cultivation, unsustainable logging, forest fire and infrastructure development; **loss of biodiversity** due to degradation and fragmentation, illegal hunting and the wildlife trade, limited management in protected areas, and lack of awareness, and; **climate change** due to increased CO2 emissions from deforestation, degradation, and agriculture and loss of degradation capacities due to degradation of natural resources and ecosystems.

Recommendations are identified in the sections of the evaluation report for lessons learned, suggestions and gaps in the current project.

Evaluation Tools

Data was collected using the following:

- Review of available documentation,
- Site visits to Attapeu and Xiengkhouang Provinces,
- Key informant interviews of project staff, and stakeholders in key government departments (MONRE, DPC, DESIA, and MAF) who formed the national TWGs,

- Key informant interviews with select provincial and district environmental officers who formed the provincial level TWGs and worked with focus communities,
- Interviews with select relevant NGOs involved in natural resources legislation implementation and enforcement,
- Consultation with community members at two of the project sites,
- Capacity Development Scorecard. Developed within the context of the GEF Strategic Approach to Capacity Building, the project administered the scorecard with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR to project stakeholders at the national and provincial levels in September 2012 and May 2013.

An Evaluation Matrix was also developed based on the Project Document, revised Strategic Results Framework and review of relevant GoL's policies and planning. The matrix is structured around the five GEF evaluation criteria and guided the information gathering with informants. ([Annex 2](#)).

Limitations and Constraints

The findings and conclusions contained in this report are the result of primarily desk review of project documentation, internet sources, site visits to target villages and target provinces, and interviews. Interviews were conducted with only a selection of key individuals during a two week mission to Lao PDR due to limited time and resources. Additionally, the evaluator is not conversant in Lao, and while a translator, independent of the project and UNDP, accompanied the evaluator on interviews, site visits, and community consultations, it is acknowledged that certain nuances might have been lost in translation. Additionally some documents were only available in Lao.

However, taking these constraints into perspective, the data collection for this report was rigorous, thorough, and accurate for the time and resources allotted and provided enough information to a) determine to what extent the project met its objective and outcomes, and b) provide recommendations and lessons learned to be applied elsewhere.

III. Findings

The following chapters cover the evaluation findings, separating project design/formulation, project implementation and project results into individual chapters per UNDP/GEF guidelines.

III.1 Project Design and Formulation

This section examines different elements relating to the design and formulation of the project. Key points include:

- Outcomes flow from the project objective. The first two outcomes are SMART⁶ but the third outcome is less specific and quite broad in scope.
- Lessons learned from NCSA were incorporated into the project design.
- Stakeholder consultation was an essential part of the project incorporated from the project design phase.
- Management arrangements were properly identified, with roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval.

⁶ SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.

III.1.1 Analysis of Strategic Results Framework (SRF)

The SRF was developed during the design phase, and the activities and indicators were further modified and enhanced during the Inception Workshop based on consultation and feedback from partners. The complete SRF can be found in [Annex 3](#); a simplified version is given below.

The outcomes smoothly flow from the main objective of the project - focusing on capacity building at the national and local levels on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions. For the most part, Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 are thoughtful, clear and “SMART” Activities are mirrored at the national and provincial levels, with clear outputs established for each outcome related to capacity development. Stakeholders at the Inception Workshop commented that while outputs may be similar, “the level of implementation might be different.” One informant commented that “implementation of the law or framework, it is general, it can be everything” reflecting some ambiguity, but also flexibility, in the first two outcomes.

Outcome 3 is less specific; it is measurable and relevant, but its achievability and time frame is independent of the project, as legislative revisions take time, consultation, and feedback from numerous stakeholders. Projects can help support the legislative process, but ultimately, the timeframe and content is dependent upon government procedures and protocols. Activities, outputs, and indicators under this outcome were modified during the Inception workshop, as stakeholders felt they could be reviewed and improved.

Informants commented that the scope of the project is large and the project has limited capacity, in terms of staffing and resources.

Table 2: Summary Strategic Results Framework

Objective: To strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions.		
Outcome	Outputs	Activities
(1) Key stakeholders in the two/three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resources management legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles • A compliance strategy for provincial level • A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement built for provincial authorities and local communities • Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and prioritize national policies/laws/regulations/decrees related to natural resource management. • Develop a compliance strategy for implementing priority laws in the provincial level. • Collect, identify and test of the most appropriate existing operational tools and make them operational for routine use • Develop the operational tools to fit at the provincial, district and communities • Organize Training of Trainer (ToT) on using compliance strategy and using operational tools in three target areas. • Application of the tools across the entire project sites. • Document the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project site.
(2) National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed set of priority laws, regulations and/or articles • A compliance strategy for national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and prioritize legal framework – national policies, laws, regulations related to

and enforce natural resource legislation and in particular are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A package of operational tools and capacity for law enforcement built for national level • Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project 	<p>natural resource management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a compliance strategy for national level. • Database/website development • Develop the operational tools to fit at the national level. • Organize Training of Trainer (ToT) on using compliance strategy and using operational tools in central level. • Document the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project site.
(3) The legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative revision taken into account the primary and secondary obligation to the Rio Conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Department of Planning and Investment at national and provincial to integrated Rio Convention in the annual district and/or provincial development planning and guideline. • Support better coordination between lines agencies through working with TWGs to review exiting institutional structure and mandate that related to Rio Convention. • Contribute to improvement of legal framework at operational level such as decrees and development guidelines that issued by Ministries. • Provide technical support to implementing ESIA

Indicators are covered in section [III.2.5 Monitoring Design and Implementation](#).

III.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

Three main risks were addressed in the Project Document. The first risk, assessed as a medium level risk, is that even when stakeholders have the capacity to implement laws, motivation could be lacking. The project strategy to minimize this risk was to target lack of motivation and real barriers to implementation, rather than just theoretical or technical barriers.

Another risk is that GoL's commitment to "rule of law" declines in the coming years. However, due to the support of the government and the support of the international community, this is considered a low level risk.

The final risk outlined in the Project Document is that certain laws and regulations in Lao PDR are not ready for implementation, since they may be perceived as too general for enforcement. This is considered a low risk also since initial reviews from NCSA and during project design indicated that there are some articles ready for immediate implementation.

Assumptions were addressed and incorporated into the Strategic Results Framework.

Table 3: Assumptions and Risks

Objective/Outcome	Assumptions and Risks
To strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing legislative Framework is good enough to start implementing Press is present and viable at the national level Government maintains transition to “Rule of Law”
(1) Key stakeholders in the two/three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resources management legislation	The 3 provincial agencies maintain the level of commitment.
(2) National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation and in particular are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement	National agencies maintain the level of commitment
3) The legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive.	Effective working relationship can be developed with the SEM project. ⁷

A key theme in assumptions is the commitment of government agencies at the national and provincial levels to the project objectives and implementation of natural resources legislation. Another assumption concerned developing a good working partnership with another on-going project; initial interactions during the design phase indicated this wouldn't be a problem. Finally, another assumption regarding the press being present and viable at the national level related to an indicator rather than a project objective.

Additionally, during the project, risk logs were filed in project quarterly and annual reports, with an assessment of the impact, determination of actions and the responsible party, and the status. Risks generally concerned: administration (staffing and financial), operational (travel difficulties to target sites in rainy season), and political. Political risks weren't an issue of the commitment of GoL or Ministries; but were instead related to procedures and protocols of GoL, which did not operate on project timelines. For example, the official nomination of the TWGs took longer than expected due to procedures required by GoL, the process of the ESIA decree revision took longer due to procedure and was more complicated than assumed, and restructuring of the ministry reassigned the ministries and departments of the IP and key stakeholders delaying the project. Likewise the assignment of the Project Board took longer than expected due to restructuring and nomination procedures.

In retrospect, assumptions and risks relating to the procedures required for creating inter-ministerial working groups and the passage of laws, policies, and decrees might have been better addressed by incorporating extra time into the project design or researching the time frame and existing procedures to get a more accurate assessment of the time line. However, the risks regarding the delay due to the restructuring of ministries and departments were not expected nor could be foreseen during the project design phase. GEF recognized this when the project requested and received a project extension.

III.1.3 Lessons from other Relevant Projects Incorporated into Project Design

NCSA, funded by GEF and undertaken by GoL sought to identify priority capacity needs under the three Rio Conventions. It first examined gaps in the implementation of each Convention, and then looked at cross cutting capacity gaps that ran through all three Conventions. NCSA

⁷ The linkage to the SEM project was considered an assumption during the design phase, however, during implementation, although there was no active linkage with the SEM project, this does not appear to have impeded progress.

yielded seven priority outputs or recommendations, with sub-outputs in each category. The seven priority outputs are:

Priority Output1: Strategies and action plans on climate change and land degradation are developed and implemented alongside the NBSAP.

Priority Output2: National Information System on climate change, biodiversity and land degradation is developed and operational.

Priority Output3: Institutional and legal frameworks for organizing and coordinating obligations and responsibilities under the Rio Conventions are efficient and effective.

Priority Output4: Develop and implement a strategy for public education and awareness-raising on climate change, land degradation and biodiversity.

Priority Output5: Research activities on climate change, land degradation and biodiversity undertaken and with results widely disseminated.

Priority Output6: Systems to monitor, evaluate and predict the impacts and effects of climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss are strengthened and implemented.

Priority Output 7: Institutional mechanisms that strengthen and improve the participation of villages in environmental management are developed.

NCSAFU grew directly out of the recommendations and strategies developed through this process, with 19 sub-outputs under **Priority Output 1, Priority Output 3, Priority Output 4, Priority Output 6 and Priority Output 7** directly relating the outcomes, outputs, and activities in the design of NCSAFU. These sub-outputs focus on three general areas related to: strengthening natural resource management legislation, policies, and planning; building capacity to better implement natural resources legislation; and raising awareness on the Rio Conventions and related content.

III.1.4 Linkages to other Relevant Projects in the Sector

Other relevant projects working on issues of environmental legislation, capacity building related to environment and natural resources management, and landscape management provided NCSAFU with lessons, including:

The *Strengthening Environmental Management Project (SEMI)* focuses on addressing national environmental issues by strengthening legislation at the national level. It focused on the Environmental Protection Law (EPL) and worked to strengthen capacity of environmental officers at the national and provincial level as well as raising environmental awareness.

The *Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI)* worked with the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the National Assembly to build the long term capacity of the government to integrate environmental concerns in the national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. It also worked to improve the longer term ability of natural and environmental resources to support livelihoods and reduce poverty.

The *Greater Mekong Sub-Region Biodiversity Conservation Corridor* Initiative is working in the corridor between Dong Hua Sao NBCA in Champasak Province. The project's objective is to conserve biodiversity in the corridor by protecting the remaining forest and supporting reforestation.

The *Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation Project (CLIPAD)*, implemented by MAF (DOF) and GIZ aims to identify opportunities for biodiversity and reduced greenhouse gas emissions through avoided deforestation and degradation in Lao PDR's National Protected Area (NPA) system. It aims to demonstrate pathways for implementation of sustainable financing through forest carbon management (REDD+ funds).

The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative (TABI) is a joint project of MAF and the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) with the goal of contributing to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods of upland communities through sustainable management and use of Agrobiodiversity. *TABI* was also supporting IUCN to develop the PBSAP, to which the NCSAFU project contributed and the NBSAP, which is directly related to the project's goals. Project team members attended NBSAP's consultation workshop.

III.1.5 Planned Stakeholder Participation

Project design builds on the NCSA process, which followed a thorough and extensive consultation process, with three thematic working groups, over 20 workshops, and over 600 people. During the development of NCSAFU, all major stakeholders were consulted and two specific consultations were held.

The main partners for the project were intended to be the Water Resources and Environment Administration (WREA), the focal point for the UNFCCC, and MAF, the focal point for the UNCCD and UNCBD, as both agencies are responsible for coordinating activities related to the Conventions.⁸ Other core stakeholders to be included as TWG members are:

- Ministry of Justice
- Mass and community organizations
- Water Resources and Environment offices in pilot provinces
- Provincial Agriculture and Forestry offices in pilot provinces
- District Agriculture and Forestry offices in pilot districts
- Department of Forest Inspection at national and provincial levels
- Village elders in pilot provinces
- Law implementation and enforcement agencies (Investigation Organ, Office of Public Prosecutors, and the Court)
- Other relevant government sectors
- Other relevant private sector partners
- International organizations

Stakeholder consultation was also integrated in the Inception Workshop to elicit feedback on the project Strategic Results Framework, workplan, roles and responsibilities.

III.1.6 Replication Approach

The project addresses prevalent capacity gaps in Lao PDR, the region, and indeed the world: adequate legislation exists but implementation and enforcement capacity is inadequate. Therefore tools, trainings, and methods piloted through this project have the potential to be replicated and applied to different contexts through the UNDP/GEF framework.

The project focuses on developing capacity at the national level, testing and modifying tools, and fostering vertical and horizontal communication amongst government agencies; lessons learned can be expanded to other provinces within Lao PDR. For example, successful tools can be used in other provinces and districts outside the project sites, and methods such as Train the Trainer

⁸ As mentioned, WREA and MAF underwent a restructuring during project implementation, which resulted in the creation of a new ministry, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), and assigned of different departments to MAF and MONRE. This restructuring would have multiple cascading effects on project implementation. See section II.1.8.

(TOT) workshops focusing on using project tools and raising awareness on natural resources legislation gives skills that can continue to be used by district, provincial, and national officials.

Another area of replicability arose during the project. The Community Forestry Management plans and guidelines created by the two target communities with support from their provincial and district officials have the potential to be used as a model and expanded to other villages bordering PAs in Lao PDR.

III.1.7 UNDP Comparative Advantage

UNDP has extensive experience supporting capacity development initiatives of national governments and other stakeholders through advocacy, policy advisory, and technical assistance services. Implementation of this project benefited from the experience and technical support UNDP provided as a specialist in capacity development.

In addition, UNDP was a critical implementing agency for implementing GEF financed NCSAs globally. The agency implemented 117 NCSAs and benefits from this extensive experience of national capacity assessments and resource tools developed in this process.

UNDP is committed to respect and support national ownership over development programs and applied the National Implementation Modality (NIM). This modality facilitates national ownership of projects by supporting the host government to define the program directions, make all strategic decisions, adjust the course of the program and oversee results and resources. UNDP was available to assist with guidance, technical support, and resources to help achieve the mutual goals.

III.1.8 Management Arrangements

At inception, the project was to be implemented by MAF, which was designated as the Focal Point for the UNCBD and the UNCCD. At the end of 2011 and early 2012, MONRE was formed by merging the Water Resource and Environment Administration (WREA) with parts of the National Land Management Authority (NLMA) and Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, as well as the Protection and Conservation Divisions of the Department of Forestry. Likewise provincial and district counterparts from the Water Resources and Environment Offices became Provincial offices of Natural Resource and Environment (PONRE) and District offices of Natural Resource and Environment (DONRE), respectively.

During this restructuring the mandate for Conservation and Protection forests were shifted from the Department of Forestry (DOF) at MAF to DFRM at MONRE. Authority for Production Forests remained under DOF at MAF. The focal points for UNFCCC and UNCBD were then housed in MONRE, and the focal point for UNCCD remained at MAF.

During Q4, 2011 after a period of uncertainty regarding project management and close to a year after the project began, DFRM was designated as the IP.

Thus, partnership arrangements for the project consisted of the following:

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is the Implementing Partner (IP) for the project and is accountable for delivery of project outputs and achievement of project objectives. MONRE is responsible for the planning and overall management of the project activities, including reporting, accounting, monitoring and evaluation, and use of resources.

A **Project Board** provides oversight and is responsible for executive management decisions of the project when the Project Manager requires guidance, including approval of project revisions. Project assurance reviews by the Board are made at designated decision points during the implementation of a project or as necessary when raised by the Project Manager. The Project Board was also subject to significant delays and wasn't formed until January 2013.

UNDP is the GEF implementing agency and provides a project assurance. Main responsibilities are to support the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. The NIM was used for the duration of this project.

Project Team:

- **National Project Director:** The NPD provides oversight and guidance at the highest level of the project.
- **Project Manager:** Appointed by MONRE, the PM is responsible for oversight and decision-making for the project, ensuring that project outputs and results are delivered as planned, and that the workplan and activities are carried out.
- **Assistant Project Manager:** Supported by GEF funding, the APM is responsible for day to day implementation of the project, including administration, communications, activity implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and oversight of budget.
- **Technical Assistant:** Brought on by the project in June 2012, the TA, supported by VSO, provides advisory guidance on content and helps to shape outputs to correspond to targets. The TA also provided assistance in conducting project activities, monitoring and evaluation, administration and report writing.
- **Project Accountant:** One project accountant supported the project, in adherence to UNDP reporting standards.

Another key component of the management structure is the **Technical Working Groups (TWGs)** formed at the national level and in each target province. These multi-disciplinary working groups, composed of technical staff from relevant government agencies, are responsible for carrying out technical aspects of the project in the three provinces and at the national level. At the national level, there are sub groups that specialize in each Rio Convention. The TWGs are responsible for providing support and feedback on the selection of laws, selection and preparation of tools, and development of compliance strategies, with guidance by the Project Manager and National Consultant. The TWGs are financed by the government with expenses and travel covered by the project.

Management arrangements were properly identified, with roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval. As previously mentioned, related departments and ministries were restructured, and the project subsequently housed in a different ministry than outlined during project design which did cause a significant delay in project implementation.

MONRE was created with jurisdiction over Protection and Conservation Forests, and housing the Focal Points for the UNFCCC and UNCBD. This change of the IP is appropriate and allowed project ownership to be clear and unambiguous, reflected by the progress made on project implementation once this arrangement was solidified.

