



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

**Readiness Package Self-Assessment Report:
Readiness for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation
and Degradation (REDD+)**

February 2018

Submission

Preface

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is pleased to submit the REDD+ Readiness Self-Assessment required under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). The report on participatory self-assessment on REDD+ readiness preparation Lao PDR has been being prepared by Department of Forestry supported by REDD+ Task Force and Technical Working Groups of the Project on Support for the REDD+ Readiness Preparation. The report is prepared based on the "A guide to the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework" issued by Forest Carbon Partnership Facility in June 2013.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARD-SWG	Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Working Group
BCC	Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative
BSM	Benefit-Sharing Mechanism
CEF	Community Engagement Framework
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CliPAD	Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation Project [supported by GIZ and by KfW]
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DFRM	Department of Forest Resource Management (MONRE)
DG	Director General
DGM	Dedicated Grant Mechanism
DOF	Department of Forestry (MAF)
DOFI	Department of Forest Inspection (MAF)
DONRE	District Office of Natural Resources and Environment
EPF	Environmental Protection Fund
ERPA	Emissions Reduction Program Agreement
ER-PD	Emissions Reduction Program Document
ER-PIN	Emissions Reduction Program Idea Note
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
F-REDD	Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ Support Program (supported by JICA)
FCPF	Forest Carbon Partnership Facility [World Bank is the Trustee]
FFRDF	Forest and Forest Resource Development Fund
FIP	Forest Investment Program [World Bank is the Trustee]
FIPD	Forest Inventory and Planning Division (DOF)
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FSSWG	Forest Sub-Sector Working Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GHG-I	Greenhouse Gas Inventory
GIS	Geographical Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH [German Society for International Development Cooperation]
ICBF	Integrated Conservation of Biodiversity and Forests Project (KfW)
INDC	Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau [German Development Bank]

LDC	Least Developed Country
LISSWG	Land Issues Sub-Sector Working Group
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR
MRV	Measurement, Reporting and Verification [for REDD+]
NEC	National Environmental Committee
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NFIS	National Forest Information System
NFMS	National Forest Monitoring System
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRSWG	Natural Resources Sector Working Group
NRTF	National REDD+ Task Force
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PFA	Production Forest Area
PMO	Prime Ministerial Order (or Decree)
PONRE	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment
PRAP	Provincial REDD+ Action Plan
PRO	Provincial REDD+ Office
PRTF	Provincial REDD+ Task Force
RECOFTC	The Center for People and Forests [formerly the Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific]
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
REL	Reference Emission Level [for REDD+]
RL	Reference Level [for REDD+]
R-PP	REDD+ Preparation Proposal [submitted to the FCPF]
RS	Remote Sensing
RV	Regenerating Vegetation
SESA	Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SUFORD	Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
VCS	Verified Carbon Standard
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)

Executive Summary

Overview

The Government of Lao PDR has prepared this REDD+ Readiness Package (R-Package) report outlining their processes, progress, and plans. In 2007, the country joined the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). Lao PDR has received USD 8.375 million of financial support from the FCPF, starting with a USD 200,000 grant to prepare a REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) approved in 2010. Thereafter, in 2014, the Government signed a Readiness Grant agreement with the FCPF for USD 3.6 million. In its mid-term review in 2016, Lao PDR requested additional funding of USD 4.575 million, which is anticipated to be authorized by end February.

A National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF) was created in 2008. Since then, the government has worked with many development partners on REDD+ issues, including the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the Government of Finland, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.

In 2015, Lao PDR was accepted into the FCPF Carbon Fund pipeline, and in 2016, received a Bank-executed grant to prepare an Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD), which is now complete in draft. Lao PDR was also among the eight Forest Investment Program (FIP) pilot countries. Thus multipronged, complementary processes are supporting strategic interventions to address deforestation and forest degradation, while aligning with national economic development priorities. The country's 8th National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEPD, 2016-2020) underscores Lao PDR's commitment to graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) status by 2020, further industrializing and modernizing its economy in the context of its membership in the ASEAN Economic Community.

The starting point of REDD+ implementation in Lao PDR is characterized by low technical capacity, highly competing economic development priorities, frequently conflicting inter-sectoral policies and regulations, and relatively weak forestry sector governance. In the last decade, the government has undertaken policy reforms through ministerial decrees, sectoral strategies, commitments to international conventions, and institutional changes, however, the country still faces financial and human resource limitations to build necessary capacity for effective policy implementation.

