

Recommendations from GEF Country Dialogue Workshop 6-8 April 2004, Lao Plaza Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR

The GEF Country Dialogue Workshop took place on 6th April 2004 at Lao Plaza Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR. In the opening ceremony Mr. Xayaveth Vixay, GEF National Focal Point introduced the main objectives of the workshop. Mr. Sakhone Chaleunvong, Vice president of the Science Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) officially opened the workshop and Ms. Funke Oyewole, representative of GEF Secretariat as well as Mr. Finn Reske-Nielsen, Resident Representative of UNDP to Lao PDR gave welcome remarks.

The total number of participants was 112 from different sectors, at national (64) and local (31) levels, including representatives from civil society, academia and national focal points for International Conventions and 17 participants from International agencies and NGOs as well as resource persons from GEF Secretariat, WB, UNDP and UNEP.

After the presentations and discussions, the workshop identified key issues related to the environmental management and natural resource protection, as follows:

- 1. Conservation and sustainable use of natural resources (National Biodiversity Conservation Areas, forest resources including wildlife and aquatic life and non timber forest products)**
 - To strengthen institutions and engage people in the management of protected areas,
 - To identify main species for specific management,
 - Exchange experiences and cooperate with all parties involved at national, regional and international levels on protected areas.

- 2. Land degradation**
 - To promote rotational cultivation practices,
 - To promote sustainable alternative livelihoods,
 - Sustainable use of organic fertilizers.

- 3. Urban environment (solid waste disposal, waste water treatment, air pollution)**
 - To develop standards on air, noise and water quality pollution,
 - Solid waste management and sewage water treatment,
 - Public and private partnerships.

- 4. Poverty reduction and population growth**
 - Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as sustainable land management have to be linked to the poverty reduction strategy,
 - To promote gender issues in addressing poverty reduction,

- Control population growth rate and migration of people from rural to urban areas.
5. **Enforcement of legislation and regulatory frameworks**
 - To develop and strengthen institutions both at national and local levels,
 - To determine clearly roles and mandates of various agencies involved in environmental management,
 - To develop, revise and disseminate legislations, and enhance their enforcement.
 6. **Implementation of international environmental conventions: (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD)**
 - Harmonize the provisions of Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) with the laws and regulations of Lao PDR
 - Establish coordination mechanisms for MEAs
 - Strengthen institutions and capacities of national focal points for international conventions through capacity building programs.
 7. **Coordination mechanisms**
 - To develop and strengthen cooperation and coordination mechanisms among various sectors at national and local levels including international agencies both inside and outside the country including institutions and national focal points for GEF.
 8. **Awareness raising and information sharing**
 - To develop and strengthen capacities of technical staff through education, training and research including foreign language proficiency,
 - To increase education and awareness raising on the environment for public and private sectors and general public.
 9. **Resource mobilization**
 - Increase capacity to access international funding through bilateral, multilateral cooperation at national, regional and international levels.
 - Establishment of an Environmental Fund in Lao PDR.

After discussion on the options to address these issues, the workshop participants identified key recommendations on national priorities in line with GEF strategic priorities included in Annex 1.

ANNEX 1

The Way Forward: Lao PDR's GEF Programme – Proposed Priority Actions

Vientiane, April 7th 2004

Strategic Priority 1 – Accelerating Lao PDR GEF Pipeline:

- WB/GEF Bolikhamxay Biodiversity Conservation Project
- UNDP/GEF Agro-Biodiversity project
- WB/GEF Southern Provinces Rural Electrification 2 Project (SPRE 2)
- UNDP/GEF National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)
- UNDP/GEF National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (NCSA)

Strategic Priority 2 – NBSAP Implementation

- Develop NBBSAP Priority detailed Action Plan (NBSAP Programme 6)
- Develop Biodiversity Financing Strategy

Strategic Priority 3 – Sustainable Land Management (SLM)

- Finalize and implement the National Action Programme to combat desertification (NAP)
- Participate in sub-regional initiatives for SLM models for transboundary ecosystems

Strategic Priority 4 – Capacity building and Inter-sectoral Co-ordination Mechanisms

- Complete NCSA and prepare follow-up action plan
- Complete MEAs programme approval and submit to UNDP/GEF for co-financing
- Identify linkages between national development priorities, poverty eradication strategy and GEF Strategic Priorities (e.g. biomass power generation, sustainable urban transport)

Strategic Priority 5 – Becoming a Small Grants Programme (SGP) participating country

- Cooperate with UNDP CO in evaluating requirements for SGP
- Establish compliance with GEF Country eligibility criteria
- Submit formal application
- Set-up Small-Grants Mechanism for Lao PDR