III.2 Project Implementation

This section discusses different elements relating to implementation of the project. Key points include:

- Project timeline which highlights the milestones and delays the project encountered.
- Adaptive management employed by the project during implementation was highly satisfactory, taking advantage of new partnerships and changing contexts during project implementation.*
- Various partnership arrangements used by the project were highly satisfactory, specifically the TWGs at the national and provincial levels, especially in the context of the ministry restructuring.*
- Project co-finance was secured as per the project document, with UNDP contributed an additional amount. By June 30, 2013, 88.7% of the project budget was disbursed, with two months remaining.
- M&E design and implementation is rated as moderately satisfactory. Some indicators in the original design were difficult to achieve and measure for the staffing and resources of the project team, but they were neither modified nor addressed. The project team showed good compliance with the rest of M&E plan, instituting additional M&E for project site activities. There was enough information to provide a good understanding of project progress.*
- The overall efficiency of UNDP as the GEF-implementing agency and DFRM as the Implementing Partner is rated as Satisfactory. *

*As per GEF requirements, items with an asterisk are given a rating.

III.2.1 Project Milestones

A brief summary of project milestones is provided below to put project implementation and activities in context.

Table 4: Project Milestones

2011
January 2011: official start date June 2011: TWG at the national level was formed October 2011: National Consultant began work on Review of Legal Framework and Compliance Strategy August 2011-February 2012: TWGs at the provincial levels were formed September 2011: Inception Workshop held, Project Strategic Results Framework was modified and updated. December 2011: Finalization of first project outreach tool; printing of poster
2012
January 2012: New APM started February 2012: First national TWG consultation workshop held February 2012: National TOT workshops and consultation on Compliance Strategy/Review of Legal Framework Q3-Q4, 2012: Community consultation and development of community plans
2013
January 2013: Formation of Project Board Q1 2013: Funding and implementation of community pilot projects April 2013: Law Handbook publication and dissemination May 2013: Joint NCSAFU-DPC Planning workshop June 2013: Terminal Evaluation mission August 2013: End of project workshop, and publication of final project outputs

III.2.2 Adaptive Management

Adaptive management, a component of project efficiency, is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The project took advantage of the changing context, seeking out partnerships with newly created departments, contributing to revisions of relevant law and policy, and consistently using stakeholder input to modify project activities. In the case of developing Community Forestry Management Plans, the project adapted activities to what arose out of community consultations.

The Project Team made extensive and efficient use of adaptive management by modifying the project to the changing context of Lao PDR. The use of adaptive management contributed to the overall success of the project and achievement of some outcomes over and above project's targets. Adaptive management was exemplified during implementation through: reacting to stakeholder input, contributing to new opportunities as they arose, and actively seeking new partners for activities.

Stakeholder Input. The Inception Workshop was held in Vientiane on September 29, 2011; attendees included 47 representatives from central and provincial government agencies, INGOs, NGOs, academics, civil society organizations, and UNDP. The purpose of the workshop was to present the project and get feedback from participants on the revised strategic results framework. Due to its slow start, the project was also seeking feedback to help shape the direction of the project and get it back on track.

Stakeholders gave input on the revised SRF, providing clearer direction to the project. Some stakeholder comments also related to project implementation at the local scale – a level which was not elaborated in the Project Document. Suggestions included disseminating law/raising public awareness and developing community forest and land use management as part of site level initiatives.

The project also responded to stakeholder input as provincial, district, and community level participants developed their workplans and projects according to their needs at the site level. Arising directly out of community consultation, target villages wanted to implement community forestry management, complete with guidelines and zoning at their sites. The project worked with the sites to develop workplans and project proposals based on these consultations and helped communities and officials to seek implementation funding.

Contributions to other sector activities. During the Inception Workshop, stakeholders noted that the activities and indicators under Outcome 3 could be improved: *legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive*. While broad in scope, the project team employed adaptive management and flexibility to take advantage of on-going initiatives addressing legislation revision and planning in the natural resources sector. These other initiatives were not part of the landscape during project design but were consistent with the project goal. The project contributed to the following opportunities outside those in the project document, such as: the Forestry Law revision, the development of the PBSAP, and consultations for the revision of National Land Use Policy.

New partnerships. The project also employed adaptive management through proactively seeking partnerships amongst different government departments. The Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC) was formed in the middle of 2012, and the project began to explore ways to collaborate in late 2012. DPC's key responsibilities, in relation to the project, are to: develop and implement national policies, strategies and related legislation; assess the result of the

implementation obligations for the MEAs, which includes the Rio Conventions; and apply direction, policies, and strategies to become plans, programs, and projects.

NCSAFU and DPC held a joint workshop on May 7-8, 2013 with representatives from all 17 provinces. The workshop served to:

- Present MONRE's Natural Resource Sector (2011-2015) milestones and draft 5 year Strategic Plan;
- Raise awareness of the Rio Conventions for national and provincial officials and show the linkages with their daily work;
- Build the capacity of environmental management units in the natural resources and environment sector through training on the project tools;
- Show how to formulate the Public Investment Programme (PIP) for 2012-2013 to align with the 7th NSEDP, allowing provincial plans to be included under the national strategy.

This new partnership was strategic for three reasons: (i) the joint workshop highlighted the Rio Conventions and project tools for counterparts in 17 provinces who would not have been exposed otherwise, potentially allowing this content to be integrated into provincial development plans, (ii) the project distributed the law handbook and administered the capacity development monitoring/scorecard, and (iii) the partnership with DPC opened the potential for government funding for the community forestry management activities at the sites.

These examples highlight the ways in which the project used adaptive management while remaining focused on the overall goals of the project. This contributed to greater ownership of project components by communities, government departments, and worked to raise awareness on the Rio Conventions and put project tools into use outside of the target provinces.

III.2.3 Partnership Arrangements

Partnership arrangements, a component of project efficiency, are rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. Roles and responsibilities were clear and established at the design phase. Once the ministerial restructuring took place, project implementation flowed smoothly. Even in light of the delay of the formation of the project board, the project took advantage of existing leadership capacities to fill the gap. The review indicated that although it took time to put together, a strength of the project was the inter-ministerial TWGs that played a big role in the design and implementation of project outputs, tools and community activities, which also allowed showcasing of expertise in government agencies. Other partners also contributed to the project throughout the duration.

As mentioned previously, the original management arrangements outlined in the project document were no longer valid due to restructuring of ministries. However, once the restructuring was complete and the project assigned to DFRM in MONRE, project ownership was clarified and implementation flowed more smoothly, highlighting that the delay as the project was being reassigned to MONRE was justified. However, the restructuring caused cascading delays that especially affected partnership arrangements.

Partnership arrangements fell roughly into 3 categories during the project: supervisory, implementers, and those engaging in similar initiatives in the sector.

Project Board

The Project Board was formed in January 2013 and is composed of:

- Director of DFRM - Leader

- Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP – Member
- Deputy Director of DFRM – Member (UNCBD)
- Director of Climate Change Division – Member (UNFCCC)
- Deputy of Land Management and Development – Member (UNCCD)

The delay in creating the Project Board was due to its interdisciplinary make up. As the departments were reassigned or shifted accordingly, it was not clear which ministry or department the focal points for each convention would be located. Ultimately, the National Project Director was named the leader of the Project Board, and joined by the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP. The remaining three members were specialized in one of the three conventions.

According to UNDP NIM policy, the project should establish the project board as soon as possible after the project is launched to provide oversight and guide the direction of the project. The delays in forming the Project Board were first noted in risks logs from August 2011, appended to the annual report, and in the 2012 Annual Report. However, the formulation of the project board was out of the control of the IP and UNDP.

In another example of adaptive management, the project took advantage of **existing leadership capacities** of the IP, UNDP, and national TWG in the absence of the project board. The role of the project board in guidance and oversight were taken on by UNDP, which took on a greater role by providing some directional decisions when necessary, and the national level TWG which helped to set the direction at the national and provincial levels. Regular monthly meetings through 2012 and 2013 with the IP and UNDP helped the project stay focused on outcomes. Likewise, the national TWG met monthly beginning in March 2011 through 2012.

Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

The second category of partners refers to the Technical Working Groups (TWGs): one at the national level, with three sub groups specializing in each convention, and one in each target province relating specifically to one convention. The names and departments of the TWGs can be found in [Annex 4](#).

The TWGs at the national and provincial levels were critical partners during the project, guiding both the content of the major outputs and the direction of the project activities on the ground. The national TWG was responsible for technical aspects of the project. They provided feedback on the selection of laws, selection and preparation of tools, development of compliance strategies, and activities in the target sites, with guidance from the Project Manager and National Consultant. Provincial TWGs tested project tools and, based on community consultation, developed plans with target villages and provided input on the compliance strategy at the provincial level.

The national-level TWG is composed of 23 members from six ministries: 10 focusing on UNFCCC, 7 focusing on UNCBD, and 7 focusing on UNCCD. One person is a member of two groups. There are three women, each specializing in a different focal area. MONRE, MAF, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare are represented. Each focal area contains members from at least 3 ministries. Departments and institutes are represented among the focal areas as follows:

-UNFCCC

- National Disaster and Climate Change Management Department (MONRE)
- Environment Quality Promotion Department (MONRE)

- Department of Water Resource Management (MONRE)
- REDD Office, Cooperation and Investment Department (MAF)
- National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (MAF)
- Department of Energy Promotion and Development (MEM)
- Deputy Director of Renewable Energy Development Division/Institute of Renewable Energy Promotion (MEM)⁹
- Department of Mines (MEM)
- People's Supreme Court (MOJ)

- UNCBD

- Department of Forest Resources Management (MONRE)
- National Disaster and Climate Change Management Department (MONRE)
- Regulation and Legislation Office (MAF)
- Department of Forest Inspection (MAF)
- Agriculture Department (MAF)
- Department of Justice (MOJ)
- Science Technology Institute (Ministry of Science and Technology)

- UNCCD

- National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (MAF)
- Livestock and Fishery Department (MAF)
- Land Management and Development (MONRE)
- Department of Forest Resources Management (MONRE)
- Meteorology Department (MONRE)
- Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

The TWGs at the provincial levels are all composed of three participants. The TWGs in Xiengkhouang and Attapeu are staff of the Provincial Office of Natural Resource and Environment (PONRE), and the TWG in Savannakhet are staff of the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO).

The first national level meeting was held on March 22, 2011, with 18 attendees. Thereafter, they met at least monthly through 2012. In June 2011, the national level TWG was officially convened. The heads of each focal area remained the same throughout the project even though departments/ministries of two of them were changed during the restructuring. The Provincial TWGs were officially nominated by August 19, 2011 (Savannakhet), January 30, 2012 (Attapeu), and February 21, 2012 (Xiengkhouang).

In quarter 2 of 2011, the TWGs selected the following target provinces:

- Xiengkhouang, Kham District, as the UNCBD site. There is wide variety of biodiversity, and the province plans to identify a new conservation protection area;
- Savannakhet, Outumphone District was selected for the UNCCD sites as it has been home to many agriculture and industrial developments and is showing signs of land degradation;
- Attapeu, Xaisettha District was selected for the UNFCCC site as it has incidences of flooding and is vulnerable to other climate change events.

See Map of Project Sites in [Annex 9](#).

⁹ This member holds two positions within MEM.

Implementing Partners

Other partners that contributed to this project include the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC) as discussed above and the Regulation and Legislation Office, MAF in the development of the Law Handbook tool.

The project contributed to other partners working in the sector as follows:

- IUCN/TABI was formulating the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (PBSAP) in Attapeu, outlining Attapeu's responsibilities and inputs to the NBSAP. Another UNDP-GEF project (Agrobiodiversity Project) agreed to support the development of the PBSAP in Xiengkhouang province.
- The Department of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, with whom the project partnered and provided a consultant to aid in the revising of the Environment and Social Impact Assessment decree.
- The Department of Forest Resources Management for the revision of the Forestry Law
- The National Assembly to support consultations for the National Land Policy development.

III.2.4 Project Finance

Project Finance, as part of project efficiency, is rated as **Satisfactory**. By June 30, 2013, GEF's funds were approximately 88.7% (\$443,728) disbursed with two months remaining for the project. It is likely that most GEF funds will be spent by the end of the project in August 2013. Project co-financing was secured as shown in Project Document. Project expenditures were more evenly spread among outcomes 1 and 2. A project audit revealed minor issues which the project accepted responsibilities and pledged to address.

GEF's support to NCSAFU totals \$500,000. Co-financing was secured from three other sources in both in-kind support and grants for a total project amount of US\$1,103,322.

Table 5: Project Co-financing

Financing	GEF (USD)		UNDP (USD)		GOL (USD)		SIDA (USD)		Total	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants	500,000	500,000		53,472						
Loans										
In-kind			400,000	400,000	49,850	49,850	100,000	100,000		
Other										
Totals		500,000		453,472		49,850		100,000		1,103,322

The GoL's original in kind contribution was US\$49,850 and applied to cover costs of the project office space and maintenance, the salaries of the National Project Director, Project Manager and Accountant, and the work of the TWGs and project board members while in Vientiane.

The SIDA funded and government implemented Strengthening Environmental Management (SEM Phase II) project supported the project and confirmed \$100,000 as in-kind co-financing to be considered as parallel funding for this project.

UNDP provided US\$400,000 in-kind support. Additionally, UNDP channeled TRAC funding (US\$ 29,891) to support implementation of the Small Grant Programme (SGP) in support of NCSAFU's project site initiatives. UNDP also supported two consultation workshops during the

development of the National Land Use Policy of the National Assembly, which contributed to the outcomes of mainstreaming the Rio Conventions in national policies, laws and legislation.

As mentioned previously, the project used NIM to promote country ownership of the project; therefore DFRM was directly responsible for managing the budget and expenditures. The financial records were then consolidated into the UNDP-ATLAS accounting and financial system. Once updated, the ATLAS system produced financial information for the project team.

By June 30, 2013, GEF's funds were approximately **88.7% (\$443,728)** disbursed with two months remaining for the project. It is likely that almost all GEF funds will be spent by the end of the project in August 2013.

Table 6: Project Budget and Expenditure (GEF contribution)

	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	Budget	Exp	Budget	Exp	Budget	Exp (to June 2013)	Budget	Exp + Rev Bud
OC1	72,500	71,337	81,000	97,020	87,500	54,225	241,000	222,582
OC2	51,500	12,870	69,000	109,848	61,000	90,652	181,500	213,370
OC3	4,500	2,231	5,500	2,004	20,000	19,897	30,000	24,132
Mgmt	27,500	36,076	10,000	1,234	10,000	2,605	47,500	39,915
Total	156,000	122,515	165,500	210,106	178,500	167,379	500,00	500,000

The biggest disparities of planned budget versus expenditure are related to increased funding of Outcome 2 (42.7% actual vs. 36.3% original) and reduced funding to Outcome 1 (44.5% actual vs. 48.2% original). This reflects a more even distribution of activities and training at the national and provincial levels. Outcome 3, arguably the most ambitious outcome of the project was only allocated 6.4% of the original budget and 4.8% actually spent. This reflects the piecemeal and flexible approach the project took in partnering with others to reach this outcome. Management was allocated 9.5% and only expended 8.0% reflecting modest staffing resources devoted to the project.

According to GEF guidelines, as a MSP project, NCSAFU was required to undertake one audit which was done covering the period from 9 March 2011 to 31 December 2011. In addition to the audit of the financial reports, the auditors also carried out an assessment of the project's accounting policies, procedures, and internal controls.

Some weaknesses in project quality control arose, covering delayed submission of Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) forms and Annual Work Plans. Other weaknesses related to enhancing financial controls and ensuring compliance with procurement policies. For each issue, the auditors provided recommendations and assigned responsibility to project staff. In response, the project management agreed with the recommendation.

III.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Design and Implementation

The M&E Design and Implementation is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**. A comprehensive M&E plan was developed, including reporting, meetings, the GEF scorecard, Strategic Result Framework (SRF) indicators, and a third party audit and evaluation. Some indicators in the original design were modified during the Inception Workshop, but were still difficult to achieve and measure for the staffing and resources of the project team. Indicators were never modified nor addressed so many indicators were not systematically collected. The GEF scorecard was administered in September 2012, which didn't allow for a baseline measure. Outside of these issues, the project team showed a high compliance with the M&E plan, instituting additional M&E for project site activities. Nevertheless, sufficient information existed to provide a good

understanding of project progress.

The project document outlines an M&E plan designed in the project preparatory phase, which conforms to UNDP-GEF policies on M&E. The following components are included:

Reporting: The project team is responsible for preparing and submitting the following reports to UNDP.

- **Annual Project Reports/Project Implementation Reviews (APR/PIR)** prepared by the project team in UNDP-GEF format. The APRs assess the performance of the project, including project performance and results, broken down by outcomes, outputs, and activities; update on partnerships; main challenges faced; next annual work plan; summary of expenditures, risk and issues logs, and lessons learned.
- **Quarterly Progress Reports**, produced by the project team. These follow UNDP guidelines and includes all aspects of project implementation: project performance and results, broken down by outcomes, outputs, and activities; update on partnerships; main challenges faced; next quarterly work plan; summary of expenditures, risk and issues logs, and report from missions carried out during the quarter.
- An **Inception Report** prepared following the Inception Workshop, which included the revised Strategic Results Framework and feedback from stakeholders. The report was circulated to stakeholders for comments.

Project Meetings:

- **Monthly Meetings** with the project team and UNDP are held to monitor progress and troubleshoot.
- **Yearly Meetings** of the Project Board are held to assess the project's progress against planned outputs.

GEF Capacity Development Scorecard: In line with GEF results based management, the project team used a capacity development monitoring and evaluation scorecard to monitor the project capacity development processes. Five capacity results of direct relevance to strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions were measured.

Strategic Framework Indicators: Indicators in the SRF were developed to measure the project's objective and outcomes. These indicators were modified and clarified in the Inception Workshop based on stakeholder consultation. The project team is responsible for collection of indicators.

Audit: One external audit conducted in accordance with UNDP-GEF guidelines.

Final Evaluation conducted external to the project.

During the Inception Workshop, the Strategic Results Framework was modified; these changes primarily focused on indicators. Twelve indicators were listed in the original SRF; following the Inception Workshop, the indicators were increased to 14. Baselines, targets, and means of verification were clarified and included. Additionally, another 11 indicators were included for each output.

A table of objectives, outcomes, and outputs with their corresponding indicators follows.

