



Sustainable village forest management activity

Project Overview

Since May 2020 GIZ Climate Protection Through Avoided Deforestation (CLiPAD) project together with the Government of Lao PDR (represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) has been implementing “**The Implementation of the Lao PDR Emission Reductions Programme Through Improved Governance and Sustainable Forest Landscape Management (Project 1)**” so-called **CLiPAD/I-GFLL** project, funded by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) together with other co-funding partners.

The project aims to reduce emissions from land use, deforestation, and forest degradation through sustainable management of forests as well as conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks through the effective implementation of Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (PRAPs) in **3** northern provinces in Lao PDR. The project will mitigate **5.6 million t CO2 eq over the 4 years (2020 – 2024)** implementation period. This project is active in 170 villages across 13 districts and direct rural beneficiaries are **120,000 people (60,000 men and 60,000 women)**. The project is directly contributing to the Lao PDR to achieve its REDD+ strategy to enable **result-based payment** from Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). In this regard, the government of Lao PDR signed the Emission Reduction Programme Agreement (ERPA) with World Bank to unlock **the result-based payment of up to 42 million USD from 2021-2025**. Project 2 is under development to upscaling to three more provinces such as Oudomxay, Borkeo, and Luang Namtha.

1. Promoting gender equality of CLiPAD/I-GFLL Project

Lao People’s Democratic Republic’s (PDR)’s Human Development Index value for 2018 was 0.604— which put the country in the medium human development category—positioning it at 140 out of 189 countries and territories. Lao PDR has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value¹ of 0.463,

ranking it 110 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index¹. Therefore, Lao PDR integrated national policies for gender equality and ending violence against women and children into provincial, ministerial and sectoral plans².

As the project cooperates with governmental institutions such as the Department of Forestry and Environment Protection Fund Office, the CLiPAD/I-GFLL project together with partners consider the GCF and GIZ gender policies and Lao PDR legal framework on gender equality, especially the Law on Gender Equality No.77/NA to be the guidance and procedures to promote gender equality of the project which the project had conducted gender assessment and defined project Gender Action Plans (GAP).

The Gender Action Plan (GAP) which was developed during the programme development is based on a Gender Analysis conducted for the programme and forms the basis for operationalizing the results and recommendations of the analysis. It contains specific gender elements to be considered during the implementation of programme measures and activities. Moreover, it helps to monitor the implementation of these measures and activities. Hence, the GAP ensures effective gender mainstreaming and integration of a consistent gender perspective in the programme to maximize climate and development co-benefits. The aim of GAP is to promote opportunities, drivers of change and positive gender dynamics as well as to manage and mitigate potential adverse risks over the duration of the programme. In addition, the GAP ensures that the programme is compliant with GCF's gender policy (GCF/B.09).

The GAP is closely aligned with the outputs of the log-frame and planned activities. It complements the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) which was also conducted for the programme and that already contains gender-related aspects. In addition to the specific activities and measures of the GAP, the programme also systematically applies some general measures in accordance with the GIZ Gender Strategy:

- Based on the GIZ's guidelines on designing and using a results-based monitoring system (RBM), the programme will document the positive and negative effects that the program's activities have on

gender relations by setting up adequate, gender-sensitive results-based monitoring and by collecting sex-disaggregated data.

- A gender-sensitive language is used in reports, training materials and publications.
- In the programme team(s), competencies on gender and gender-sensitive forest management is to be considered during the hiring process and further developed by means of training.
- The GAP has been executed by the different entities involved in the programme management, including all concerned Government line agencies and development partners.

2. Gender as a quality feature of CLiPAD/I-GFLL Project work

The CLiPAD/I-GFLL project is recognized to achieve the project objective of supporting the Government of Lao PDR to enable result-based payment of reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation is not only individual or one institution capacities to takeover. So, the project needs efforts and contributions from everyone (**men and women**) who have been involved in the project implementation from central to communities' levels. During Project 1, the project works closely with the **Lao Women's Union** to ensure the effective engagement of women: Inclusive awareness-raising measures targeting women as carriers of traditional knowledge and change agents within their families have great reach, especially when presented in different ethnic languages and tailored to lower education levels. Whenever possible, project-supported awareness-raising, village consultations, training, and dissemination meetings will proactively involve empowerment elements for village women. The project promotes improved participation of women and empowers them to take on more leadership roles in local structures, including, for instance, supporting the elaboration of guidelines for village forest and agriculture grant (VFAG) management committees, which include a quota of at least **30%** female committee members. To support women to fully utilize and benefit from VFAG, the project includes training on business skills development for women that help to address common participation gaps and barriers. The project further expands new economic opportunities for women related to agroforestry, forest management, and agricultural activities

¹ Gender equality_LUX_DEV_Laos

² <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/news/lao-pdr-integrates-national-policies-gender-equality-and-ending-violence-against-women-and>

through integrating gender assessments in value chain studies and providing targeted technical and financial support (within the context of Outputs 2 and 3) to women. All extension staff and trainers supporting Project 1 are already trained on gender equality and social inclusion.