The Government of Lao (GOL) acknowledges many significant challenges to apply its policies concerning natural resources across sectors. Nonetheless, REDD+ provides an opportunity to strengthen essential coordination between institutions in addressing drivers of deforestation that cut across multiple sectors, especially forestry, agriculture, and land. At the same time, there is an opportunity to undertake more comprehensive capacity needs assessment of the various agencies that are expected to have significant roles and responsibilities for implementing REDD+ interventions at both national and sub-national levels.

Status of REDD+ Readiness

Readiness organization and consultation: National and provincial arrangements for REDD+ have evolved as part of the government's efforts to improve and strengthen forestry sector policies and activities. Significant institutional reforms have taken place since 2007 such that roles and responsibilities for responding to climate issues, including REDD+, are now relatively well-established. At the Ministerial level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is now responsible for monitoring environmental conditions in different areas, including the forest sector, but the primary jurisdictional responsibility for all forests now lies with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The consolidation of management of the forest sector under MAF is already improving coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders.

For REDD+ readiness process, the government set up the NRTF chaired by MAF's Deputy Minister. Its membership includes representatives from six ministries (including MAF, MONRE, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Justice), the Lao Front for National Construction, the National University of Lao, as well as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The NRTF reports directly to the Prime Minister through monthly Government meetings, which has helped to put climate change and green growth squarely in the focus of the government.

The REDD+ Division under the Department of Forestry (DOF) in MAF serves as the secretariat to the NRTF, and to the six Technical Working Groups (TWGs), which provide advice to the NRTF on thematic areas of work under REDD+. Coordination on climate change (including REDD+) is also being strengthened including mainstreaming climate finance related reporting and monitoring between the forestry sector (DOF) and the climate change focal point (in MONRE). Through the multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial structure of the NRTF and the six TWGs, discussions and decisions related to REDD+ are consulted across different sectors; coordination is continuing to improve as a result. Consultations and decisions pertaining to the ER-Program have also been taken through both of these mechanisms. The consultations with stakeholders are an ongoing, iterative process, with key stakeholder groups involved from the very beginning.

The structure of the NRTF supported by the DOF REDD+ Division is replicated at the provincial level, where a Provincial REDD+ Task Force (PRTF) supported by a Provincial REDD+ Office (PRO) have been established in 7 provinces. Significant consultation and stakeholder participation have been carried out during the development of various programs, for example on the R-PP, the Forest Investment Plan, the ER-Program Idea Note, in national and provincial workshops and provincial REDD+ action plans (PRAPs). In addition, many working groups support broad engagement with key stakeholders. Such working groups include the Natural Resource and Environment Sector Working Group (NRESWG), the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Working Group (ARD-SWG), the Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group (FSSWG), the Land Sub-Sector Working Group (LSSWG), etc., which all are important discussion fora for Government and its development partners, including civil society.

As part of the ER-PD, six Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (PRAPs) were developed with strong and consultative processes with PRTFs, PROs, and district- and village-level stakeholders. Through the cross-sectoral PRTFs, REDD+ and the proposed ER-Program interventions have been discussed with relevant sectoral agencies outside of the forestry sector. Between the Central and Provincial levels, strong communication has been maintained to consult with Provinces, and to keep them informed.

Lao PDR is in a somewhat unique situation, with significant Readiness progress through bilateral and multilateral projects working at national and provincial levels on REDD+, which created the necessary building blocks for the draft NRS, which is anticipated to be endorsed by the government by the end of March 2018. Thus, the National REDD+ Strategy and National REDD+ Program have been developed in parallel with the sub-national Emissions Reduction-Program for the FCPF Carbon Fund.

Assessment of Land Use, Forestry, and Other Policy Issues. Studies of drivers of deforestation and degradation were conducted at the national and provincial levels, along with more detailed assessments for the six ER-Program provinces. Lao PDR is endowed with valuable, productive and ecologically unique forests, which are not only a vital economic resource but provide important nutrition, livelihood, and income of the rural population and in particular, the rural poor. They also provide a habitat for the nation's rich natural biodiversity and protect its soils, watersheds and water resources. Some 80% of the population are heavily reliant on the forest for timber, food, fuel, fiber, shelter, medicines, condiments and spiritual protection. Forests are important sources of revenue, with non-timber forest products (NTFPs) often providing nearly half of a rural family's total income.