Table 7: M&E Indicators

Project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs		Indicator
Objective: To strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions.		1. Compliance strategy and tools developed and used by central and local authority. 2. Number of initiative development activities that use the tools developed by the project 3. Information system of law and legislation related to Rio Convention update and use by central and local authority and communities in the project areas. 4. Number of infractions of environmental laws reported by the national press. 5. Percentage of respondents in all provinces that is sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address biodiversity, land degradation and/or climate change. 6. Capacity development monitoring scorecard rating
Outcome Level:		
Key stakeholders in the three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation.		7. Number of times the compliance strategy and tools are used at the project sites. 8. Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces that are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the Rio Conventions. 9. No. of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws
National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resources legislation, and in particular are able to support provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement.		10. Confidence of national stakeholders of own ability to implement laws. 11. Number of training on how to use natural resource laws and tools. 12. The number of times that provincial officers request assistance of national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws.
Legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive		13. National/provincial development policies integrated environment concerns and reflected finding and recommendation of the project 14. Revised government policy/law is promulgated and, to an appropriate extent, reflects the findings and recommendations of this project.
Output Level		
1.1	An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles.	15. Availability of review priority natural resource laws and regulation.
1.2	A compliance strategy for provincial level	16. Availability of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at provincial.
1.3	A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement built for provincial authorities and local communities	17. Set of operational tools prepared and available by first quarter of 2012. 18. Number of training workshops and its reports and number of trainees participated in the training 19. Provincial consultation workshop on PBSAP and baseline data
1.4	Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	20. Respondent in national confirms that operational tools applicable and used
2.1	An agreed set of priority laws, regulations and/or articles	21. Availability of review priority natural resource laws
2.2	A compliance strategy for national level	22. Availability of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at national level.
2.3	A package of operational tools and capacity for law enforcement built for national level.	23. Set of operational tools 24. Number of training provided and number of people got trained
2.4	Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	25. Respondent in national confirms that operational tools applicable and used.

3.1	Legislative revision taken into account the primary and secondary obligation to the Rio Conventions	26. Number of decree/regulation and PCAP/annual development plan approved by government
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Revision of the indicators, along with the baseline, targets and means of verification in the Inception Workshop made them SMARTer - more specific, relevant and time bound. However, the sheer number of indicators, work entailed in the collection process, and indicators measuring outcomes that aren't entirely project dependent renders many difficult to measure and achieve.

For example, some indicators rely on surveys and data collection mechanisms beyond the scope of project resources, both human and financial. These indicators include:

- Information system of law and legislation related to Rio Convention update and use by central and local authority and communities in the project areas.
- Number of infractions of environmental laws reported by the national press.
- Percentage of respondents in all provinces that is sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address biodiversity, land degradation and/or climate change
- Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces that are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the Rio Conventions.
- No. of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws
- Confidence of national stakeholders of own ability to implement laws.
- The number of times that provincial officers request assistance of national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws.

Indicators relating to government approval of decrees, regulation, policies and laws may not be the best measure of the project. Government approval by necessity follows its own process and is not subject to the time frames of the project.

Additionally, indicators related to project outputs are somewhat redundant in this project. The outputs are physical reports, documents, or tools which can be verified on their own.

M&E Implementation

During the course of the project, the project team showed a high level of compliance with the M&E plan through:

- Quarterly and Annual reports submitted to UNDP and available for review, fulfilling the necessary UNDP/GEF requirements.
- The Inception Workshop report covering content covered, participants and the revised SRF was available for review.
- Meeting minutes from monthly project team-UNDP meetings were available for review.
- The GEF Capacity Development Scorecard was distributed to 153 national, provincial, and district officials in September 2012 and 67 provincial officials in May 2013. The data was available for review. The scorecard was administered close to the midpoint of the project, so that a baseline is not available. Scorecard information is available in Section III.3.1.
- An audit was conducted and the report was available for review.
- A Midterm Review Meeting was held in September 2012 to review progress of 2012 and set annual work plan for 2013.

- Annual Review Meeting Minutes for January 2013 were available for review in lieu of Project Board meeting minutes. The PB was only established in January 2013. As mentioned previously, UNDP and the TWG took on more of a management role in the absence of the project board, but no TWG meeting minutes were available for review.

It is important to note that the Inception Workshop report, the Annual Review meeting minutes and reports from other project functions, such as the joint workshop with DPC shows input and consultation from stakeholders.

Additionally, the project team designed an M&E plan for the project activities funded by the project at target sites. These M&E plans corresponded with the proposals developed by the communities (with support of provincial and district officials), and included activity, responsible parties, achievements/indicators, and date of completion. The results of the monitoring plans for two project sites were available for review.

As mentioned above, some indicators in the SRF were difficult to collect. Systematic and comprehensive collection of these indicators wasn't conducted throughout the project, nor was they modified. Data for the following indicators was not collected during the project:

3. Information system of law and legislation related to Rio Convention update and use by central and local authority and communities in the project areas.
4. Number of infractions of environmental laws reported by the national press.
5. Percentage of respondents in all provinces that is sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address biodiversity, land degradation and/or climate change.
8. Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces that are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the Rio Conventions.
9. No. of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws
10. Confidence of national stakeholders of own ability to implement laws.
12. The number of times that provincial officers request assistance of national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws.

Indicators for which data were collected and included in project performance and results sections of quarterly and annual reports are listed below:

1. Compliance strategy and tools developed and used by central and local authority.
2. Number of initiative development activities that use tools developed by the project
6. Capacity development monitoring scorecard rating
7. Number of times compliance strategy and tools are used at project sites.
11. Number of trainings on how to use natural resource laws and tools.
13. National/provincial development policies integrated environment concerns and reflected finding and recommendation of the project
14. Revised government policy/law is promulgated and, to an appropriate extent, reflects the findings and recommendations of this project.

Nevertheless, annual and quarterly reporting, meeting minutes, reports and minutes from a selection of project activities, the GEF Capacity Development Scorecard, and the additional M&E responsibilities taken on by the team provide a good understanding of the progress the project made towards outcomes, outputs and activities, outlining risks and lessons learned, and show the extent of adaptive management and stakeholder interaction used to update project timelines and activities as required in a dynamic context.

III.2.6 Project Execution and Contribution of UNDP and Implementation Partner

The overall efficiency of UNDP as the GEF-implementing agency and DFRM as the Implementing Partner is rated as **Satisfactory**. Both the IP and UNDP showed on-going communication throughout the project and were focused on results and outcomes.

In their respective roles, each agency provided the project team the support needed to conduct project activities, notably facilitating communication with other ministries and departments (DFRM) and providing advisory and guidance due to the late start of the Project Board (UNDP). Both parties regularly attended monthly meetings; reviewed minutes show consistent communication, examining results, follow up and next steps. By all accounts of the project team and UNDP representatives, communication was on-going and supportive and aimed at reaching project objectives and outcomes.

As indicated earlier, the project encountered delays. The first delay arose from restructuring of ministries and the subsequent lack of clarity on departments and representatives assigned to the project implementation. Other delays concerned publication and dissemination of project outputs, notably the Review of Legal Framework and Compliance Strategy. These outputs were intended to focus stakeholders on a set of laws, regulations, or articles as a priority for enforcement during the project. A National Consultant was hired in October 2011 to guide the process of developing the Review of the Legal Framework, the Compliance Strategy and operational tools. The TWGs at the national and provincial level were critical to gain feedback from different ministries, departments and technical specialties. A series of 11 laws were listed as priorities through consultation with the TWGs.

Much of the consultation for the main outputs - the Review of Legal Framework, the Compliance Strategy, and some of the tools - was completed by 2012. However, the national consultant left the country to pursue higher education, and finalization and publication of the outputs was substantially delayed. Therefore, the Review of Legal Framework, the Compliance Strategy, and some other tools weren't used or tested during the project. Stronger management of the consultant earlier on in the project, guided by a workplan with the specific finalized outputs, monitored and tied to a payment schedule may have sped up the finalization of some of the project tools, allowing them to be tested and then trainings held for use.

UNDP was in charge of project assurance and technical advice; under NIM with main responsibilities including support design of project activities, conduct monitoring, trouble shoot and apply UNDP financial and procurement procedures. Due to the delay of the formation of the Project Board, at times the UNDP undertook more of an advisory role, especially when challenges and delays became an issue.

DFRM, as the IP, was responsible for all operational aspects of the project and supervised the project team. They played a large role in communicating with other departments, agencies, and ministries for the formulation of the TWGs and Project Board. With consultation from the TWGs, DFRM determined the direction of activities throughout the project, including trainings and the community initiatives. Additionally, DFRM played a large role as facilitator of the project for with government legislation initiatives, for instance, seeing the opportunities to provide support for the Land Use Policy revision and the Forestry Law revision.

III.3 Project Results

This section discusses project results, specifically examining:

- Progress toward attainment of objectives, outcomes, and outputs (**effectiveness**), looking at each outcome and output through the key themes of increased coordination, capacity building, legislation implementation, and legislation and policy development.*
- **Relevance** of the project and how it relates to priorities of GOL and objectives of GEF.*
- Country ownership
- Mainstreaming and relationship of the project to key UNDP goals and objectives
- Longer term **impacts** of the project*
- The potential for **sustainability***

*As per GEF requirements, items with an asterisk are given a rating.

III.3.1 Effectiveness – Attainment of Objectives

To what extent has the project reached its objective? To what extent have the expected outcomes of the project been achieved? To what extent have the project outputs been used?

Attainment of key results indicates the project met its objectives and is rated as **Satisfactory**. Project activities spanned many different levels throughout the course of the project: national, provincial/district, and community level. At the provincial level, there have been changes in the implementation of laws, capacity, and increased coordination due to the project. At the national level, there have been changes in capacity and increased coordination resulting from the project. The project contributed to four legislation revisions, and/or plans during the project. One (1) is completed; the other three (3) are still in process.

Key Results for Critical Activities and Outcomes

The following table outlines key results that grew out of project activities and outputs.

Table 8: Key Results for Critical Activities and Outcomes

Outcome 1: Key stakeholders in the two/three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resources management legislation	
Output	Key Results
Creation and mobilization of provincial TWGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 members in each province, Xiengkhouang Feb. 2012, Attapeu: Jan 2012, Sanavanhkhet: Aug. 2011 • Provide consultation on project outputs and tools • Attend TOT workshop and test tools with pilot villages, develop workplan • Conduct consultation and test tools with target communities Mar 2012
Output 2.1 (1.1) Review of Legal Framework	Finalized in 2013 but not yet published, the Review of Legal Framework assesses key documents, laws and legislations related to natural resources management and environmental protection as they relate to the Rio Conventions to look at gaps in implementation, develop a strategy for better compliance, and help to develop tools needs to enhance implementation of these key laws. Eleven laws were selected to examine: Forestry Law, Law on Wildlife and Aquatic Life,

	Environmental Protection Law, Water and Water Resources Law, Law on Electricity, Law on Minerals, Law on Fisheries, Law on Agriculture, Law on National Heritage, and Law on investment Promotion.
Output 1.2 (2.2) Compliance Strategy	Finalized in 2013 but not yet published, the Compliance Strategy outlines responsible parties, priorities for implementation, relevant articles of laws, operational tools, and recommendations to better implement laws to increase compliance with the Rio Conventions.
Output 1.3 (2.3) 13 Natural Resource Management and Environmental Protection Posters	A series of 13 posters that provide information visually covering biodiversity and protected status, environmental conservation pertaining to climate change and forest fire, and community land management were modified from existing sources for distribution to provincial/district officials for community outreach. 2050 sets were printed. Target PTWGs received 50 units each, target communities receive 3 sets each, provincial rep in May 2013 workshop receive 3 sets each, field study tour community receive 5 sets each.
Output 1.3 (2.3) Handbook on Fundamental Knowledge of Agriculture and Forestry Legal Framework “Law Handbook”	This handbook provides summary information on five laws, including Forestry Law, Law on Wildlife and Aquatics, Law on Livestock Production and Veterinary Matters, Pest Management Law, and Fishery Law and covers what these laws allows, what they prohibit, and what likely sanctions are if violations are made. 2000 sets were printed and distribution began in April 2013. Target PTWGs receive 50 each, provincial rep in May 2013 workshop receive 10 each, MAF distributes 500.
Output 1.3 (2.3) Participatory Community Based Non Timber Forest Product Monitoring and Management Toolkit	Finalized in 2013, but not yet published, this toolkit aims at providing provincial and district officials with guidance on supporting community management of natural resources.
Output 1.3 (2.3) Training of Trainer Manual	Finalized in 2013 but not yet published, this manual is to help those who are going to create a new group of trainers to disseminate information about natural resources and natural resources law.
Output 1.3 (2.3) Carbon Measurement Tool	This tool is not yet finalized or published. It is only available in the Lao language.
Output 1.4 Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Community Forestry Management Plans and Guidelines produced for target villages, Ban Tha and Ban XayXee • 3 project proposals to implement the Community Forestry Management Plans in each target village • ToT workshops conducted at the national and provincial level, which included testing of the tools • Posters/handbooks distributed
Outcome 2: National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation and in particular are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement	
Output*	Key Results
Creation and mobilization of national TWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 members nominated by June 2011. Monthly meetings held. Representatives from 6 ministries included • Target villages selected with input from provincial/district level • Provide consultation on project outputs and tools • Attend TOT workshop and test tools with pilot villages
Output 2.4 Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project	ToT workshops conducted at the national and provincial level, which included testing of the tools Posters/handbooks distributed
Project communications tools	Website under MONRE, factsheet
Outcome 3: The legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive.	

Output	Key Results
Output 3.1 Legislative revision taken into account the primary and secondary obligation to the Rio Conventions	Project contributed financial support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Law Revision • PBSAP (consultation workshops and biodiversity data development for Attapeu) • National Land Use Policy Revision (consultation workshops) • EIA Decree (support national consultant)

*To minimize redundancy, project tools, the Review of Legal Framework, and Compliance Strategy are listed in this table once at the provincial level. One set was created, but consultations were held and feedback provided at provincial and national levels.

Data collection during the evaluation revealed four general areas which contributed to project outcomes: capacity building, legislation implementation, increased coordination, and legislation and policy development.

Outcome 1 covered the provincial/district and local levels, and activities and outputs contributed to outcomes through:

- Capacity development
- Legislation implementation
- Increased coordination

Outcome 2 covered the national level, and activities and outputs contributed to outcomes through:

- Capacity development
- Legislation implementation
- Increased coordination

Outcome 3 covered the national level, and activities and outputs contributed to outcomes through:

- Legislation and policy development

A further discussion of these key themes follows.

Increased Coordination

Increased coordination was both horizontal - amongst different departments and ministries at the national level – and vertical, amongst national and provincial/district counterparts in the same ministry. The development of TWGs facilitated increased coordination directly.

Following the establishment of the office and hiring of project staff, the creation of the TWG at the national level was the first priority. With support from the project team, the TWG drove the direction of the project. The TWG was involved in guiding the development of the Review of the Legal Framework and the Compliance Strategy; development and testing of tools, such as the posters, Law Handbook, NTFP Management Toolkit, etc.; and selection of target provinces through a consultative process.

The TWG was composed of members from six different ministries and a number of different departments within those ministries. Informants at the national level noted that one of the major successes of the project was that different sectors were involved; one informant remarked that there were “good discussions in some of these workshops”. Expertise was exchanged. One informant remarked that he was able to offer data on climate change. Another commented that

increased coordination enabled problem solving across sectors - explaining that when they met, they exchanged ideas and lessons learned, and if “we have a question, we can find a solution.” Another commented that collaboration took advantage of strengths and skills of different departments; one department provided content knowledge on technical issues and another provided skills development for training. Others saw value in: getting to know each other, learning about the different roles for each department, and learning what others are doing on the different Rio Conventions.

The provincial TWGs, with support of the national TWG: guided the selection of target communities, contributed to the development and testing of project tools, provided feedback on the Review of Legal Framework and Compliance Strategy for the provincial level, and supported the communities in the development and implementation of Community Forestry Management Plans. One provincial level official demonstrated his ownership and role in the development process saying, “we formulated the handbook, the tools...”

Provincial level officials reported vertically interacting with officials during the project to seek advice on how to formulate regulations for the different zoning areas. Another commented that this project enabled them to meet in person, rather than just over the phone or via email. One official commented on horizontal coordination – he was new to working with NPAs, and it was helpful to learn from experiences in other provinces. Provincial officials also coordinated with communities during dissemination/awareness raising and with target communities during the development of the Community Forestry Management Plans and guidelines.

Capacity Development

Capacity development occurred at many different levels of this project, ranging from national level officials to local communities. The project specifically focused on developing capacity related to natural resource management and environment protection laws, the Rio Conventions, and implementation of legislation.

Interviewed national level officials commented on their increased knowledge about the Rio Conventions, specifically mentioning UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNCBD. Another commented that before the project, he “thought Rio was a beer.” One informant said he understood more about the effect that cutting forests has on the climate. Another said that officials gained information about how climate change affects different sectors and what the government has done regarding the UNFCCC, such as the National Communications and the National Plan. When asked about changes in capacity regarding natural resources legislation in Lao PDR, most informants referred to capacity changes at the provincial/district and community level. One informant did note that there was an increased understanding of Forestry Law throughout different sectors. One informant said people and government staff better understand the law, explaining that now “people use the right words.”

Interviewed provincial level officials said they learned about the Rio Conventions and Lao legislation over the course of the project. When asked what they learned about the Rio Conventions, all 4 provincial level officials interviewed specifically mentioned the terms “biodiversity”, “combating desertification”, or “climate change”, indicating content areas in the Rio Conventions that are most relevant to Lao PDR. Two specifically mentioned learning more about climate change impacts and how overexploitation of forests and destruction of forestry worldwide led to climate change. One individual said he learned about the Rio Conventions, but just not in depth. Two informants also noted that they learned how their daily activities link to the Rio Conventions, finding it meaningful to connect their work with international conventions.