In addition, the project also formulated that the participation rates of women in community meetings are at least **40%**. Against this figure, the project has engaged with the **Lao Women's Union** to involve and encourage project target villages' women in participating project activities (Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP), Village Forest and Agriculture Grant, Village Forest Management Planning (VFMP), Promotion of Sustainable and Deforestation-free Agricultural Practices (PSAP) to ensure and strengthen their decision making and their rights to vote in all related interventions in the villages.

For example, The village forest and agriculture grant (VFAG) guideline formulated that three VFAG committee members (president, cashier, and accountant) must be included at least **1 female** to be involved in fund management even women get the lowest votes from the election results if compared to men. **Currently, 105 women are already included in 115 completion VFAG committees establishments.**



The project recognized only the VFAG management committee members that women are included.

3. Gender and result-based monitoring of CliPAD/I-GFLL Project

The CliPAD/I-GFLL project has tasked an international consultant to review the Gender Action Plan and to review the project's Master Budget at the level of action inputs from a safeguard's perspective, with a specific focus on potentially negative effects along gender lines for vulnerable populations living in the project's target village clusters.

As such, gender has been included as a component within the ESMP Checklist, to be used by all project staff and implementing partners before project activities are implemented. With accompanying training materials, implementing partners and project staff are instructed to consider whether the project's activities would have negative effects, along with a gender lens, and if planned activities are determined likely to have negative gender-based effects, it is strongly recommended that activities and implementation plans be revised to mitigate negative gender-based impacts.

Against this approach, it has been reflected in the current implemented communities' consultation meetings indicator that the share of women participation was **51.90% or 12,646 people**. Currently, the project is planning to develop a gender reporting channel in the project M&E system in which project staff and partners can track the number of women participation and related gender issues to ensure that the project can advise and find the right solution on time. Moreover, the project has a gender focal point that works closely with the CliPAD/I-GFLL international safeguard and gender consultant to provide monitoring and provide advice related to gender issues across the project activities.



The project ensures women are not only come to sit in the consultation meetings, but it is significant for them to listen, to see, and get aware of the project's interventions at the village and they have the right to consult, to make decisions, to vote and to share responsibilities equal to men.

The project is recognized that gender equality cannot be achieved only by the target group. It is a joint task where the project is cooperating with different governmental departments such as the Department of Forestry, the Environment Protection Fund Office (main partners), Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office, and District Agriculture and Forestry Office (project owners) to implement the project activities on the ground to be aligned with donors and the Lao government gender policies and legal framework to ensure that women are involved and participating in all project activities which formulated in the project funding proposal and set-up guidelines. The most significant cooperation partner to drive the project's component related to gender issues such as women empowerment, gender equality promotion, and encouraging women participation. The project is cooperating with **the Lao Women's Union (LWU) which is recognized as a mass and social organization of women at all strata throughout Lao PDR which completely works for the interest of women and represents women in the whole country.** This organization plays a very important role in communities which to engage with the communities' women to acknowledge their rights, their votes, and their duties equal to men.



The Lao women's Union staff empowers communities' women by providing legal awareness and project policies to ensure women are fully participating with their rights, votes, and duties.

The project life is not ending now, the project still needs to foster cooperation with partners to continue promoting gender equality in all project interventions to seek opportunities and build capacities for rural communities' women to widen their knowledge and mindset, to ensure they ably make decisions, playing a leadership role, and sharing responsibilities in all sectors. With this regard, it could contribute to achieving the project goal by supporting the Lao PDR REDD+ strategy to reduce emission and unlock result-based payment which directly contributes to Lao PDR NDC 2020 to UNFCCC to enhance its ambition through the introduction of three national-level greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

scenarios, namely a baseline emissions scenario, an unconditional mitigation scenario to 2030, as well as a more ambitious conditional mitigation scenario to 2030 towards achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. **With this regard, the GIZ gender competition 2022 is a good opportunity for the CliPAD/I-GFLL project to cooperate with and encourage all of us to support promoting its gender equality to the international stage which could widen the Lao PDR communities and even global communities to recognize the aroma of gender equality and pay more attention to involve women in sustainable forest management to contribute to the UNFCCC goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to keep global warming below 1.5 °C in this century.** The lesson learned of the key success factors of gender equality of CliPAD/I-GFLL project are (1) a clear gender action plan, (2) good cooperation with the partners, and (3) clear communication.



Women are not only participating in consultation meetings at the hall, but they need to work closely on technical areas too, especially forest demarcations, forest measures, land use planning, sustainable agricultural activities, and financial management to ensure they are aware and have capacities equal to men.



Agriculture and animal agriculture, Properties agroforestry

Sustainable forest management, forest management for multiple use, comprehensive protection