In 2015, of the country's total land area of 23 million hectares (ha), forests accounted for around 58 percent, compared to around 70 percent forest cover estimated in the mid-1960s. In the past ten years, land cover data based on the Lao Forest Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD) forest type maps, shows that the net deforestation rate has been at around 3.1% (approx. 735,000 ha), while during the same period, agricultural land expanded by approximately 2.1% (approx. 500,000 ha, not including shifting cultivation). Another significant change is the increase in tree plantations (mostly rubber) ¹from 25,000 ha in 2005 to 142,000 ha

¹ Many believe that rubber plantations are under-estimated. This discrepancy is due to the challenge of distinguishing young rubber plantations from regenerating vegetation, especially in hilly regions in the North.

in 2015.[1] Water bodies have increased, from 286,000 ha in 2005 to 360,000 ha in 2015, largely due to new hydropower reservoirs.

Forest degradation, which encompasses decreases in tree stocking, changes in species composition and size structure, loss of wildlife and plant habitats, and declines in wildlife and plant population, is as concerning as deforestation. There are no direct measurements for monitoring degradation. It is recognized, however, that the 6.1 million ha of rotational shifting cultivation and associated fallow areas, if left undisturbed, would likely revert to forests through natural succession. The Northern part of the country, where the ER-Program is located, contains nearly half of all the rotational shifting agricultural areas nationwide.

To address deforestation and forest degradation, the GOL is reforming its policies and regulations. Due to economic development and climate change issues, Government has been working on revision of the Land Law, which may be completed in 2018. It will be followed by updating of the Forestry Law along with other related natural resource laws and regulations. REDD+ issues have been incorporated into the 8th NSEDP, and Lao PDR's Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution (INDC), now NDC, submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at its December 2015 meeting in Paris.

On 13 May 2016, the new government administration issued Prime Ministerial Order No. 15, immediately banning all exports of logs and unfinished timber, and inspecting all transportation of logs, to check on their legality and to seize illegal logs. PMO 15 also aims to reign in problems with salvage logging around infrastructure projects. The government has brought considerable political support to rigorous enforcement of this new order. These positive changes demonstrate the government's commitment to improving forest governance, which are also reflected in its recent reorganization of the government management of the forest sector. In 2017 the GoL initiated the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) negotiations with the EU including the multi-stakeholder process of defining and agreeing on Lao PDR's Timber Legality Definition (TLD) and development of a Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS). Also, in 2017, the Central Party Committee issued a Resolution on Land [Policy], indicating the need for reform in land management and paving the way for a new Land Law.

Strategy. With the support of FCPF financing, the GOL has prepared a draft National REDD+ Strategy (NRS), and in parallel, an ER-PD for the Carbon Fund, which includes PRAPs. The consultative process used to prepare PRAPs is important and informs the development of the national level framework for operationalizing and implementing REDD+ strategy options – which are the next step in the development of the national REDD+ framework. The development of the NRS has focused on setting the vision and identifying strategic intervention measures in parallel with the preparation of the ER-PD. The NRS specifies programs and strategic interventions over three phases, (2018-2020), (2021-2025), and (2026-2030) targeting five core interventions areas:

- Development of sustainable agriculture in coordination with forest protection
- Infrastructure and mining development including resettlement and urban expansion in coordination with forest protection
- Sustainable timber harvesting and forest management (wood and forest products)
- Turning pioneering shifting cultivation to sedentary cultivation, controlling forest fires and forest restoration (carbon stock enhancement)
- Development of sustainable commercial tree plantation

The approval of process of the NRS is underway and the government anticipates this important step to be finalized in March 2018 followed by national presentation during the rest of the year.

The NRS aims to address five key sets of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, concerning: 1) agricultural expansion onto forest land; 2) unauthorized expansion of infrastructure and mining on forest land; 3) poorly-managed tree plantations; 4) unsustainable or illegal logging and NTFP harvesting; and 5) shifting cultivation and forest fires. An underlying factor driving conversion of forest land to other uses is the lack of clarity on the ground as to what land has been planned for forest use, and what land for agriculture or other land uses. A related issue has been poor forest governance, especially in terms its ability

to enforce existing policies, laws, and regulations. To address these issues, the strategy proposes improved management of forests and tree plantations, intensification of agriculture, improved forest law enforcement and governance, support to land use planning and land titling, and better identification and demarcation of administrative boundaries for forests, as well as improved community tenure rights for village forests. Support for stabilizing shifting cultivation and reducing forest fires is also proposed.

Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), and Community Engagement Framework (CEF). A strategic level SESA was implemented at the national level. The SESA process and analytical work was conducted over a one-year period, from July 2016 through June 2017. Upstream analytical work combined with extensive consultations with key and relevant stakeholders were conducted, with the aim of identifying the social environmental and gender issues, risks and impacts related to the national REDD+ strategy. The SESA process ensured that environmental, social, and gender concerns will be integrated into the development and implementation process of the REDD+ strategy and interventions including those presented in the ER-Program. Noting that the preparation of REDD+ strategy options – in the form of action plans -- is still in progress; the government will undertake some additional work to complement the SESA.

An ESMF, as an output of the SESA process, is currently in draft form. The ESMF, which includes a CEF, would serve as the framework instruments for managing and mitigating the environmental, social, and gender risks and impacts of future REDD+ investments (projects, activities, and/or policies and regulations) associated with implementing the National REDD+ Program. The ESMF provides a direct link to the relevant safeguard policies and procedural requirements of the World Bank. The CEF provides guidelines for working with ethnic groups found in local communities. The CEF also incorporates the main elements of an access restriction process framework and the Resettlement Policy framework, required to mitigate and compensate for impacts under the World Bank's operational policy on involuntary resettlement. These safeguard guidelines are to be followed by all REDD+ projects within the National REDD+ Program, including the ER-Program.

Safeguards and Safeguards Information System (SIS). In the R-PP, Lao PDR stated plans to develop a REDD+ SIS. Discussions on the design are underway as Lao PDR needs to develop its own national Country Safeguards System, and clarify how that will address the National REDD+ Program and ensure that it meets the national safeguards (policies, laws, and regulations), the UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards and the current World Bank Safeguards, or Operational Policies and Basic Procedures. This work will build upon a national safeguards gap analysis study already conducted. The SIS will be developed with support of the Additional Grant of the FCPF Readiness Fund and completed by early 2019.

Other Institutional Arrangements. In terms of financial arrangements, training and analyses have already been done on benefit-sharing mechanisms. Such work will lead to adoption of a benefit-sharing mechanism, and establishment of national and provincial REDD+ funds. Lao PDR has several existing fund mechanisms, which include the Forestry and Forest Resources Development Fund (FFRDF), the Poverty Reduction Fund, the Environmental Protection Fund, and Village Development Funds. These funds have been evaluated for their potential for use for REDD+ benefit-sharing mechanisms. The GoL is evaluating the optimal options for REDD+ funds management.

To promote transparency and support stakeholder consultation and outreach, a comprehensive bilingual, Lao-English, REDD+ website is being developed. The Government has already developed webpages for all its Ministries, including MAF; the latter includes webpages for DOF and its Divisions, such as the DOF REDD+ Division. The DoF website (<http://dof.maf.gov.la>) launched two years ago was supported by the FCPF project and has been used to upload Lao REDD+ documents. A related web portal will be developed for sharing some of the data and maps in the National Forest Monitoring System. Other communications, information, and educational materials will be prepared as REDD+ work progresses.

Reference (Emissions) Levels and Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification. Lao PDR has made significant progress toward developing natural resource management and monitoring systems. Over many years, work has improved the capacities of DOF's Forest Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD), which has responsibility for the national forest inventory work. With support from development partners, particularly JICA, substantial work has been done to complete an updated (2015) forest cover map based

on wall-to-wall satellite imagery for 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015. The 2015 forest inventory is complete with field verification and which provides the basis for the REL/RL submitted to the UNFCCC in January 2018, as well as the calculations used to determine the emissions reduction potential for the ER-Program. The National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) is well advanced as part of a larger National Forest Information System (NFIS). Examples of carbon registries in other countries are being studied, and a model for a carbon registry for Lao PDR is proposed and discussions are underway on the design criteria.

Noting that Lao PDR requested for additional funding to complete the readiness process, the table below summarizes activities to be carried in line with requested additional funding. A detailed draft work plan is presented in the annexes section.