Three of the provincial level officials noted that they learned more about natural resources legislation. They remarked they already knew about Forestry Law and Wildlife and Aquatic Law, and one said that due to the Handbook, he knew all 5 laws. Another commented that he learned about other laws “that relate to Rio” such as Land Law, Environmental Protection Law, Fishery Law and Pest Management Law. Another felt that the techniques they learned for presenting NRM laws and material was helpful. The Kumban leader, who disseminated the less technical information and worked more closely with the community felt he learned how to “explain the reason for protection of biodiversity, wildlife resources, this is why we need to protect it,” and he clearly described the objective of the Community Forestry Management Guidelines to “conserve the biodiversity and environment in that areas, so that resources will be protected and used in a more sustainable manner.”

Provincial officials also felt that villagers had more awareness regarding natural resources management and legislation in the following ways:

- Zoning: where it is strictly prohibited to log, to take NTFPs, etc. and where it is allowed.
- Hunting: what animals are not permitted to be hunted.
- Understanding the direct and indirect benefits of forest protection.
- Linking climate change impacts to changing weather patterns.

Villagers in the community consultations supported what provincial officials said, demonstrating knowledge about: the law (with one village head providing a specific reference to a law in the handbook); zoning and regulations, providing definitions of the zones (first zone is strictly prohibited, second zone is buffer, third zone is forest for community use); and the need to protect the greater ecosystem, because “in the catchment area, you have to protect it, you can’t deforest it, because it can give you water for your paddy field” and “you need to restore the forests, so that weather, rains, come regularly.”

GEF Capacity Development Monitoring Scorecard

The GEF Capacity Development Monitoring Scorecard was used to measure capacity at 2 different points during the project. Five capacity results, over separate 14 indicators, were measured which are of direct relevance to strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions:

- Capacity Result 1: Capacities for engagement
- Capacity Result 2: Capacities to generate, access, and use information and knowledge
- Capacity Result 3: Capacities for strategy, policy, and legislation development
- Capacity Result 4: Capacities for management and implementation
- Capacity Result 5: Capacities to monitor and evaluate.

The scorecard was administered in September 2012 (midterm) and May 2013 (end) of the project. Since the scorecard was not administered at the beginning of the project, baseline levels are not available. Additionally, the same respondents (except for two) did not complete the scorecard both times, making it difficult to use the scorecard ratings as a measure of capacity change in individuals. At best, these ratings reflect overall trends throughout the sector over a nine (9) month period, rather than the influences of the project.

During September 2012, the scorecard was completed by 153 individuals: 41 individuals (some members of the national TWG) at the national level, 85 individuals from the three target provinces (under PONRE), and 26 from the district level. The second time the score card was

distributed was in May 2013 at the joint NCSAFU/DPC workshop were 67 provincial level officials (under PONRE) completed the scorecard.

Table 9: Scorecard Results

Capacity result	Maximum Score/scoring matrix	Score at mid-term	Score at end	Change in Score
Capacities for engagement	1/ (1=high; 3=low)	2	1.90	-0.1 (+)
Capacities to generate, access, and use information and knowledge	3/ (3=high; 0=low)	1	1.49	.49 (+)
Capacities for strategy, policy, legislation development	3/ (3=high; 0=low)	2	1.40	-0.6 (-)
Capacities for management and implementation	3/ (3=high; 0=low)	0	1.05	1.05 (+)
Capacities to monitor and evaluate	3/ (3=high; 0=low)	2	1.34	-0.66 (-)

The scorecard has been distributed to the original 153 respondents to assess changes over the duration of the project. It is anticipated that scores will be shared during the Project Terminal Meeting.

Training Opportunities and Study Tours

The project also organized a number of study tours and workshops to develop capacity related to natural resource management and environmental protection.

- **Community Forestry Study Tour.** A study tour was conducted for the Department of Forestry (MAF) in December 2011 to Cambodia for national level government officials to see Community Forestry Sites.
- **National Training of Trainer Workshop.** A TOT workshop was held in February 2012 for national and provincial TWG members to test the tools developed by the project and teach officials how to train people to disseminate information related to natural resources management and environmental protection.
- **Provincial Training of Trainer Workshop.** Provincial TWG members also developed their workplan and initial field activities covering March to July 2012 in each province, including testing of tools in targets districts for feedback, conducting TOT workshops for other provincial/district officials in target districts, and doing community consultation in target villages.
- **Community Based Natural Resources Management Study Tour.** A study tour in August 2012 was conducted for provincial/district officials and local leaders in target villagers to expose them to best practices in natural resources management projects in Southern Lao PDR. Five participants from each province attended, including 1 representative from the district level, 2 provincial TWG members, 1 village leader, and 1 Kumban¹⁰ leader.

Legislation Implementation

¹⁰ A Kumban is a grouping of 4-5 local villages, and the Kumban leader is the administrative head of the Kumban. During the course of this project, the Kumban Leader in one province was the liaison between the village and the provincial officials.

The project document outlines three ways in which environmental protection and natural resources management law can be implemented:

- **Dissemination**, providing information on laws through awareness raising;
- **Compliance**, providing guidance on what is allowed through permitting and management plans;
- **Enforcement**, providing penalties when laws are broken.

Implementation during this project focused on **dissemination** related to natural resource laws and **compliance** through management plans. Tools developed through this project addressed dissemination (the poster, law handbook, TOT manual) and compliance through permitting/management plans (NTEP Toolkit).

A selection of national level TWG members were interviewed during the project. Many did not feel that it was their role to “implement” laws or support the implementation of laws at the provincial level. When asked about his role in implementing law, a TWG member mentioned that he helped to improve and promote the forestry law. Most informants felt there was a big need for dissemination of laws at the community level, because “the local people have the least understanding of the law.” One informant also felt there was a need for awareness-raising at a higher level, to strategically gain high level support for implementation of natural resources legislation.

All four interviewed provincial officials said their role in implementation was to disseminate laws, primarily Forestry Law and Wildlife and Aquatics Law. Three also saw their role in implementation expanded during the project to support the zoning and regulations developed by the communities. All four said they used the Law Handbook and the poster. The posters were described as easy to use and appropriate. It was easy for the villagers to visualize, especially easy to see which animals are not allowed for hunting. They said the Law Handbook was easy to explain, easy to understand, and more comprehensive (since it contained more laws than they were already familiar with). One said that if they have questions, the book “has the answer.”

In Xiengkhouang, they reported the poster and handbook was used for legislation dissemination in 40 villages, and plans to disseminate to a total of 98 villages. Attapeu officials reported dissemination activities in 4 villages.

All three (3) target communities developed proposals covering Community Forestry Management Plans and related activities with support from the provincial officials and project team. Two target communities, Ban Tha in Xiengkhouang Province and Ban XayXee in Attapeu Province developed Community Forestry Management Plans and Guidelines. They began implementing activities, with support from the project. Ban XayXee also has regulations signed by the village head and deputy district governor.

The project document noted that overall public perception of laws is negative. However, community members expressed opinions that natural resource laws, such as those that support Community Forestry Management Plans are beneficial to them. They say fewer people are hunting and encroaching, and it helps to protect their access because the regulations have certain “provisions and obligations and commitment.” Others saw the benefits are more indirect, saying the benefits will be for future generations and they get benefits because the people have not violated the regulations.

As a direct result of the project, zoning and demarcation of the strictly prohibited zone was carried out in Ban Tha, Xiengkhouang Province, and the Community Forestry Management

Guidelines were completed and signed in Ban XayXee, Attapeu Province. Provincial officials said that they have seen a decrease in hunting (2), slash and burn (1), and encroachment (1), though acknowledge that it is too early to tell larger effects on the environment.

Legislation and Policy Development

Arguably the most ambitious project area, activities related to this outcome focused on incorporating relevant elements of the Rio Conventions and/or recommendations of the project in the revision of national level policies, legislation, and planning. To these ends, the project contributed to the revision of Forestry Law, National Land Use Policy, the first Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP), and the revision of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Decree. Additionally, through a joint workshop with the Department of Planning and Cooperation, the project also encouraged Rio Conventions content to be included into provincial Annual Development Plans.

The project supported consultations for the revision of Forestry Law and National Land Use policy, allowing the input of critical stakeholders to be included into revisions. The National Project Director of NCSAFU has a solid understanding of the Rio Conventions and is on the Steering Committee related to the revision of Forestry Law, increasing the likelihood that relevant tenets of the Rio Conventions will be included. The revised Forestry Law and revised Land Use Policy are expected to be completed and approved by the National Assembly by December 2013. The current revisions were not available to be examined for content.

The EIA Decree has also been undergoing a revision. Last updated in 2010, it was first signed in 2003. Updating is required with the creation of the new ministry (previously the department was under WREA) and the revision of the Environmental Protection Law, which requires decentralization of some aspects. A national consultant, with a background in Forestry and international environment, was hired by the project to support the EIA decree revision process and help address the gaps in capacity. The process is on-going with initial consultations planned within the ESIA Department before consulting with other departments.

The project also supported the development of the PBSAP for Attapeu province. Undertaken by IUCN, the PBSAP used a consultative process to develop the action plan. The PBSAP relates to the NBSAP but is geared specifically to the province, to help fulfil GoL's obligations to UNCBD. The PBSAP is completed, and a launch event is planned; an English version is not yet available.

Finally, the project hosted a joint workshop with DPC. During this two day event, representatives of environment management units (PONRE) from all 17 provinces attended to learn about the requirements for submitting Provincial Investment Plans to DPC in sync with the 7th NSEDP. Participants learned about the Rio Conventions and received the project tools, such as posters and Law Handbook. Through the Rio content and tools, participants might be able to include elements of the Rio Conventions in their Provincial Investment Plans.

III.3.2 Relevance

How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal areas and to the environment and development priorities of Lao PDR?

Through harmonisation with government priorities, GEF focal areas, and UN/UNDP Action Plans, the project is ranked as **Relevant**.

The Project harmonises with GoL environmental targets and directions, as outlined in the

Seventh Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2011-2015. Targets focus on increasing economic growth, exiting LDC status by 2020, achieving the MDGs, and ensuring political stability. However, the 7thNSEDP also seeks to “ensure sustainable development by integrating economic development with socio-cultural development and environment protection to the nation’s advantage.” The 7thNSEDP Environmental Protection, Natural Resources Management and Sustainable Development targets and directions are relevant to objectives and outcomes of the project, including, but not limited to: strengthening technical staff from central to local levels, drafting and improving laws and regulations on environmental conservation, working to protect forest, water sources, land and biodiversity, promoting development to allow for adaption to climate change, ensuring environmental impacts of development processes are minimal, and collaborating with different sectors to conduct research and draft strategies for mitigating climate change.

The project also aligns with other areas under the NSEDP, such as:

- **Rural Development, Poverty Reduction and Alleviation:** Conduct participatory planning at the village, Kumban and district levels in order to implement poverty reduction projects in the most effective ways; implement projects for establishing green rural areas earmarked for non-use for expanding green cover; and enhance participation at the village and Kumban level by developing staff capacity.
- **Forestry Sector:** increase forest cover to 65%; strengthen forest management and prevent destruction of forests by making efficient use of forest funds; and protect the environment and reduce activities that affect climate change.
- **Justice Sector:** disseminate laws so that people are aware of, and respect, the laws; improve existing laws as necessary; and improve coordination between justice sector and other sectors

The project is in line with other action plans that flow from the NSEDP, such as the ***Second Five Year National Environmental Action Plan (2011-2015)*** and the ***Natural Resources and Environment Sector Plan (2011-2015)*** focusing on capacity development and climate change.

The GoL is signatory to the three (3) Rio Conventions, thus the project objective of strengthening national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions is in line with GoL’s Rio Convention obligations.

The Project is in line with the GoL’s goals of capacity development in the environmental sector, which arose from the National Capacity Self-Assessment Project.

The project’s objective closely aligns with GEF’s focus of helping countries meet their obligations to the Rio Conventions in the focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation and fits under the strategic priority related to crosscutting capacity building.

Moreover, the project’s strategic approach to capacity development conforms to GEF’s operational principles:¹¹

- Ensure national ownership and leadership
- Ensure multi-stakeholder consultation and decision-making
- Base capacity building efforts in self needs assessment
- Adopt a holistic approach to capacity building

¹¹<http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/C.22.8%20Strategic%20Approach%20to%20Capacity%20Building%20FINAL.pdf>

- Integrate capacity building in wider sustainable development
- Promote partnerships
- Accommodate the dynamic nature of capacity building
- Adopt a learning-by-doing approach
- Combine programmatic and project-based approaches
- Combine process as well as product-based approaches

III.3.3 Country Ownership

Country ownership of the project was demonstrated throughout the project in several ways. First of all, the project design was rooted in the NCSA process undertaken by MAF, with input of numerous stakeholders. The findings of NCSA formed the foundation for project design and direction of NCSAFU.

As mentioned before, stakeholder participation was a key component of the project. Stakeholders drove the development of project outputs, tools and activities at the provincial level, but also functioned to increase coordination amongst departments and ministries that might not have otherwise come into contact with one another on a monthly basis. When asked about major successes of the project, the NPD said he felt it was a success to get so many sectors involved. While there were delays in getting the appropriate nominations secured and getting the project board assigned, in general project staff report that there were high levels of engagement at the monthly meetings. Some also presented in workshops on their specialties. TWG members were not provided a per diem to attend these monthly meetings; project activities were in addition to their existing duties.

Stakeholders at the provincial level also exhibited a high level of engagement in the project and were eager to implement project activities. Officials were happy to see additional budget allocated to facilitate more of what they saw as their primary role in legislation implementation - dissemination of laws. In one province, an official mentioned using project tools in 40 villages. A provincial official was also able to share the experience of participatory forestry management at the provincial planning workshop conducted with DPC in May 2013.

Ownership of the project was also seen at the community level. The development of Community Forestry Management Guidelines came from communities, with support from district and provincial officials who coordinated with the project team on developing project proposals for each target site. Interviews and community consultations reiterated that communities were the ones who wanted to engage in participatory forest management and create this management structure. As one informant said, "People have idea to protect the environment, it came from the people, and this project gave them the way."

Communities were clear that they were the ones who wanted to protect these areas; they felt they would receive the benefits from protection but they would also be subject to hardships if they weren't protected (weather, loss of NTFPs).

III.3.4 Mainstreaming

This section examines whether the project harmonizes with UNDP country programming and other key focus areas, such as gender, disaster reduction, and any affects on local populations.

The project harmonizes with the relevant UNDAF and CPD Outcomes for Lao PDR:

- By 2015, the government promotes more equitable and sustainable growth for poor people in the Lao PDR

- By 2015, the government ensures sustainable natural resources management through improved governance and community participation
- By 2015, the government and communities better adapt to and mitigate climate change and reduce natural disaster vulnerability in priority sectors.

Notably the project directly contributed to the outcome pertaining to natural resources management (NRM) through:

- Capacities of national and subnational authorities enhanced for better environment management as per forestry and fishery laws; Communities' engagement in NRM strengthened.
- Outcome indicator: number of participatory natural resource management agreements based on secure land tenure signed

This last outcome indicator also illustrates a positive effect on local populations: that of improved NRM arrangements with local groups and supported by provincial officials.

The project made efforts to include women in activities at the central level and local level. At target sites, women were included in community consultations concerning development of community forestry management guidelines. Additionally, for each community consultation conducted during the evaluation, a representative of the Lao Women's Union attended. At the national level, three (3) women were a part of the TWG, one for each focal area.

Project staff said that while women were encouraged, at the central level, the technical staff are more likely to be men. It is interesting to note that the project team was composed primarily of women, including the Assistant Project Manager, the Technical Advisor, and the Project Accountant. During an interview with a key informant, the importance of women at the community level was noted. Women's lack of education was considered a significant barrier, which explains why at the provincial level, all government officials and the heads of the village were men. Gender concerns were raised throughout the project, notably at the Midterm Review where participants discussed how to increase involvement of women in target communities.

III.3.5 Impact

What are the potential and realized long terms effects of the activities carried out by the project?

The potential for sustainable impacts due to this project is **Significant**. At the national level, legislation revisions and relationship building have the greatest opportunity for long-term impact. At the provincial level, increased implementation of legislation, community based natural resource management, and use of the project tools have the greatest chance for long term impact.

Objectives at the national level are far-reaching and ambitious. Activities here have a greater chance for long-term impact due to revising and providing input to laws, legislation, and incorporating relevant elements of the Rio Conventions into national level strategies. The project took opportunities where it could, but time and resources were limited due to project design and funding constraints. Potential longer-term impacts relate to:

- **Legislation revisions.** Contributions to on-going strategy, policy, and legislation initiatives in the sector, including: Forestry Law, PBSAP, National Land Use Policy, EIA Decree.

- **Relationship building.** Information exchange, increased communication, and consultation throughout the project amongst different departments and ministries, showcased expertise and department mandates.

At the provincial level, officials and communities were engaged and interested, initiating activities, with support from the project. Implementation activities at the community level began in quarter 1, 2013. However, likely there will not be enough time or support to have sustained impacts. Potential longer-term impacts relate to:

- **Increased implementation of legislation.** Reports of increased capacity and ability to implement (disseminate) natural resources legislation at the provincial level and anecdotal reports of decreased encroaching, slash and burn, illegal logging, and illegal wildlife hunting at target villages.
- **Community based natural resources management.** Community Forestry Management plans and guidelines developed and signed, project proposals to support plans developed, and zoning and demarcation activities undertaken.
- **Use of handbook and poster.** One province reported using the poster and handbook in an additional 40 villages past target village. The PM has been distributing the poster to other villages, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the poster and handbook developed through the project.

III.3.6 Sustainability

What changes brought about during the context of the project are likely to be institutionalized?

The potential for sustainability is rated as **Moderately Likely** with moderate risks. Country ownership has been demonstrated. The project has supported for legislation revisions, which are sustained within the legal framework. Project tools were seen as useful and appropriate, but most project outputs haven't been published or disseminated. The Community Forestry Management Plans have a good chance for replicability in other areas, but the communities need more financial and technical support.

As discussed previously, country ownership was demonstrated in several ways at different levels of the project, which contributes to the sustainability of the project interventions, from the national level to the community level.

