

Responsible Land Policy in Laos



Starting point

With around 7.4 million inhabitants, Laos is relatively sparsely populated. Over 70% of Laotians depend directly or indirectly on agriculture and forestry for their living. To drive forward the country's development, the Lao Government is investing in agriculture and forestry, mining, and hydropower. Until now, the rural population has derived limited benefit from this practice and is often not familiar with the legal frameworks governing land, nor the relevant institutions and processes that ensure their land rights. Additionally, most cannot afford the fees to secure a title to their land. In the formalisation of land ownership, women are particularly vulnerable to discrimination as a result of traditional gender-based roles and inadequate sensitisation about their land rights. Poor households and ethnic minorities face similar difficulties.

Project

To address these challenges, *Enhanced Land Tenure Security* (ELTeS) works on three intervention levels. At the individual level, it is ensured that the personnel necessary for the application of legally compliant procedures and instruments are trained in sufficient numbers. At the cooperation and organisational level, the coordination of the various ministries regarding the Land Act is supported within the framework of implementing ordinances and procedural regulations, and methodological further development and technological innovations in the individual instruments are promoted.

Our objective:

Access to land as a core condition for combating poverty and hunger in rural areas is improved for specific population groups in Northern Laos, particularly for women and socially marginalised groups.

Fields of action in Laos

- **Improving the Institutional Framework and Procedures** for securing land use and land ownership rights.
- **Strengthening Planning Processes** among the authorities by establishing information sharing mechanisms and improving the participation of the local population in land use and agricultural land planning.
- **Training Government Authorities** to administer and guide investments in land in accordance with established legislation and recognised principles on responsible agriculture and forestry investment.
- **Awareness Raising for Private Agricultural and Forestry Investors** and strengthening of capacities to comply with national legislation and recognised principles for responsible investments in land.
- **Empowering Local Communities** impacted by investment projects in land through Targeted Awareness Raising (TAR) mechanisms, and participatory consultation.

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Budget and duration

EUR 11.06 million (2.35million EU) / October 2016 – October 2023

Lead executing agency and implementing partners

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, in particular the Department of Land; Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Department of Agricultural Land Management; and Ministry of Planning and Investment and the Investment Promotion Department

Commissioned by

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) / European Union (EU)

Sustainable development



Land Use Planning GPS points are taken in Ban Donchai

Example from the field

A large part of the Lao population does not have formalised land rights. It is estimated that to date, around 1.5 million land titles have been issued, out of approximately 3 million overall land plots. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) is aiming to implement an efficient and comprehensive land registration process in Laos. To assist this process, the project focuses mainly on rural areas. Skilled local teams are surveying and registering individual and municipal areas of land. Data from systematic land registration is then fed into the national land registry system (LaolandReg), which is under the custody of MoNRE. The land registry system generates individual land titles automatically at decentralised level. To further improve the land registration process, work is also under way to create the statutory framework for strengthening customary land tenure security in forest areas.

Results

The project already achieved the registration of over 23,000 private land parcels in three provinces (82% of those parcels are registered in the names of women or with conjugal ownership). Village land use and agriculture management plans were developed in 190 villages. Around 225 government partners (80 women) from different agencies at all levels and more than 40,000 villagers (50% women) in target districts have been trained in-depth on Targeted Awareness Raising (TAR) on land rights and rights on investment projects. Moreover, more than 101 private investment projects now adhere to the principles of international guidelines such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) and the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (RAI), due to the support and guidance of the project.



Women group joins knowledge assessment before and after participating in awareness raising activity on customary land rights and conflict resolution, Houaphan Province

More information on <https://www.giz.de/responsiblelandpolicy> and [Land Portal](#)



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Registered offices: Bonn and Eschborn, Germany
Rural Development, Agriculture (Department G500)
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36+40
53113 Bonn, Germany

T +49 (0) 228 44 60 - 3824
F +49 (0) 228 44 60 - 1766
www.giz.de

Contact:
Bernd Messerschmidt
bernd.messerschmidt@giz.de

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