Planned readiness work up to 2020

National and Provincial REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	<p>Additional capacity building for the REDD+ Division, NRTF and TWG members on REDD+ strategy and action plans</p> <p>Technical support and capacity building for sub-national institutions for implementation of ER-Program interventions</p>
REDD+ strategy and interventions	
	<p>Cross-sector capacity needs assessment for the implementation of NRS, ER-PD, and PRAP interventions and preparation of a Capacity Development Plan</p> <p>Strategic and economic analysis of NRS interventions</p> <p>Development of a cross-sector spatial analysis framework for land suitability analysis to support the land use and forestry planning and economic analysis of REDD+ interventions.</p> <p>National and sub-national cross sector knowledge sharing, consultation, awareness raising and dissemination of NRS</p>
Stakeholder Engagement	
	<p>Workshops, training and capacity building in line with identified capacity needs and specifically for cross-sector land use planning and management in the context of REDD+ as identified in the Capacity Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Awareness raising and dissemination of REDD+ material at national level (workshops, campaigns, pamphlets and other publications)</p>
Implementation and monitoring	
	<p>Preparation and finalization of benefit sharing plan including stakeholder consultation and awareness raising</p> <p>Development of a national REDD+ monitoring system</p> <p>Establishment and capacity building of field monitoring units in selected districts to establish a framework for REDD+ progress monitoring</p>
Social and Environmental Impacts	
	<p>Design of national Safeguards Information System</p> <p>Capacity building and mainstreaming REDD+ at National and Sub-national level within and across key sectors (forestry, agriculture and energy).</p>
Reference Emission Level and Monitoring Systems	

Updating and improvement of the FREL/FRL and Design and implementation of the MMR/MRV Building sectoral capacity for data management and data sharing Procurement and updating of hardware and software for GIS and remote sensing. Design and setup of knowledge management system for REDD+ impact monitoring across key sectors

The self-assessment summary below shows that Laos has achieved significant progress in the readiness preparatory aspects, but the institutional aspects require further development. Important aspects such as REDD+ decentralization, preparing clear national level implementation framework require further work. The ER-PD in the six northern provinces will provide important lessons for the national REDD+ framework and the government is encouraged and appreciative of the support from the FCPF and Carbon Fund as well as other development partners.

Self-Assessment Summary

Traffic light key	
	Significant progress
	Progress well, further development required
	Further development required
	Not yet demonstrating progress

Key stakeholders including the core team, TWGs, and development partners rated the national REDD+ Readiness. The Self-Assessment Summary Scores at sub component level are shown below based on the Traffic light key

The Self-Assessment Summary

Component	Sub Component	Summary scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	
	2c. Implementation Framework	
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	
Reference Emission Level/Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Country Content and Overview of Support from Forest Carbon Partnership Facility

Lao PDR is a mountainous country, known in the past for its rich forests and biodiversity. In recent decades, however, deforestation and forest degradation have been at high levels. This issue has been of concern to the national government, as well as to the population at large. Many of Lao PDR's people live in close proximity to and have historically depended on natural forests for their livelihoods. Moreover, as Lao PDR generates electricity from hydropower, and earns foreign exchange from selling electricity, good management of its watersheds is a vital national issue.

In 2005, the government adopted its Forestry Strategy to 2020, which set a very ambitious target for increasing forest cover. The current government, elected in April 2016, has also placed strong emphasis on bringing the forest sector under more unified management, by consolidating all forest sector management responsibilities under one ministry (MAF). Moreover, it has prohibited all export of logs and unfinished timber, and is stopping all log transport, to check on the legality of the logs and to seize illegal logs. These measures aim to bring all forests in the country under more sustainable management, increase the availability of wood for local industry, improve forest conservation and protection, and also to reduce illegal logging and trafficking in timber, to increase government revenues. The government also recognizes the need to support the Lao people to have access to timber for local use and processing, and to non-timber forest products. The immediate impact of the PMO 15 is that exports of unprocessed timber and logs export to neighboring countries has decreased dramatically.²

In addition to its domestic priorities for achieving sustainable forest management, protecting its remaining forests and enhancing forest cover, Lao PDR also recognizes and embraces its international responsibilities to contribute to addressing climate change, through mitigation measures such as improved forest management. In its 2015 submission to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) of its Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution (INDC), its work on REDD+ figures prominently.

Lao PDR has been working on REDD+ issues since 2007, when Lao PDR joined the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). A National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF) was created and worked with support from technical advisers and several development partners. FCPF then provided USD 200,000 to the country, to help with its preparation of a REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP). Lao PDR submitted its R-PP to the Facility in 2010, which was accepted.

Subsequently, FCPF provided the Second Readiness Grant of USD 3.6 million to implement the R-PP. This grant agreement became effective in August 2014 and runs until 15 March 2018. With this support from the FCPF Readiness Grant, the Government and many development partners began working on various elements and building blocks for the national REDD+ program. Work has been progressing well on a number of key analytical studies, provincial-level REDD+ work, stakeholder consultations on various issues, such as safeguards and benefit-sharing, and development of the reference emission level (REL) and measurement, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems. As of January 2018, the National REDD+ Program in Lao PDR is in advanced stage of development. Since 2008, many achievements have been made, including preparation of the following drafts:

² According to a Forest Trends study in 2017, the exports of these products to Vietnam and China in 2016 had decreased by 74 percent compared with their levels in 2014. These two countries were the major export targets, comprising 94 percent of these exports. For more information, see: Phuc Xuan To, Naomi Basik Tremor, and Kersten Canby. 2017. *Impacts of the Laos Log and Sawntwood Export Bans: Significant Reductions in the Exports to Major Markets of Vietnam and China in 2016*. Forest Trends Report Series: Forest Policy, Trade, and Finance. Forest Trends, Washington, DC.