- The project is housed within DFRM – MONRE. Project Manager works for DFRM and the National Project Director is the Director General of DFRM. APM and TA were responsible for the daily management of the project with supervision by PM.
- Ownership of project at province level was exceptional with high levels of engagement.
- Communities initiated management plans on their own, indicating the need for participatory forestry management already existed.

Project contributions to legislation, planning and policies also demonstrate potential for long-term sustainability:

- EIA Decree
- Forestry Law
- National Land Use Policy
- PBSAP

- Community Forestry Management Plans and Guidelines

Revisions of EIA Decree, the Forestry Law, and National Land use Policy will continue after the project has been completed.

Two of the project tools -the posters and handbook - were seen as useful and appropriate by government officials, being easy to understand at the community level especially. The project devoted time and energy to modifying and developing these two tools, as well as training officials how to use them and train others to use them. These tools have been distributed to officials in every province. Stakeholders report that the Law Handbook is easy to use, good for different levels of comprehension, and promoted better understanding among different sectors; the posters are good at the village level because it represents the principles of natural resource management visually. It is likely they will continue to be used by provincial, district, and community members (one (1) target community displayed the posters in their community space).

These tools helped provincial and district officials to implement the law(in which they saw their role as dissemination), however, without funding to travel to distant communities, it isn't clear to what extent dissemination activities, and therefore implementation of legislation, will continue.

Other project outputs, such as the Review of Legal Framework, Compliance Strategy, and other tools still remain to be finalized, published, tested, and disseminated. Drafts of those reviewed tend to be text heavy and long, which may indicate they won't be ideal for community use or users may need training to use them properly.

Community management plans have good potential for replicability. Driven by the community, and with support from district officials, these village agreements have the potential to be used as models of community based natural resource management throughout the country. Activities in these plans include zoning and demarcation, patrolling and some sort of community development fund, as the development of livelihoods along with natural resources protection was seen as critical for sustainability.

The project explored the potential for institutional and financial sustainability within DPC to integrate community projects into their annual plans. They have worked with the provincial officials and community members to develop the community plans into a proposal format to submit to DPC for funding or other donors, but as of yet, no additional funding has been secured.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

The review of this project indicates a successful project that met its outcomes and showed positive results of varying degrees at the national, provincial, and village levels. Although the project experienced significant delays due to restructuring of involved ministries and departments and in the finalization and publication of project outputs, strong partnerships, usable and appropriate tools, and community led initiatives have laid the groundwork for greater awareness and compliance with natural resources legislation.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

National Level:

1. A greater awareness and understanding of the Rio Conventions is exhibited. Informants specifically mention climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, and deforestation,

which are areas of importance for Lao PDR. E.g. one informant said he understood more about the effect that cutting forests has on the climate.

2. Technical Working Groups (TWGs), established by the project to support implementation, fostered information exchange and exchange of expertise amongst sectors (ministries and departments) and levels (national-provincial) during consultations and workshops.
3. The project contributed to on-going strategy, policy, and legislation initiatives in the sector, including supporting: consultations for Forestry Law revision, development of the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP), consultations for the National Land Use Policy revision, and a national consultant for the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Decree revision.

Province/District Level:

4. Greater awareness and understanding of Rio Conventions is exhibited, specifically relating to areas of importance for Lao PDR. Officials specifically note the primary issues relating to the Rio Conventions, such as climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, and deforestation. Officials also see a linkage of their work with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), saying when working in natural resources and conservation, “it’s related to the objective of the Rio Conventions.”
5. A greater awareness and understanding of natural resource laws is reported, mostly Forestry Law and Wildlife and Aquatics Law, but also Environmental Protection Law, Pest Management Law, and Fishery Law (laws summarized in the Land Handbook).
6. The project fostered communication at the national level in joint workshops where it allowed in person contact. It also fostered communication amongst different provinces, and between the provincial levels to communities, where officials provided support to community plans.
7. Officials involved in the project defined their roles in implementation as disseminating relevant laws to communities, and supporting target communities in the formulation of Community Forestry Management Guidelines.
8. An increased implementation of laws at the province/community level was reported, notably in target communities, but also dissemination and awareness-raising about natural resource law to other villages in district. One province reported disseminating materials to 40 villages in the province. Another province reported disseminating materials to 4 villages.
9. The project enjoys high levels of engagement with provincial officials.

Community Level:

10. Communities report being supportive of Community Forestry Management Plans, and they see that “laws that give them benefit,” including more NTFPs and allowing wildlife populations to increase, reflecting a more positive attitude towards the law.
11. Community Forestry Management Guidelines initiated and adopted by Ban¹²Tha (Kham District, Xiengkhouang Province) and Ban XayXee (Xiaseththa District, Attapeu Province) target communities.
12. Villagers in Ban Tha report a clear understanding of different zones, differing between strictly prohibited, buffer, and community use areas. Ban XayXee has signed regulations regarding the establishment of the community forestry management plan.
13. Community and provincial officials give anecdotal reports of decreased encroaching, slash and burn, illegal logging, and illegal wildlife hunting at target villages due to project activities.

¹² Village

14. Villagers report increased understanding of natural resources, biodiversity and climate change, describing it in terms of larger patterns (i.e. mentioning catchment areas, changes in weather and rainfall patterns).

LESSONS LEARNED

Capacity building and awareness-raising about natural resources legislation at all levels was seen as important and relevant, demonstrating the project objective aligned with stakeholders' perceptions of needs.

- Awareness-raising at the community level is regarded as very important by all levels for this project and for future directions.
- More capacity development regarding natural resources legislation, the Rio Conventions, and the use of project tools is regarded as important.
- Awareness-raising about the importance of the environment, resources, and how deforestation, biodiversity, and land degradation affect economic development is needed at upper levels to leverage strategic support and include key environmental issues into national level policies.

Addressing implementation of natural resources legislation and issues pertaining to the Rio Conventions is a cross cutting issue.

- Involvement of different ministries, departments, sectors and levels all contributed to the successful outcomes of the project.
- There was no clear mechanism for forming cross-ministerial working groups, however, cross sectoral communication was highly regarded and worth the time and effort.
- Exchanges of expertise at different levels built relationships among different departments and ministries and allowed for information exchange.

Communities exhibited high levels of ownership in managing their protected areas, however, clear linkages between natural resource management and benefits to communities need to be clearly established.

- Having communities and local officials work together to design activities and management plans pertaining to their local area conferred a high level of ownership, which was revealed in high levels of engagement.
- Consultations revealed support for Community Forestry Management and clear understanding of the need for protection, however, the need for livelihood support was a consistent theme.
- If communities perceive they will receive tangible benefits from natural resources conservation and protection, such as increased non-timber forestry products (NTFPs) or livelihood projects, there is likely to be higher compliance.
- If benefits are perceived as more abstract (for future generations or to sequester carbon), there might be less support of regulations in times of need.

Revision of legislation, national level plans and policies operate according to the government timeframe, not a project timeframe. Project timelines should take into account government procedures and protocols.

- Expectations of revisions/changes should be aligned with national procedures.
- The Compliance Strategy developed by the project also needed to follow government protocols and procedures for approval through different departments and ministries as it covered responsibilities of different government officials. Soon to be published, this and other project outputs that are being published at the end of the project, are at risk for not being tested or used.

- Contributions to legislation revision and strategic planning are an important opportunity to leverage natural resources and Rio Convention content into national policy, with a long-term potential for impact. The project employed a flexible and pragmatic approach in joining with other on-going initiatives.

The term “implementation” of legislation is general and can mean many things, including top-down enforcement through penalties for breaking the law, dissemination of laws, provision of permits for use, or bottom-up participatory community agreements to increase compliance.

- Outcomes in this project didn’t clarify what type of implementation was intended; no documentation was provided explaining the rationale of how or why project activities focused on dissemination of laws.
- Clarifying what type of implementation is intended for an initiative during project design or very early on in the project will make it easier to measure if and how implementation has changed.
- Clarifying what type of implementation is intended during project design or very early on in the project will also make it easier to target tools and activities at the correct officials, as well as indicators and baselines to measure change.
- Provincial stakeholders in this project saw their role in implementation as dissemination of laws, and the project developed tools to help them disseminate laws and create participatory community agreements.
- Interviewed national level officials did not perceive themselves to have a role in implementation of legislation, which could have made the project less focused at the national level. Some informants suggested that participants with backgrounds in policy or legislation would have been helpful.

Project outcomes relating to legislation implementation and capacity building at national and provincial levels had limited connection to outcomes related to legislation revision.

- Activities relating to legislation revision were unconnected to other activities, making the project less focused.
- Adaptive management used by the project allowed activities to be driven more by provincial and local needs, contributing greater ownership and positive outcomes. This increased the project’s success, but it reduced some of its focus at the national level.

Data on some project indicators were neither systematically collected nor collected at all, primarily due to lack of human and financial resources. Indicators could have been revised or removed when the project began gathering momentum at the midterm review; capacity development indicators weren’t collected over key stakeholders at the beginning of the project, making quantification of capacity changes difficult, as no baseline was measured.

The project took advantage of existing leadership capacities within its partnership structure when the formation of the project board was substantially delayed.

- Due to government restructuring, the project board wasn’t formed until the third year.
- The UNDP took on a greater role by providing some directional decisions.
- The national level Technical Working Group helped set the direction at the national and provincial levels.
- This informal process wasn’t documented. TWG meeting minutes weren’t available, so it wasn’t possible to conduct a systematic assessment of discussions, inputs, quality of interaction, and level of guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In finalising the exit strategy, some areas the IP may want to focus efforts on to increase chances for sustainability include:

- Develop a plan for appropriate departments and divisions to use the Review of Legal Framework and Compliance Strategy. There is a risk that these outputs will not be used after publishing.
- TWGs provided a good platform for inter-ministerial and inter-departmental sharing at all levels. The exit strategy should include options to keep the TWGs active, or to use other existing TWGs related to the Rio Conventions. The formalities for nominating the members were time consuming, however, once the relationships are established, communication between the departments can be less formal.
- Communities need additional support to realize their plans and implement activities. Community and provincial support for their management plans is currently very high, and in the first three months of implementation at the community level, a lot of progress has been made, but it's too short for long term sustainability at this point. There is great opportunity as communities have concrete plans for next steps but lack relatively small amounts of funding.

Linkages with other initiatives may increase the chance for sustainability.

- The exit strategy should closely examine other initiatives or funding opportunities including DPC funding, the Asian Development Bank-Biodiversity Conservation Corridor project (in Champasak Province) currently being implemented, the World Bank's second Laos Environment and Social project (LENS2) which is in the project preparation stages.
- GEF/World Bank's International Development Assistance's planned Protected Area and Wildlife Project (PAWP), with a proposed development objective of strengthening participatory and transfrontier management of national protected areas and improve law enforcement against illegal wildlife trade. This project is designed to enhance the capacity of DFRM and DOFI and might find some of the NCSAFU project tools, such as the poster, Law Handbook, and NTFP guidelines, useful.
- The Community Forestry Management agreements developed by the project align closely with the goals of the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). Linkages with RECOFTC may strengthen community forestry management in project communities.

Next steps to increase implementation and compliance with natural resources legislation in Lao PDR:

- Other tools stakeholders felt would help them to implement laws include: summary handbooks of different laws in a concise and usable format as developed in the project and other awareness raising tools like Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or radio spots to disseminate laws at the community level.
- Provincial officers would like to have specific guidelines for law enforcement; suggestions include specific fines or penalties for encroachers, illegal hunters and harvesters that would give them guidance on the spot.
- Natural resources management at the community level needs to be linked to some income-generating component, either NTFPs or other livelihood initiatives. One informant at the national level noted: There is a "big risk to implementing the Rio Conventions – forest conservation, biodiversity conservation" because "at the same time, we have to be working on incomes at the village level." When times get difficult, the villagers will go back to the forest. They don't have the luxury of adhering to management plans if they have no other source of income.

- Engage with the private sector to increase awareness of, and compliance with, natural resources legislation. While this is beyond the scope of the current project and the mandate of the IP, higher level contacts in MONRE, MAF, MEM, or MOJ facilitated through the national TWG might be an entry point for discussion.

In order to better address the commitments of Lao PDR to the Rio Conventions at the national level, key issues and concrete outcomes should be mainstreamed into national and ministry plans.

- Support inclusion of key issues, notably land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change, into the 8th National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2016-2020 and other five-year strategy documents. Planning for this period will be done in the next couple of years, so now is the time.
- Support concrete outcomes to increase concrete results. For instance, the revision of the EIA decree was included in 7th NSED, and it is being performed (with project support). Only including the words “climate change” or “land degradation” in a strategy can be too abstract to for implementation.
- UNFCCC and climate change are well represented in Lao PDR policy and planning, especially the Strategy on Climate Change, the Second Five Year Environmental Action Plan (2011-2015) and the Natural Resources and Environment Sector Plan (2011-2015). Providing support for the implementation of the NAPA and the Strategy on Climate Change of the Lao PDR (in which adaptation and mitigation options for key strategic priorities in different sectors are laid out) is a next step.
- UNCBD and biodiversity are addressed to a certain extent, through the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) (supported by the project), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Additionally NGOs are active in biodiversity issues. Supporting implementation of the NBSAP or PBSAP is a next step.
- UNCCD and land degradation is addressed in national policy and planning primarily through government policy related to preventing slash and burn. Integrate issues relating to the prevention and/or reduction of degraded land and rehabilitation of partially degraded land into related sectors (agriculture, forestry, sustainable land use and management, climate change adaptation) and policies (National Land Use Policy).

Annex I: Terms of Reference (TOR)

International Consultant for the evaluation of Meeting the National Obligation to Implement Natural Resource Legislation Lao PDR and recommendations for a possible next phase

A. Background

Laos is a tiny landlocked country gifted with natural wealth in one of the most biodiversity-rich location in the world. Protection and conservation of its rich natural assets is understood to be a tool for economic progress.

The Government of Laos has demonstrated commitment to conservation starting in the 1990s when it became a Party to 3 important Rio Conventions: the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) along with other international multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and sustainable development conventions and agreements. All these form the overall context for Lao PDR's global environmental management framework.

From 2003-2009, the GOL with support from UNDP-GEF conducted a self-assessment of its capacity to implement the Rio Conventions to gain better understanding of the threats to LAO PDR's environment and come up with better strategies to address them,. The National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (NCSA) serves as a main mechanism to assess the country's capacity and associated needs in the biodiversity, climate change and land degradation thematic areas.

A follow up project called Meeting the National Obligation to Implement Natural Resource Legislation (or NCSA Follow-up) was launched at the end of 2010 to Strengthen Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation. It aims to strengthen

The project is coordinated by the Department of Forest Resource Management under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), collaborating with other departments such as the Department of Planning and Cooperation (DPC), Department of Environment and Social Impact Assessment (DESIA) under the same Ministry; and with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The main purpose of NCSAFU in Lao PDR is to strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions.

NCSAFU Main objectives:

- **Outcome 1:** *Key stakeholders in the two/three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation.*
- **Outcome 2:** *National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation, and in particular are able to support all provinces in LAO PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement.*
- **Outcome 3:** *The legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive.*

NCSAFU Main outputs:

1. An agreed set of priority laws, regulations and/or articles.
2. A compliance strategy. This consists of a set of steps to be taken to increase local and national compliance with the law. It will also include timelines, indicators and allocation

of responsibilities. This includes clear mechanisms to ensure that Rio Conventions will be addressed.

3. A package of operational tools.
4. Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project Site.

Overall indicators

1. Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces who are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the Rio Convention
2. The number of times the tools are used at the Project Site
3. The number of times the village/provincial officers involved in the target sites request assistance from the provincial/national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws
4. Confidence of the national stakeholders in their own ability to implement laws;
5. The revised EPL is promulgated and to, to an appropriate extent, reflects the findings and recommendations of this project.
6. The mainstreaming of environment into national and provincial planning process. (via Department of Planning and Cooperation)

A. Objective of the Assignment

The main objective of this assignment is to undertake an evaluation of the implementation of the NCSAFU project (2011-2013) to assess achievements, progress, and key challenges in implementation, and make recommendations for a possible next phase. It will assess key outcomes and achievements for the overall delivery of the NCSAFU framework of strengthening national and local legislations for natural resource management. The evaluation will identify whether LAO's national policy framework for resource management in relation to the 3 Rio Conventions have been absorbed into institutional and governance structures of the GOL, and therefore leads towards greater benefits to communities, wildlife and habitats.

This evaluation will cover all outputs of NCSAFU with its partner agencies: MAF, MONRE, DESIA, DPC, and partner NGOs and other organizations.

The evaluation will recommend key outputs of an extended programme of support to MONRE/DFRM in the area of legislative and environmental governance from 2013 to 2015. The synthesis from this evaluation will feed into the formulation of the NCSAFU Phase II (2013 – 2015).

The international consultant will work under supervision of the NCSAFU management team and UNDP Lao Environment Unit Chief.

Specifically the evaluation will focus on:

1) Relevance:

- Assess the overall relevance of the program in terms of design and objectives;

2) Effectiveness and efficiency:

- Reviewing effectiveness and efficiency of the program; measuring progress against expected targets; identifying areas where special attention is needed in order to achieve targets;
- Examining project management arrangements both within UNDP and across the different government agencies to ensure that they are adequate for and consistent with the attainment of assigned project outcomes and the implementation of agreed project activities;

3) Impact:

- Assessing overall impact of the program and the level of satisfaction of project stakeholders and beneficiaries with the results achieved thus far;

4) Sustainability:

- Assessing sustainability of implemented activities;

5) Recommendations for NCSAFU Phase 2:

- Drawing on the assessment of the program and on the results of stakeholder consultations, the consultant will provide recommendations on the overall focus of the possible second phase;
- Drawing practical recommendations for strengthening the linkages between all components including project/programme management set-up, practical coordination mechanism and way forward;
- Drawing insights gained from stakeholder consultations and lessons learned, provide concrete recommendations for the NCSAFU Phase II focusing on but not limited to:
 - a. Design of an appropriate programmatic and management structure
 - b. Communications and awareness needs to influence policy makers and the general public
 - c. Areas for legislative enforcement.
 - d. Linkages between all project outputs/activities to make larger impact
 - e. Identifying appropriate balance between policy and planning at national level with action-oriented activities at the local-level focus on legislation enforcement.