- National REDD+ Strategy (final draft to go to Minister in February 2018 for approval in March 2018);
- Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (final draft);
- Environmental and Social Management Framework and Community Engagement Framework, including Grievance Redress Mechanisms (first draft);
- Reference Level, submitted to UNFCCC in January 2018.

These documents will soon be available on the Department of Forestry website, under the webpage for the DOF REDD+ Division or its relevant Divisions. Reference Level, now is available at <http://dof.maf.gov.la/en/publications/> or http://dof.maf.gov.la/download/REL-and-Supporting-Docs/2018_frel_submission_laopdr.pdf

Additional grant funding from the FCPF Readiness Fund to Lao PDR was approved in late 2016. It will be used for some remaining work of the National REDD+ Readiness Program, particularly mainstreaming the NRS into the National and Provincial Social and Economic Development Plans, development of NRS Action Plan(s), development of the REDD+ Safeguard Information System, and sub-national capacity building, to prepare Lao PDR for the REDD+ Result-based Payments from the FCPF Carbon Fund

The table below summarizes multilateral, bilateral, non-governmental organization, and private sector development partner REDD+ Readiness and REDD+ implementation support from 2011 through 2020. Some of the support is specific to REDD+ and other Programs aim at broader sustainable forest management and rural development. The government continues to seek international support because the starting point for REDD+ and broader climate change response capacity is characterized by significant financial, human, and technical constraints. Development partners have contributed roughly USD 65 million in the last ten years including the ongoing Forest Investment Program. Anticipated support through the Green Climate fund could increase this value to USD78 million. in addition to the government's own fiscal and indirect contribution.

Other Key Programs or Projects Supporting REDD+ Readiness and Implementation

Lao PDR Funding for REDD+ Readiness and Implementation, 2011-2020

Program or Project	Period	Project Brief	Estimated REDD+ total funding, 2011-2020 USD ('000)
<p>REDD+ Readiness support project, funded by the FCPF Readiness Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First grant, 2014-2018 • Second grant, 2018-2020 	<p>Aug 2014- June 2020</p>	<p>Supporting REDD+ national program and strategy development, SESA, ESMF, capacity building at provincial level</p> <p>* \$200,000 preparation grant 2009-2010</p>	<p>8,175 *(+200)</p>
<p>Forest Investment Program (FIP) support to the Lao Forest Investment Plan (Lao FIP), consisting of partial support (co-financing) to:</p>	<p>2012-2018</p>	<p>Supporting grassroots forest managers to engage in participatory sustainable forest management (PSFM) in all types of forests, to contribute to REDD+</p>	<p>30,000</p>
<p>Scaling Up Participatory Sustainable Forest Management (SUFORD-SU), also supported by World Bank (IDA) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland. [This project was preceded by three World Bank-Finnish supported projects between 1995 and 2012: FOMACOP, SUFORD, and SUFORD-AF.] FIP co-financing: USD 13,330,000</p>	<p>2013-2018</p>	<p>Supporting PSFM in 41 Production Forest Areas (PFAs) in 13 provinces; working on forest landscape management in 4 provinces and 33 pilot village forests; supporting forest law enforcement in 18 provinces</p>	
<p>Smallholder Plantation Development supported by the International Finance Corporation and private sector partners.</p> <p>FIP co-financing: USD 3,000,000</p>	<p>2014-</p>	<p>Working with Stora Enso in south-central Laos (Savannekhet and Saravane Provinces). Exploring support to other partners.</p>	
<p>Protecting Forests for Ecosystem Services, which constitutes additional financing from FIP to the Asian Development Bank for the Biodiversity Conservation Corridor (BCC) Initiative</p> <p>FIP co-financing: USD 13,340,000</p>	<p>2016-</p>	<p>Additional financing for REDD+-related activities and work with additional villages adjacent to protected areas and corridors.</p>	
<p>SUFORD-AF and SUFORD-SU: REDD+ related technical assistance supported by Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs</p>	<p>2011-2017</p>	<p>Initial work on REDD+ project; subsequent work to support FIP investments in REDD+; REL and monitoring ERs for project areas</p>	<p>1,059</p>
<p>Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ Support Project (F-REDD) (2016-2020) supported by JICA, and its preceding projects, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Strategy Implementation Project (FSIP) • FSCAP • NFIS National Forest Inventory System • PAREDD 	<p>2011-2020</p>	<p>National-level work on forest inventory, REL, MRV, strategy and policy; provincial support to SFM and REDD+ in Luang Prabang</p>	<p>14,508</p>

Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation and Degradation (CliPAD) program, funded by the German government and implemented by GIZ and KfW	2009-2019	National support to REDD+ and climate finance issues. Initial provincial work in Xayaboury, now field work focused on Houaphan Province	8,320
UN-REDD Program / FAO	2014-2017	Forest resources monitoring at provincial level; Enhancing resource and land tenure security through village forestry.	707
Netherland development organization (SNV)	2013-2016	Multiple-benefits for REDD+ project for Vietnam and Laos, focus on benefit-sharing and safeguard issues	133
Regional Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) program, funded by USAID, with work in Lao PDR by Forest Carbon and SNV	2012-April 2016	Capacity-building activities in Houaphan and Attapeu provinces	1,650
The Center for Forests and People (RECOFTC)	2011-2015		625
SUB-TOTAL IN SUPPORT (excluding FIP support)			35,177
SUB-TOTAL (including FIP support)			65,177
Green Climate Fund - Pipeline funding (not secured yet) For ER-Program Area (total estimated at USD 45 million)			2019-2020: 13,315
Projected TOTAL- 2011 through 2020 (including pipeline)			78,492

Aims and Objectives of the Assessment

The objectives of this report are to:

- provide information on **self-assessment** of the REDD+ Readiness Preparation in the Lao PDR. The assessment was carried out through a multi-stakeholder self-assessment process in accordance with the Guide to FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework;
- Fulfill one of the **requirements for submission of the Emission Reduction Program Document to the FCPF Carbon Fund**³; and
- identify **key strengths** of Lao PDR's achievements to date, and **actions still required** to fully achieve the objectives outlined in Lao PDR's R-PP.

This report is supported by several other key documents, including:

- The National REDD+ Strategy;
- the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment;
- the Environmental and Social Management Framework and Community Engagement Framework and a Grievance Redress Mechanism;
- the Emission Reduction Program Document;
- the REDD+ Communication Strategy and Outreach Program; and
- the Reference Level.

Structure of this Report and the Self-Assessment Process

The report structure follows the guidance of the FCPF Readiness Assessment Framework, which consists of four components, nine sub-components and 34 criteria. At the end of each component, a table is provided outlining the way forward including activities planned under the additional funding.

For self-assessment of the national REDD+ Readiness Program, a series of stakeholder consultations were held in December 2017:

Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholder Group	Date of Consultation	Objective of Meeting
Core REDD+ Team of Government staff and technical advisors	05 December 2017	Participatory Self-Assessment
Six REDD+ Technical Working Groups	12 December 2017	Participatory Self-Assessment
Development partners, civil society and private sector representatives	19 December 2017	Participatory Self-Assessment
National REDD+ Task Force	28 December 2017	Report and Validation

³ Lao PDR and the World Bank signed a Letter of Intent to submit an ER-PD in mid-2017. Lao PDR aims to present its Readiness Package and Report to the FCPF Partnership Committee meeting in late March 2018, and get approval; prior to presenting its ER-Program Document at the FCPF Carbon Fund meeting in June 2018.

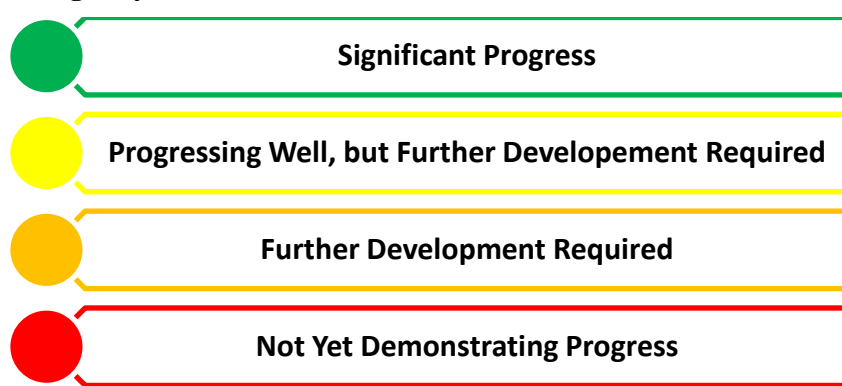
Self-Assessment of National REDD+ Readiness

The self-assessment of Lao PDR’s National REDD+ Program and its progress towards “readiness” has been discussed with different stakeholder groups. The discussions were facilitated by national and international technical advisors and were based upon the 34 assessment criteria and diagnostic questions. The criteria and questions were translated from English into the Lao language. The meeting of the core REDD+ team and that of the development partners discussed these issues in English, whereas the meeting with TWG members and National REDD+ Task Force discussed these issues in Lao.