Evaluation questions

The following broad [questions](#) are the minimum that need to be addressed in this evaluation:

- Have the right things been done? (Was the outcome/outputs relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and the UNDP mandate?),
- Have things been done right? (Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective and efficient?),
- Are the results sustainable? (Will the outputs and outcome(s) lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project(s))?
- How might we do things better in the future? (Which findings may have relevance for future programming or for other similar initiatives elsewhere?).

Specific Evaluation Questions:

The NCSAFU project team and UNDP are interested in finding answers to these specific evaluation questions.

1. What were the measurable benefits/results from the project activities and products delivered to date (resources developed, meetings, consultations, awareness raising projects through tools, etc) as experienced by beneficiaries ?
 - a. National level environment officers
 - b. District and local level environment officers
 - c. Pilot project community members
2. What were the impacts of the two major outputs (Review of Legal Framework; and Compliance Strategy Report); on delivery of the strengthening environmental legislation objectives?
3. What was the best strategy to mainstream environmental management in government policy planning?

Design-Approach

- ***Desk Review of Existing Project Documents*** including the two major outputs (Review of Legal Framework; and Compliance Strategy Report); Communication Tools, Training of Trainers resource, Field Study Report, Results of GEF Scorecard Report; Progress Reports; Workplans, Monthly Meeting Minutes, and other reports that the project team will identify.
- ***Meetings with Key Informants***, including members of the Technical Work Group (TWG), Project team members, national, provincial and district level authorities/beneficiaries, and community members.
- ***Capacity Building Partners and Activities Mapping*** of existing partners and support which has been given to date in pursuit of achieving the outcomes.
- ***Site Observation and Interview Visits*** will be required to conduct interviews and discussions with key stakeholders and beneficiaries in the pilot sites to triangulate data and fill information gaps as needed.

B. Responsibilities

In consultation with the Project Team and UNDP, the consultant will:

- i. Outline scope of the review, areas of focus and information needed;
- ii. Propose methodology and steps in which the review will be carried out for different components;
- iii. Undertake consultations with stakeholders including Government ministries, institutions, development partners, INGOs, academia and where possible local people;
- iv. Based on the analysis, produce a draft evaluation report based on the objectives specified above;
- v. Organize consultation workshops to seek comments from implementing Government partners and relevant ministries, development partners, private sector and non-government organizations on the draft report; and
- vi. Incorporate comments and produce final evaluation report on the implementation of the NCSAFU by the final week of the evaluation.

C. Deliverables and tentative timeline

This assignment will be for 20 days over a period of six weeks. This will require up to 15 days in country including a field trip to selected province(s) and debriefing with government and UNDP Lao PDR.

- i. Come to agreement on appropriate scope of review and areas of focus, based on the status of project activities at the time of the evaluation. Draft outline of the evaluation report and proposed mission time schedule circulated for comments to Project team and UNDP by **week 1**;
- ii. Preparatory review of relevant documents and reports, **weeks 1**;
- iii. In-country meetings and stakeholder consultations during **weeks 2-3**;
- iv. A presentation to Project team and UNDP and other stakeholders organized by **Week 3** on the initial evaluation results;
- v. Submission of first draft evaluation report by **Week 4**;
- vi. Address comments from stakeholders on first draft report, by **Week 5**;
- vii. Final evaluation report submitted to Project Team and UNDP by **Week 6**.

D. Lao Government's and UNDP's involvement

The Government of Lao and UNDP Country Office will assist with arranging consultation meetings and field visits, and provide all relevant documents. In addition, both the Government and UNDP will also jointly ensure that the consultant review and evaluation of the NCSAFU project is conducted in a fair manner. . UNDP and the GOL will facilitate the entire process and make sure that resources are in place to ensure the completeness of the review with high quality.

E. Qualifications

- Relevant post-graduate degree in environmental sciences, natural resource management, , law or related;
- At least 10 years of relevant experience in carrying out high level analytical work on environmental governance, development policies and project implementation;
- Preferably experience in Laos or Southeast Asia.
- Proven experience in project evaluation;
- In-depth understanding of common environmental and legislations enforcement issues faced by Lao or other countries in this region.
- Specific experience with tracking Rio convention (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC) implementation and management issues an advantage;
- Strong and proven research and analytical skills;
- Initiative and ability to organize his/her work independently, but also to work as part of a team;
- Proven ability to deliver quality output working under tight deadlines;
- Ability to communicate effectively and to facilitate discussions at the senior level with government officials and the development community
- Excellent command of written and spoken English;
- Knowledge of Lao language (spoken and/or written) an advantage;

F. Other relevant information

Duration: 20 working days over a six week period

Duty Station: UNDP, Vientiane Lao PDR and home based

Start: End of April 2013

Requirements for submission of application: All interested and qualified candidates should apply on-line using the following links:

- 1) UNDP Lao PDR Country Office website at <http://www.undplao.org/vacancies/index.php> or
- 2) UNDP Jobs at <http://jobs.undp.org/>

Instructions for on-line submissions:

- 1) Step 1: Please prepare all required documents electronically;
- 2) Step 2: Combine all documents in ONE SINGLE FILE (preferably in PDF however Word format can be also accepted) and upload to the UNDP Jobs using the link above;
- 3) Step 3: After that you will receive an auto reply from the UNDP jobs if your offer is received successfully.

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information:

- 1) **Cover letter explaining why he/she would be the most suitable candidate for the work, and including a brief methodology on how he/she will approach and conduct the evaluation;**
- 2) **CV including past experience in similar projects or assignments and at least 3 references;**
- 3) **Detailed financial proposal: Lump sum offer with clear cost breakdown (international travel, consultancy fee, and per diem).**

Note: The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount. Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including travel, per diems). All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. UNDP accept travel costs not exceeding of an economy class ticket.

During the online application it is recommended that all documents to be uploaded in one electronic file in PDF or Word formats.

Evaluation of proposals and award criteria:

1. Short listing of applications according to technical criteria **(a to b)**,
2. The 3-4 applications with the highest score will be interviewed
3. Final evaluation includes interview scoring **(criteria c)** and financial proposal (as per table below)

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Weigh</u>	<u>Max Points obtainable</u>
<u>Technical criteria</u>	0.7	70
a. Academic degree	0.05	5
b. Skills and experience of a consultant		
• Experience in carrying out high level analytical work on environmental governance, development policies and project implementation;	0.10	10
• Relevant work experience in Laos or Southeast Asia	0.05	5
• Specific experience with tracking Rio convention (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC) implementation and management issues an advantage.	0.10	10
c. Proposed workplan and approach to carry out the assignment	0.10	
- All aspect of the ToR has been addressed in sufficient detail.	0.05	10
- Implementation schedule.	0.05	5

- Quality assurance measures.		5
d. Result of the interview	0.20	20
Financial	0.3	30
<u>Total points obtainable</u>	1.0	100

Cumulative analysis: The award of the contract will be made to a consultant who offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- a. responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- b. Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria:
 - * Technical Criteria weight; [0.7]
 - * Financial Criteria weight; [0.3]

Only a consultant obtaining a minimum of 49 points in the technical rating would be considered for the financial evaluation.

Note: For detailed information, please refer to Annex 1- Terms of Reference (TOR). Any request for clarification must be sent in writing to the following e-mail: chitlatda.keomuongchanh@undp.org

UNDP Lao PDR will respond in writing by standard electronic mail and will send written copies of the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, to all consultants.

The copies of the response will be also placed on our web-site at <http://www.undplao.org/vacancies/procurementnotice.php> and linked to the current Procurement Notice.

All interested candidates are encouraged to visit the above web-site for updates.

Please note that only short-listed candidates will be notified.

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

For more detailed information about UNDP Lao PDR please visit our website at

<http://www.undplao.org>

Appendix 2: Evaluation Criteria Matrix

Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthening Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation – Final Evaluation Report

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area and to the environment and development priorities of the Government of Lao PDR?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the GEF biodiversity, climate change and land degradation focal areas and strategic priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents GEF focal areas and strategic priorities Key project partners and project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP and other partners GEF website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the Action Plan of UNDAF? How does the project support the Action Plan of UNDP's CPAP? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of relationship between outcomes of UN/UNDP's strategic plans and project plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents UNDAF and UNDP CPAP and documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, government partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the project relevant to GOL's environmental and development priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which project supports and aligns with national environmental objectives, policies, strategies and plans Degree to which project is country driven and country managed Degree of coherence between country priorities and GEF/UNDP criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents National policies and strategies on environment and development GEF/UNDP goals Key project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with UNDP, project partners, and other relevant government officials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the project's outcomes and outputs reflect the needs of national, provincial, district, and local stakeholders? How does the project support the needs of target beneficiaries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which project takes into account national realities and capacities at the national, provincial, district, and local levels Degree to which project design included input from relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Previous NCSA report Project partners and stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was adaptive management used to keep the project current and relevant to changing conditions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in project timelines, work plans, and strategic framework and why Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach when needed to improve efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project partners and UNDP Project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews with project team, UNDP and others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did project budget (revised) reflect expenditures? Where were 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference between budget and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses

discrepancies? Was co-financing leveraged as planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expenditures Planned vs actual funds leveraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with project team, UNDP and others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How efficient are partnership arrangements for this project? How efficient was the collaboration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which partnerships and collaboration amongst departments were encouraged Examples of partnerships Evidence that collaborations will continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project team and key partners, relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the proper departments and divisions involved? How do the mandates relate the project's objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which department mandates/expertise correspond to project objectives/activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project team and key partners, relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation? Did project use national technical expertise when available? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government departments/divisions that were part of project, as TWGs, as trainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project team, key partners, relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learned from the Project on efficiency? How could the project have more efficiently addressed its key priorities? What changes, if any, could have been made to the project? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout the evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent has the project reached its objective? To what extent have the expected outcomes of the project been achieved? To what extent have the project outputs been used?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project been effective in achieving expected outcomes? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Key stakeholders in the three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resources legislation. National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation, and in particular are able to support all Lao PDR with legislation implementation Legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators in project strategic results framework Perceptions of changes in law implementation and enforcement at the local, district, and provincial levels in the sites, and at the national level Perceptions of changes in awareness of natural resource laws and Rio Conventions in national, district and provincial officials Changes in natural resources law implementation at the site level Project contribution toward changes in legislation, decrees, policy, and planning in regards to natural resources management and the Rio Conventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents NCSA report Data reported in annual and quarterly reports Key project partners and stakeholders at national, provincial and district level Community consultations at the site level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project partners, stakeholders Community consultations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the project outputs been used by targets? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of use and familiarity with outputs by relevant stakeholders <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Legal Framework Compliance Strategy Natural Resources Laws Summary Handbook Poster NTPF Management Handbook Documentation of the impacts of tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of tools Key project partners, project team Stakeholders at national, provincial, district levels Community consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project partners, stakeholders Community consultations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is risk and risk mitigation being managed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning Quality of risk mitigation strategies developed and followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents UNDP project staff and project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learned regarding achievement of outcomes? What changes could have been made to the project in order to improve the achievement of expected results? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout the evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Impact: What are the potential and realized long terms effects of the activities carried out by the project ?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective is the project in achieving its long term objective of strengthening national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues most relevant to the Rio Conventions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived changes in capacity at the national, provincial, district, and local targets in terms of skills, content knowledge Perceived contribution to changes in legislation, laws, strategic plans, etc Changes and potential changes in legislation, policy, regulations, decrees at the national and local levels Perceived changes in behaviors at the national, provincial, district, and local levels in regards to legislation implementation and enforcement Changes to quantity and strength of barriers, such as: knowledge about content of Rio Conventions, cross department, ministry and level (national, provincial, etc.) communication, knowledge about biodiversity, land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documentation Project team, UNDP, key partners, relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, partners Community consultation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> degradation and climate change at the local level Perceptions of usefulness of tools, Compliance Strategy and Review of Legal Framework 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the impacts or likely impacts of the Project: On the local environment On the local population On other socio-economic issues? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative descriptions of changes and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with key stakeholders Community consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the project provide lessons learned in order to enhance the longer term impact in this and other similar initiatives? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Sustainability: What changes brought about during the context of the project are likely to be institutionalized?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence and quality of sustainability issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documentation Project team and UNDP, project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, and partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project adequately address financial sustainability? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and source of costs Possible support or additional funding from other sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documentation Project team and UNDP, Project partners, stakeholders Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders Community consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the initiatives and results made by the project been integrated into institutions, departments and structures at the different levels? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree of ownership of project results/outcomes by partners and stakeholders Degree of level of support and importance attributed to project by stakeholders Level of financial and in kind support to be provided by in country after project is completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documentation Project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders Community consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence, if any, is there that project partners will continue activities, or related activities contributing to the outcomes beyond the end of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which project activities and outputs have been taken over by partners and institutions/departments Degree of engagement for project results and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documentation Project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders Communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders Community consultation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were laws, policies, plans, decrees, or frameworks addressed through project to address institutionalization of natural resources management? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project contribution to legislative changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Documentation • Project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document analyses • Interviews with project team, UNDP, partners, stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which areas/ elements in the project have the strongest potential for long-term sustainability? • What are the key challenges to the sustainability of the project that must be quickly addressed? • How can experience from this project influence other capacity building, legislation dissemination, or laws, policies, plans initiatives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected throughout the evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis

Annex 3: Proposed Revise Project result Framework during the Inception Workshop

	Description	Indicator/scorecard	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Objective	To strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions.	Compliance strategy and tools developed and use by central and local authority.	Development a compliance strategy and tools to facilitate law enforcement and implementation natural resource require	A compliance strategy and at least 5 operational tools available at the national and provincial level by the end of the project,	Guideline of tools developed by the project
		Number of initiative development activities that use the tools developed by the project	No initiative development project that project's operational tools	At least 3 Initiative development activities at the provincial, by the end of the project	Government and community agreed to work together on the initiative activities/ project and initiatives financed
		Information system of law and legislation related to Rio Convention update and use by central and local authority and communities in the project areas.	Limited access to legislation information by local authority and villagers in the project areas.	Information decimation tools for awareness rising available by the end of the project.	Publication of the project, report from press.
		Number of infractions of environmental laws reported by the national press.	Existing law/regulation requires review and publishes.	Information related to new law and existing law related to Rio Convention publish in the national and international newspapers and website, Radio and or TV.	News: newspaper, TV, Radio, and website of government, international organizations, NGOs.
		Percentage of respondents in all provinces that is sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address biodiversity, land degradation and/or climate change.	10% of selected sample sizes are able to address biodiversity, land degradation and climate change.	At least 90% of selected sample size is able to address biodiversity, land degradation and climate change.	Assessment or survey reports
		Capacity development monitoring scorecard rating	Capacity development monitoring scorecard rating by stakeholder requires	TWGs/relevant non/government agencies	Assessment, survey or monitoring reports.
Outcome	1. Key stakeholders in the three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation.	Number of times the compliance strategy and tools are used at the project sites.	Application of compliance strategy and tools needs.	Compliance strategy and tools used in the project sites at least 3time by the end of the project.	Implementation reports, training report and record of the project.
		Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces that are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the Rio Conventions.	Less than 10% o respondents understand and familiar with national laws related to Rio Convention.	At least 50% of despondence understands and familiar with national laws related to Rio Convention.	Monitoring and evaluation reports, survey reports.
		No. of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws	Record number of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws requires.	At least increase to 10 cases per year.	Record of government and record of the project (compliance strategy)

	Description	Indicator/scorecard	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Outcome	2 National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resources legislation, and in particular are able to support provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement.	Confidence of national stakeholders of own ability to implement laws.	Assessment through scorecard rating requires.	Respondent give score rate of number 4 or 5 more rise to 75% by the end of the project.	Survey or scorecard rating assessment reports.
		Number of training on how to use natural resource laws and tools.	Training on using natural resource laws and tools require.	At least 3 training provide to relevance stakeholders and the trainee evaluation report by the end of the project.	Proceeding or training reports
		The number of times that provincial officers request assistance of national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws.	Zero	At least 5 times by the end of the project	Survey report and recode of the project.
Outcome	3. Legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive	National/provincial development policies integrated environment concerns and reflected finding and recommendation of the project	Zero	At least 2 by the end of the project.	Minute of meetings, guideline to mainstream environment into national and provincial development planning process.
		Revised government police/law is promulgated and , to an appropriate extent, reflects the findings and recommendations of this project.	Zero	By end of the project	Records of national assembly meetings,/project records
Outputs	1.1 An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles.	Available of review priority natural resource laws and regulation.	Priority natural resource laws related to Rio Convention needs to develop to guide implementation.	Approved the review report and the local officers and communities able to implement natural resource law/regulation by using the review priority law as a guideline.	Project publications, survey reports
	1.2 A compliance strategy for provincial level	Available of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at provincial.	Existing compliance strategy needs improvement.	Approved compliant strategy and provincial officers utilize the compliance strategy.	Compliance strategy report, minute of consultation meeting, survey report
	1.3 A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement built for provincial authorities and local communities	Set of operational tools prepared and available by first quarter of 2012.	Review of existing operational tools of other relevant projects needs.	Final tools and provincial officers committed to utilize the compliance strategy.	Implementation reports, Printed guides
		Number of training workshops and its reports and number of trainees participated in the training	Zero	Capacity built to implement and enforcement legal framework at provincial.	Training workshop report and report of testing tools
		Provincial consultation workshop on PBSAP and baseline data	Development of the PBSAP needs	PBSAP	Proceeding of workshops ,PBSAP report
	1.4 Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	Respondent in national confirms that operational tools applicable and used.	Assessment usefulness of tools is needed.	Application of the tools by local communities and local authority.	Survey monitoring reports

	Description	Indicator/scorecard	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Output	2.1 An agreed set of priority laws, regulations and/or articles	Available of review priority natural resource laws	No priority natural resource laws related to Rio Convention available	National officers utilize the review report	Minute of consultation meetings and project reports.
	2.2 A compliance strategy for provincial level	Available of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at national level.	Existing compliance strategy needs improvement.	National officers utilize the compliance strategy	Compliance strategy report, minute of consultation meeting
	2.3 A package of operational tools and capacity for law enforcement built for national level.	Set of operational tools	Existing operational tools of other relevant projects needs revised and upgraded	National officers utilize the operational tools	Implementation reports, print materials.
		Number of training provided and number of people got trained	Project not yet provides any trainings to government officers	Capacity built to implement and enforcement legal framework at national level.	Training report, project reports
	2.4 Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	Respondent in national confirms that operational tools applicable and used.	Assessment usefulness of tools is needed.	Report of the document impact of the tools by the end of the project.	Project reports, monitoring report
Output	3.1 Legislative revision taken into account the primary and secondary obligation to the Rio Conventions	Number of decree/regulation and PCAP/annual development plan approved by government	Revisiting the PCAP, annual development plan, and existing government development workplan and decree/regulation needs.	Approved of the PCAP/annual workplan and contradicting decree/regulations identified	Proceeding, minutes, or workshops reports
Activity	1.1.1 Review and prioritize national policies/laws/regulations/decrees related to natural resource management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOR and recruitment a national consultant on legal and natural resource management - Data and information collection and individual meeting with stakeholders - Data and information analysis and drafting the report - Consultation meeting on the 1st draft report - Consultation meeting on the 2nd draft report - Finalize the report and translate to English. - Publish the report 				Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - component 1: implement at provincial level - implement together with activity 2.1.1
	1.2.1 Develop a compliance strategy for implementing priority laws in the provincial level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inputs from activities 1.1.1 - Report writing - Consultation meeting on the 1st draft report - Consultation meeting on the 2nd draft report - Finalize the report and translate to English - Publish the report 				Note: implement together with activity 2.2.1
	1.3.1 Collect, identify and test of the most appropriate existing operational tools and make them operational for routine use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize a training workshop on training of trainer to practice utilizing the existing tools - Testing tools in the fields - outreach, environmental awareness activities by using the existing tools - Baseline data development - capacity assessment by using score card - Testing tools reports 				Note: implement together with activity 2.3.1

	Description	Indicator/scorecard	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
	1.3.2 Develop the operational tools to fit at the provincial, district and communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inputs from activities 1.1.1 & 1.2.1 & 1.3.1 - Study tour to community forestry in Cambodia - Update, upgrade and/or develop operational tools for each convention - Field visit to target areas and consultation workshop on draft report - Finalize the tools and translate to English - Publish the report - Contribute to national biodiversity strategy and action plan through contribute to development of provincial biodiversity development strategy and action plan 				Note: implement together with activity 2.3.2
	1.3.3 Organize Training of Trainer (ToT) on using compliance strategy and using operational tools in three target areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOR and recruitment a national consultant and VSO - Inputs from activities 1.3.1 & 1.3.2 - Module development - Deliver training course including TOT workshops in targets areas and outreach activities - Evaluation training report 				Note: implement together with activity 2.3.3
	1.4.1 Application of the tools across the entire project sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support establishment of community development project (depend on result and priority form local authority but target for establishing community forestry, sustainable farming/fisheries) to implementation in the target areas - Awareness raising - Follow up and monitoring 				
	1.4.2 Document the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOR and recruitment a national consultant and VSO - Assess training impact and capacity development situation (survey) - Lesson learn and assessment report 				Implement together with activity 2.4.1
Activity	2.1.1 Review and prioritize legal framework – national policies, laws, regulations related to natural resource management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOR and recruitment a national consultant on legal and natural resource management - Data and information collection and individual meeting with stakeholders - Data and information analysis and drafting the report - Consultation meeting s draft report - Finalize the report and translate to English and publish. 				Note: component 2 : implement at national level
	2.2.1 Develop a compliance strategy for national level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inputs from activities 2.1.1 - Report writing - Consultation meetings on draft report - Finalize the report and translate to English - Publish the report 				
	2.3.1 Database development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TOR and recruitment a national consultant to support database development - Communication materials and press development - Website development 				
	2.3.2 Develop the operational tools to fit at the national level.				
	2.3.3 Organize Training of Trainer (ToT) on using compliance strategy and using operational tools in central level.				

	Description	Indicator/scorecard	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver training course to related line ministries in Vientiane - Assess training impact 				
	2.4.1 Document the impacts of the tools on compliance across the project site				
Activity	3.1.1 Support Department of Planning and Investment at national and provincial to integrated Rio Convention in the annual district and/or provincial development planning and guideline.				Note: component 3: will be further consult with relevant agencies
	3.1.2 Support better coordination between lines agencies through working with TWGs to review exiting institutional structure and mandate that related to Rio Convention.				
	3.1.3 Contribute to improvement of legal framework at operational level such as decrees and development guidelines that issued by Ministries.				
	1.3.4 Provide technical support to implementing ESIA				

Annex 4: Composition of TWGs

National Level

Focal Area: UNFCCC	
Member Name	Department and Ministry
Mr. ImmalaInthaboualy	National Disaster and Climate Change Management Department, MoNRE
Mr. SermsitthiSoumountha	Department of Energy Promotion and Development, MEM
Mr. SomsameuDoungdavong	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
Mr. VanthiengPhommasoulinh	Agriculture Department, MAF
Ms. KeodokmayPhouipaserth	Department of Water Resource Management, MoNRE
Mr. BoualomXaysanavong	Deputy Director of Renewable Energy Development Division, MEM, Institute of Renewable Energy Promotion Department of Electricity, MEM
Mr. SayphetVilaypaserth	Head of Information and Evaluation Division Department of Mines, MEM
Mr. SounicaXanaphay	The People's Supreme Court, MoJ
Mr. KhamSenOunkham	REDD office, Cooperation and Investment Department, MAF
Mr. LonkhamAtsanavon	Deputy Director of Environment Quality Promotion Department, MoNRE
Focal Area: UNCBD	
Mr. BouaphanhPhanthavong	Deputy Director of DFRM, MoNRE
Mr. ImmalaInthaboualy	National Disaster and Climate Change Management Department, MoNRE
Mr. BounkhongSouvimoun	Regulation and Legislation Office, MAF
Mr. ThatsomphoneVewphasert	Department of Forest Inspection, MAF
Mr. VanthiengPhommasoulinh	Agriculture Department, MAF
Ms. KhongchayPhimmakong	Science Technology Institute, Ministry of Science and Technology
Mr. SomsayKhensoulinh	Department of Justice, Ministry of Justice
Focal Area: UNCCD	
Mr. OlothSengthaerghoung	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), MAF
Mr. YoSaysoulinh	Land Management and Development, MoNRE
Mr. SomsameuDoungdavong	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), MAF
Mr. SaisamonePhothisat	Deputy Director of DFRM, MoNRE
Mr. AkanaePhomsouvanh	Livestock and Fishery Department, MAF
Mr. VanhdyDouangmala	Meteorology Department, MoNRE,
Ms. VilaykhamLathsard	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

Xiengkhouang Province: UNCBD Site

Member Name	Department and Ministry
Mr. SomphoneXayyak	Director of Provincial Forest Resource Management Unit, PONRE
Mr. KongsavanNamthepha	Provincial Environment Quality Promotion Unit, PONRE
Mr. VilakonePhengdouang	Technical Staff, Provincial Forest Resource Management Unit, PONRE

Savannakhet Province: UNCCD Site

Member Name	Department and Ministry
Mr. PanyaPhiovlamoun	Plantation Unit, PAFO
Mr. PhouthoneXoumphomphakdy	Division of Agriculture and Forestry, PAFO
Mr. IntongXayalate	Division of Agriculture and Forestry, PAFO

Attapeu Province: UNFCCC Site

Member Name	Department and Ministry
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Mr. VongxayManivong	Division of Agriculture and Forestry
Mr. KhamphoneXayasone	Environment Sector, Division of Agriculture and Forestry
Mr. ChanchayXaysayane	Conservation and Protection Division

Annex 5: Evaluation Mission Schedule and Interviews

Date	Time	Key Informant	Venue
June 12 (Wednesday)	14:00-16:00	Meeting with Ms. Yvette Marie Lizée (UNDP) , Ms. ChitladtaKeomoungchanh (UNDP) , Ms. PhetmaneSanasisane (NCSAFU) , Ms. Dada Bacudo (NCSAFU)	UNDP Office
June 13 (Thursday)	8:30-09:00	Meeting and working with Project team	DFRM
	9:00-10:00	Interview with Mr. LamphanhKommadam , Project Manager	
	10:15-10:45	Interview with Mr. BounlamKonesavanh , Legal department of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry/TWG member – on handbook development and implementation	MAF
	13:30-14:00	Interview with Mr. ImmalaInthaboualy + Mr. BounteeSaithong , UNFCCC national focal point/TWG member	MONRE
	14:15-15:15	Interview with Mr. KhamphanhNanthavong , DG of DFRM and CBD national focal point	Department of Forest Resource Management
	15:20-16:00	Interview with DRFM team/TWG member - Mr. ChainoySisomphane -Mr. SangvanhBouavong	MONRE
	16:15-17:00	Meeting with Mr. VilayPimmasone , counterpart/National University of Laos	DFRM
June 14 (Friday)	09:00-09:30	Meeting with Mr. KhamphaditKhammouanhueang , GEF national focal point	MONRE
	09:45-10:45	Interview with Mr. ThongsamlithOnmamisone , DESA team Interview with Mr. MoneMouansivong (NC-NCSAFU) / and National Consultant –review EIA Decree	Dept of Environment and Social Impact Assessment Office/MONRE
	12:00-13:15	Interview with Ms. ChitladtaKeomoungchanh (UNDP)	
	13:30-14:00	Interview with Mr. BanethomThepsombath , IUCN	IUCN Office
15-16 June weekend		Home base working at hotel	
17 Jun (Monday)	08:30-09:30	Meeting with Mr. ViranaSonnasinh /DPC team	Planning and Cooperation Dept/MONRE
	11-12 noon	Fly to Xiengkhouang , brief stop to pick up officials and head straight to pilot site	PONRE office
	13:30-15:30	Travel to community: Interview with Mr. KhambaneNabouakai , Head of Kumban	Phonsavan
	15:30-17:30	Community Consultation	Ban Tha, Kham District,
18 June (Tuesday)	09:00-10:30	Meeting with TWG at provincial level Mr. SomphoneXaiyakheth , Head of Forest Resource Management Unit, (PTWG) Mr. VilakonePhengdouang , Technical staff, (PTWG)	Ban Phonsavan, Pak District, Xiengkhouang Province, Provincial Natural

			Resources and Environment Office (PNREO)
	12:20-12:50	Flight from Xiengkhouang to VTE	
19 June (Wednesday)	Morning	Flight from VTE-Champasak (11:00-12:15)	
	Afternoon	Driving from Champasak to Attapeu province	
	Evening		Attapeu
June 20 (Thursday)	9:00-11:00	Interviews with Provincial authorities/TWG members Mr. Soukvilay Phonesarasen, PTWG Mr. Bounloub Sydavong, PTWG	Attapeu, Attapeu Province, PNREO
	14:00-17:00	Community Consultation	Ban Xaysi, Xaisettha District
	Evening		Attapeu
June 21 (Friday)	Whole day	Travel from Attapeu via Pakse/Champassak to VTE Interview with Ms. Phetmane Sanasisane (NCSAFU), Ms. Dada Bacudo (NCSAFU)	
June 22 (Saturday)	9:00-10:00	Interview with Mr. Bruno Cammeart , Former Head of Environment Unit, UNDP CO	
June 22-24 (Saturday - Monday)		Working on writing initial finding and prepare for documents for a consultation meeting	
June 25 (Tuesday)	14:00-15:00	Debriefing with project team	NCSAU office
	15:00-16:00	Debriefing with Ms. Kyoko Yokosuko and UNDP team	UNDP Office
June 26 (Wednesday)		Collect final documents/meet with project team as necessary	
June 27	Departure	Fly from VTE-BKK-NYC	
8 July		Submit first draft	
14 July		Submit final draft	

Annex 6: Matrix for Rating Achievement of Outcomes

Objective /Outcome/Output	Indicator/scorecard	Target	Results	Status
Objective: To strengthen national and local capacity to implement natural resources legislation with a focus on issues relevant to the Rio Conventions.	Compliance strategy and tools developed and use by central and local authority.	A compliance strategy and at least 5 operational tools available at the national and provincial level by the end of the project,	Compliance Strategy Finalized, Tools are: Poster, Law Summary Handbook, NTFP Operational Tools, TOT Manual, Carbon Measurement Tool	completed
	Number of initiative development activities that use the tools developed by the project	At least 3 Initiative development activities at the provincial, by the end of the project	Proposals developed in 3 target villages, Community forestry Management Plans and Guidelines developed in targets.	Completed
	Information system of law and legislation related to Rio Convention update and use by central and local authority and communities in the project areas.	Information dissemination tools for awareness rising available by the end of the project.	Poster/Law Handbook Disseminated to target provinces (3x50 each), all provincial representatives at DPC workshop (17x3 each), target villages (3x3 each), field study tour villages(6 x 3 each) MAF distributed 10 to each PAFO	Completed
	Number of infractions of environmental laws reported by the national press.	Information related to new law and existing law related to Rio Convention publish in the national and international newspapers and website, Radio and or TV.	Not collected	NR
	Percentage of respondents in all provinces that is sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address biodiversity, land degradation and/or climate change.	At least 90% of selected sample size is able to address biodiversity, land degradation and climate change.	No systematic data collection, however, all 4 provincial officials interviewed said they gained knowledge about Rio Conventions, specifically mentioning biodiversity, land degradation, and climate change	NR
	Capacity development monitoring scorecard rating	TWGs/relevant non/government agencies		Completed
Outcome 1:Key stakeholders in the three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resource management legislation.	Number of times the compliance strategy and tools are used at the project sites.	Compliance strategy and tools used in the project sites at least 3time by the end of the project.	Tools used in sites.	Partially Completed
	Percentage of respondents in 3 participating provinces that are sufficiently familiar with national laws to know that they address the	At least 50% of respondents understands and familiar with national laws related to Rio Convention.	No systematic data collection, however, all 4 provincial officials interviewed said they gained knowledge about Rio Conventions, specifically mentioning biodiversity, land degradation, and	NR

Objective /Outcome/Output	Indicator/scorecard	Target	Results	Status
	Rio Conventions.		climate change	
	No. of times village/cluster officers request assistance of provincial authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws	At least increase to 10 cases per year.	No systematic data collection, however community consultation and interviews indicated ongoing communication between target villages and officials	NR
Outcome 2: National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resources legislation, and in particular are able to support provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement.	Confidence of national stakeholders of own ability to implement laws.	Respondent give score rate of number 4 or 5 more rise to 75% by the end of the project.	Compliance Strategy Finalized, Tools are: Poster, Law Summary Handbook, NTFP Operational Tools, TOT Manual, Carbon Measurement Tool	
	Number of training on how to us natural resource laws and tools.	At least 3 training provide to relevance stakeholders and the trainee evaluation report by the end of the project.	4 TOT workshops conducted: 1 at national level, 1 in each target province	Completed
	The number of times that provincial officers request assistance of national authorities for assistance in enforcing the selected laws.	At least 5 times by the end of the project	No systematic data collection, however, provincial officials report interaction with national officials. One said he asked for advice on zoning/guidelines development	NR
Outcome 3: Legislation and policy with regards to the Rio Conventions in Lao PDR is more suitable to the national situation and more comprehensive	National/provincial development policies integrated environment concerns and reflected finding and recommendation of the project	At least 2 by the end of the project.	Project partnered with DPC to integrate Rio Conventions Content in Provincial Investment Plans, all provinces attended, May 2013, no plans available for review	NR
	Revised government police/law is promulgated and , to an appropriate extent, reflects the findings and recommendations of this project.	By end of the project	Project contributed financial support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Law Revision • PBSAP (consultation workshops and biodiversity data development for Attapeu) • National Land Use Policy Revision (consultation workshops) • EIA Decree (support national 	

Objective /Outcome/Output	Indicator/scorecard	Target	Results	Status
			consultant)	
Output 1.1: An agreed set of priority laws/regulations/articles.	Available of review priority natural resource laws and regulation.		11 Priority laws highlighted in Review of Legal Framework	Completed
Output 1.2: A compliance strategy for provincial level	Available of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at provincial.		Compliance Strategy completed, not yet published	Completed
Output 1.3 A package of operational tools and capacity built on law enforcement built for provincial authorities and local communities	Set of operational tools prepared and available by first quarter of 2012.		Poster (Dec 2011), Law Handbook (Feb 2013), NFTP Toolkit, TOT Manual (not yet published), Carbon Measurement Tool (not yet finalized or published)	Completed, but not in original time frame
	Number of training workshops and its reports and number of trainees participated in the training		TOT held in provinces March to June 2012	Completed
	Provincial consultation workshop on PBSAP and baseline data		Workshop held	Completed
Output 1.4: Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	Respondent in national confirms that operational tools applicable and used.		Confirmed by interviews	Completed
Output 2.1: An agreed set of priority laws, regulations and/or articles	Available of review priority natural resource laws		11 Priority laws highlighted in Review of Legal Framework	Completed
Output 2.2: A compliance strategy for provincial level	Available of compliance strategy that suitable for implementing at national level.		Compliance Strategy completed, not yet published	Completed
Output 2.3: A package of operational tools and capacity for law enforcement built for national level.	Set of operational tools		Poster (Dec 2011), Law Handbook (Feb 2013), NFTP Toolkit, TOT Manual (not yet published), Carbon Measurement Tool (not yet finalized or published)	completed

Objective /Outcome/Output	Indicator/scorecard	Target	Results	Status
	Number of training provided and number of people got trained		TOT workshop at national level Feb 2012.	completed
Output 2.4 Documentation of the impacts of the tools on compliance across the Project	Respondent in provincial confirms that operational tools applicable and used.		Confirmed in interviews and community consultations	Completed
Output 3.1 Legislative revision taken into account the primary and secondary obligation to the Rio Conventions	Number of decree/regulation and PCAP/annual development plan approved by government		Project contributed financial support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry Law Revision • PBSAP (consultation workshops and biodiversity data development for Attapeu) • National Land Use Policy Revision (consultation workshops) EIA Decree (support national consultant)	Completed/In process

Annex 7: Detailed Ratings for Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Rating	Summary of Supporting Evidence
Implementation		
Efficiency: Adaptive Management	Highly Satisfactory	The project took advantage of the changing context, seeking out partnerships with newly created departments, contributing to revisions of relevant law and policy, and consistently using stakeholder input to modify project activities. In the case of developing the Community Forestry Management Plans, the project adapted activities to what arose out of community consultations.
Efficiency: Partnership Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory	Roles and responsibilities were clear and established at the design phase. Once the ministerial restructuring took place, project implementation flowed smoothly. The review indicated that although it took time to put together, a strength of the project was the interministerial TWGs that played a big role in the design and implementation of project outputs, tools and community activities, which also allowed showcasing of expertise in govt agencies. Other partners also contributed to the project throughout the duration.
Efficiency: Project Finance	Satisfactory	At end of 2012, project budget 66% expended. Project co financing secured as shown in Project Document. Project expenditures were more evenly spread among outcomes 1 and 2. A project audit revealed minor issues which the project accepted responsibilities and pledged to address.
M&E Design at entry	Moderately Satisfactory	A comprehensive M&E plan was formed at the design phase and it conformed with GEF policy. Logical Framework developed, based on problem analysis, project strategy feeds directly to project objective and outcomes. Some indicators could be SMARTer, as they depend on resource intensive surveys or data collection mechanisms that don't exist.
Overall quality of M&E	Moderately Satisfactory	Although collection of some indicators were problematic, and others weren't systematically collected, project showed good compliance with reporting and other aspects of M&E, including monthly meetings and additional monitoring to assess community progress. GEF scorecard was administered close to midpoint of project so a baseline measure was not possible.
M&E Implementation	Satisfactory	Indicators redesigned during Inception workshop (10 months in to project). More indicators developed but high resource requirement for collection of indicator data, so some indicators were not measureable. High compliance with M&E plan, except for problematic indicators. Additional monitoring of project activities at the community level incorporated into M&E plan. GEF scorecard modified and used at project mid term and at end.
Project Execution and contribution of UNDP and IP	Satisfactory	Good record of communication between UNDP and Project Team, monthly meetings with minutes show UNDP focus on project outcomes and addressing delays and challenges. UNDP at times took more of an advisory role due to the delay of project board being nominated. Once partnership

		arrangements were finalized after the restructuring of the ministries, implementation flowed more smoothly. Good record of communication between Project and UNDP. Under NIM, IP took major role in project direction, creating and maintaining relationships with interministerial TWG. Reporting was clear, monthly meetings were held with focus on outcomes and outputs and meeting project targets.
Assessment of Outcomes		
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	Project met outcomes to varying extents: at the national level, increased cooperation amongst government officials, and recognition of Rio Conventions. At provincial levels, high engagement and excitement about the project, also increased cooperation between provinces and some to the national level. Increased implementation of legislation at the provincial level (dissemination), reports of increased knowledge about law and Rio Conventions. Project also contributed to national level legislation revision.
Relevance	Highly Relevant	The project harmonizes with government priorities, GEF focal areas, and UN/UNDP Action Plans including the NSEDP-VII, GOL strategic document relating to economic development. Likewise, the GOL is signatory to the three Rio Conventions so it has obligations to fulfill regarding this conventions.
Impact	Significant	National level: legislation revision and relationship building amongst sectors, provincial level: increased implementation of legislation in terms of dissemination (official in one province conducted dissemination activities at an additional 40 villages), community based natural resource management guidelines and agreements developed, some zoning conducted. Anecdotal reports of lowered levels of hunting, logging and encroachment
Sustainability	Moderately Likely	Good country ownership, matches mandate of DFRM, ownership at level of province very high with engagement very good, strong community involvement in management of sites, development of participatory natural resources management has high potential for replicability. Some tools have been disseminated and used widely by those interviewed. Risks related to short time for implementation at sites, other tools and outputs not yet published or tested.

Annex 8: List of Documents Reviewed

GEF Evaluation Office. The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010. Evaluation Document, November 2010, No. 4.

Lao PDR. Action Plan for Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas. 2012.

Lao PDR. Agreement on the Structure and Mandate of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment at Provincial. 2012.

Lao PDR. Decree on Environmental Impact Assessment, 2010.

Lao PDR. Decree on Establishment and Activities of the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment. 2012.

Lao PDR. Environmental Protection Law, 1999.

Lao PDR. National Action Programme on Combatting Desertification. 1999.

Lao PDR. National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change. 2009.

Lao PDR. The National Rio+20 Report for Lao PDR. 2012.

Lao PDR. Natural Resources and Environment Sector Plan 2011-2015 (unofficial translation).

Lao PDR. NBSAP Assessment. As Assessment of Lao PDR's National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and Action Plan to 2010.

Lao PDR. The Second Five Year National Environmental Action Plan (2011-2015).

Lao PDR. The Seventh Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015).

Lao PDR. Strategic Framework for National Sustainable Development Strategy. 2008.

Lao PDR. Strategy on Climate Change of the Lao PDR. 2010.

NCSAFU. Compliance Strategy (draft, unpublished)

NCSAFU. Discussion of Initial Results of Assessment of Capacity of Provincial Management Authorities of the GOL using the GEF Scorecard. (draft)

NCSAFU. Executive Summary, Handbook on Fundamental Knowledge of Agriculture and Forestry Legal Framework.

NCSAFU. Inception Workshop Report

NCSAFU. Participatory Community Based Non-Timber Forest Product Monitoring and Management. A Toolkit (draft, unpublished)

NCSAFU. Project Annual Report 2011.

NCSAFU. Project Annual Report 2012.

NCSAFU. Project Co-ordination and Mid-term Review Meeting. 2012.

NCSAFU. Project Document. Signed 2010.

NCSAFU. Project Identification Form (PIF). Meeting the Primary Obligations of the Primary Obligations of the Rio Conventions through Strengthened Capacity to Implement Natural Resources Legislation

NCSAFU. Project Monthly Meeting Minutes (2011-2013).

NCSAFU. Project Quarterly Reports. Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, 2011.

NCSAFU. Project Quarterly Reports. Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, 2012.

NCSAFU. Project Quarterly Reports. Q1, Q2, 2013.

NCSAFU. Review of Legal Framework (draft, unpublished)

NCSAFU. Training of Trainer (TOT) Manual. Tools Introduction into Participatory Natural Resources Management. Draft.

Piloting Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting for Rio Conventions. National Manual on the Implementation of Integrated Reporting to the Rio Conventions. Lao PDR, 2011.

Proposal for GEF Funding: National Capacity Needs Self-assessment for Global Environmental Management.

Report on National Capacity Needs Self-assessment for Global Environmental Management. For the three Rio Conventions: UNFCCC, UNCCD, UNCBD. 2009

UNCBD. United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity. 1992.

UNCCD. Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. 1994.

UNFCCC. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. 1992.

UNFCCC. Kyoto Protocol. 1998.

UNFCCC. Bali Action Plan. 2008.

UNFCCC. Durban Report. 2012.

UNDAF Action Plan, 2012-2015, Lao PDR.

UNDP. Country Program Document for the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2012-2015).

UNDP Evaluation Office. Project Level Evaluation: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects. Evaluation Office, 2012.

Annex 9: Map of Project Sites



Annex 10: Interview Protocols

Questions were used as a guide for topics discussed. Not all questions were applicable for all parties.

A. Project Management/administration

1. Can you tell me a bit about the role of your department/institution in the project? What was your role?

Implementation

1. Can you tell me a bit about the tools that were designed and/or modified during the project? For each, was it used at the national or project site level? Who used it and how did they use it? Were there any problems in getting stakeholders to use them (did they need training)?

Poster:

Handbook on Natural Resources Management Law (summary):

Community Forestry Guidelines:

2. Which tools, in your opinion, were the best? Why? What other tools do you think stakeholders (national and provincial) need to help them implement the law better?

3. Are you able to use the Compliance Strategy? If so, what aspects do you use and how did you use it when conducting project activities? What worked in the process of developing the Compliance Strategy? What didn't work so well? What were the challenges?

4. Are you able to use the Review of Legal Framework? If so, what aspects do you use and how did you use it when conducting project activities? What are the challenges with using the Review of Legal Framework?

5. What other major activities were undertaken by the project? (inception workshop in 9/2011, how many trainings)/ What type of capacity building/support did national level stakeholders get?

Community Management plans?

6. Can you describe some of the things that worked best in terms of the management, administration and implementation of the project?

7. What were some of the challenges and issues faced by the project (such as delays, etc)? How did the project address those challenges?

Outcomes

1. To the best of your knowledge, have there been changes in the awareness and implementation of laws during this project? At the national level? At the provincial level? In what ways? (Has there been more outreach and education about laws? Or changes in permitting, managed use plans for natural resources? Were there more penalties for illegal behaviour?)

2. Why types of changes in capacity, if any, did you see in national level officials? Provincial/site level officials? What did that look like? (Increased content knowledge of laws? Increased communication?)

3. In what ways, if any, do you think the project contributed to mainstreaming the Rio Conventions into the Lao legal framework? At the institutional level? At the provincial/site level?

4. What do you think are the biggest challenges in implementing natural resources legislation?
5. What do you think are the major successes of the project?
6. What if anything, do you think the project could have done better?
7. Did anything really positive happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it? Did anything really negative happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it?

Sustainability?

Additional comments:

B. TWG/National Level Environment Officers

1. Can you tell me a bit about the role of your department in the project? What was your role?
2. As part of your job, do you implement natural resources legislation? If so, how?
National/provincial level? Probe for support, outreach, permitting/management plans, penalties.
What are some of the hardest things about implementing something like Forestry Law?
3. Do you work with provincial or district level officials/counterparts? Yes___ No___ If so, in what ways?
4. Have you gained awareness about natural resources legislation in relation to the Rio Conventions? Yes_____ No_____ If so, do you know any law(s) that supports the Rio Conventions? Probe: land degradation, biodiversity, climate change mitigation/adaptation. Has this lead you to change what you do in your work?

Implementation

1. Were you involved in the consultation process for the drafting of the Compliance Strategy? For the Review of the Legal Framework? From your perspective, was the process a useful one? Why/Why not? What didn't work so well? What were the challenges?
2. What do you think are the most useful aspects of the Compliance Strategy? The Review of Legal Framework?
3. Can you tell me a bit about the tools that were designed and/or modified during the project? For each, was it used at the national or project site level? Did you use it or support someone else who did? How did you use them (probe for support from project, ease of use, do they think they will continue to use, why/why not)? Were they difficult to use? Which was the most helpful?
 - a. Poster:
 - b. Handbook on Natural Resources Management Law (summary):
 - c. Community Forestry Guidelines:
4. Were there other tools you would have liked to have?
5. Did you participate in any trainings on how to use natural resource laws or tools given by this project? If so what were they? Was it useful?

Outcomes

1. Have there been changes in your awareness about the implementation of laws during this project? If yes, which laws? Probe for Forestry Law, Law on Wildlife and Aquatics, Law on Livestock Production and Veterinary Matters, Pest Management Law, and Fishery Law.
2. In what ways has implementation changed? What do these changes look like? Probe for outreach(providing information and awareness), management plans/permitting/guidelines for NTFPs, and changes in enforcement leading to penalization (fines/warnings/arrests).
3. What do you think brought about these changes in awareness? In implementation? (Review of Legal Framework, Compliance strategy, project tools, project trainings). Why?
4. What effects, if any, do you think these changes had on the environment? On the community? Others?
5. What types of things do you need to more fully implement these laws at the national level? (other tools, trainings, equipment, materials, etc)?
6. Do you feel that this project helped you to work with and support district and provincial officials to implement natural resources law better? In what ways? What types of things do you think would help you to support provincial and district officials who are implementing these laws in the provinces? (other tools, trainings, equipment, materials, etc)?
7. In what ways, if any, do you think the project contributed to mainstreaming the Rio Conventions into the Lao legal framework? At the institutional level?At the provincial/site level?Probe specifically for the Convention on Desertification and Land Degradation, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on Climate Change.
8. What do you think are the major successes of the project?
9. What if anything, do you think the project could have done better?
10. Did anything really positive happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it? Did anything really negative happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it?

Sustainability?

Additional Comments:

C. Provincial TWG/Provincial/District Level Environment Officers

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role in this project?
2. What is your role in law implementation and enforcement? Probe for support, outreach, permitting, penalties. What are some of the hardest things about implementing something like Forestry Law?
3. Do you work with national level environmental officials/counterparts? Yes___ No___If so, in what ways?

Implementation

1. Were you involved in the consultation process for the drafting of the Compliance Strategy? For the Review of the Legal Framework?From your perspective, was the process a useful one? Why/Why not? What didn't work so well? What were the challenges?

2. What do you think are the most useful aspects of the Compliance Strategy? The Review of Legal Framework?

3. Can you tell me a bit about the tools that were designed and/or modified during the project? For each, did you use it project site level? Did you use it or support someone else who did? How did you use them (probe for support from project, ease of use, do they think they will continue to use, why/why not)? Were they difficult to use? Were they appropriate? What was the most helpful?

Poster:

Handbook on Natural Resources Management Law (summary):

Community Forestry Guidelines:

4. Were there other tools you would have liked to have?

5. Did you participate in any trainings on how to use natural resource laws or tools given by this project? If so what were they? Was it useful?

6. What types of support and/or communications, if any, did you get from national level environmental officials during the course of this project? Are there other types of support that you wanted to have?

Outcomes

1. Have you gained awareness about natural resources legislation in relation to the Rio Conventions? Yes_____ No_____ If so, what types of laws support the Rio Conventions? Probe: land degradation, biodiversity, climate change mitigation/adaptation. Has this lead you to change what you do in your work?

2. Have there been changes in your awareness about the implementation of laws during this project? If yes, which laws?

3. What do these changes look like? Probe for outreach (providing information and awareness), permitting/community management plans/guidelines for NTFP use, and increases in enforcement (warnings, fines, arrests).

4. What do you think brought about these changes? (Review of Legal Framework, Compliance strategy, project tools, project trainings). Why?

5. What effects, if any, do you think these changes had on the environment? On the community? Others?

6. What kinds of things do you think would better help you to enforce natural resources legislation at the provincial level? At the local level? (might be best here to make it less conceptual by asking about specific laws such as the Forestry Law, Law on Wildlife and Aquatic life, etc) (other tools, trainings, equipment, materials, etc)?

6. (Xiengkhouang) Do you think this project helped to address deforestation? The loss of biodiversity? If so, in what way? If not, what do you think would help?

6. (Attapeu) Do you think this project helped to address climate change? Climate change adaptation? If so, in what way? If not, why not? (if not, what do you think would help?)

7. What, if anything, do you think are the major successes of the project?

8. What if anything, do you think the project could have done better?

9. Did anything really positive happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it? Did anything really negative happen during the course of the project that you weren't expecting? If so, what was it?

Sustainability?

Additional Comments:

D. NGOs:

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself and the role of your department/institution/organization in the project?

2. What types of contributions do you feel your department/institution made to the project? OR What did you receive from the project? For what?

3. Overall, do you feel your department/institution contributed to the objectives of:
Key stakeholders in the three provinces are implementing and enforcing important components of the existing natural resources management legislation. Yes____ No____
In what ways?

4. National level stakeholders have the capacity to implement and enforce natural resource legislation and are able to support all provinces in Lao PDR with legislation implementation and enforcement. Yes____ No____
In what ways?

5. Making the legislation and policy in regards to the Rio Conventions more suitable to the national level situation and more comprehensive. Yes____ No____
In what ways?

6. If applicable, did your institution/office integrate aspects of the Rio Conventions into national development policies? Into law? If so, what and how?

7. Do you think there are other ways that your department/institution could have contributed to the project? If so, in what ways?

8. Can you think of anything else that could help contribute to increasing the implementation and enforcement of natural resources legislation in Lao PDR? (other partners, different tools)

Sustainability?

Additional Comments:

E. Community Members at the project sites: Khom ban x 1, Natural resource users x 1 including women x 1

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your role in the project. Do you use natural resources?

2. Do you have a role in law implementation and enforcement? Yes____ No____ if so, what is it? Do you work with district officials?

3. Have you seen this before? (law handbook and poster) What do you think it means?

Implementation and Outcomes

1. Did you help to develop your community's pilot project? If yes, can you describe the project to me?
2. What if any, activities have been carried out? What kinds of help, if any, did your community need to carry out these activities?
3. Do you see any benefits for your community for belonging to this project? If so, what are they? Do you see any other benefits (to the environment, other)? Have there been difficulties? If so, what are they?
4. What other kinds of things do you think would help your community to implement this project in your village? More materials? More trainings? More institutions?(other tools, trainings, equipment, materials, etc)?
5. (Xiengkhouang) Do you think you know more about deforestation and natural resources because of this project? The loss of biodiversity? If so, in what way? If not, what do you think would help?
5. (Attapeu) Do you think you know more about climate change because of this project? Climate change adaptation? If so, in what way? If not, why not? (if not, what do you think would help?)

As you may know, this project has been working on natural resources management and laws in your community, which includes teaching about the laws and helping communities plan for better natural resources management.

6. Are these types of laws and projects important to you? Why/Why not? Do you think these laws help to protect the natural resources here? Do you feel they protect you and your access? What else do you think would help to protect your access to the natural resources here?

Sustainability?

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹³</p> <p>Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System</p> <p>Name of Consultant: <u>Lesley K Perlman</u></p> <p>Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____</p> <p>I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.</p> <p>Signed at <i>Deep River, CT, USA</i> on <i>14 July 2013</i></p>
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¹³ www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. R.', written over a horizontal line.