The assessment ratings are based on the first two meetings in the table above, as participants in the latter meetings did not feel that they had adequate information on the REDD+ Program to make assessments. They did, however, discuss and comment upon the ratings of the first two groups. The

The ratings used the color-coded “traffic light” system, wherein the ratings were as follows:

Figure 1: Traffic Light System



Each group discussed the assessment criteria and related individual diagnostic questions, and then reached consensus on the color rating that was appropriate given the progress achieved. For the meeting of the six TWGs, each group rated the criteria on which they felt they had pertinent knowledge, and then the ratings of the six TWGs were combined into overall ratings for that meeting.

The assessment ratings are based on the first two meetings in the Table above, as participants in the latter meetings did not feel that they had adequate information on the REDD+ Program to make assessments. They did, however, discuss and comment upon the ratings of the first two groups. This additional feedback was considered in assessing the two sets of ratings, and in deciding on the overall ratings. Given that the knowledge of the REDD+ progress was limited, that factor itself indicated that more work needs to be done on raising awareness of the REDD+ issues and program. The meeting that was convened for civil society, private sector, and development partners had limited attendance, despite invitations going out to a wide range of stakeholders.

Final scoring was determined by the project through an objective assessment of progress and discussions with stakeholders. While substantial progress had been achieved, many elements of the package will require further work and refinement under the Additional Funding.

1 COMPONENT 1: READINESS ORGANIZATION AND CONSULTATION

1.1 Sub-component 1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements

Overall Progress and Constraints

National REDD+ management arrangements have been evolving since their establishment (See Table 1). Since the submission of the R-PP to the FCPF in 2010, the Government of Lao PDR has undertaken taken a series of important decisions and institutional changes to strengthen capacity for climate change response across multiple sectors (forestry, energy and agriculture). The Director-General of Forestry led the initial activities on REDD+. Lao PDR was one of the first countries to join the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). A REDD+ Focal Point was named in the Department of Forestry (DOF) Division of Planning and Cooperation. DOF initially set up the National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF) in late 2008 with 12 members, increased to 15 members in 2011. In 2008, a grant was received from FCPF to develop a REDD+ Readiness Proposal (R-PP), which was submitted to FCPF and accepted in late 2010. The FCPF and the Government of Lao PDR signed a grant agreement on a REDD+ Readiness Project in August 2014. This grant runs through 15 March 2018.

In 2011, the Lao Government established the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). As part of this reorganization, in 2012, a REDD+ Division was established in Department Forest Resource Management under MONRE while a REDD+ Office was set up in the Department of Forestry (DOF under MAF). The REDD+ Division has served as the Secretariat for the NRTF, which was moved to MONRE. The NRTF expanded at first to 24 members, then by November 2015, 30 members, and was chaired by Deputy-Minister of MONRE. Following elections in early 2016, the Government decided to reorganize some ministries, and streamline their mandates. The Government has reorganized the REDD+ Division by merging two REDD+ offices into a REDD Division under DOF, within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. MONRE will continue to monitor environmental conditions in different sectors, including the forest sector, but the primary responsibility for all forests now lies with MAF.

The National REDD+ Task Force was reformulated in 2017. It is currently chaired by MAF Deputy Minister. The reconstituted NRTF, with 16 members, held its first and second meetings on 30 August 2017 and 28 December 2017, respectively. [The current membership of the NRTF is provided in Annex 2.] The NRTF – and development of the National REDD+ Program -- has been supported by six cross-sectoral Technical Working Groups (TWGs), initially established under joint MONRE and MAF leadership.

In seven provinces, Provincial REDD+ Task Forces (PRTF) have been established, which are chaired by the Provincial Deputy-Governors, and supported by the Provincial REDD+ Offices. The Provincial REDD+ Offices were initially established under the Provincial Offices of Natural Resources and Environment (PONRE) but were recently transferred to the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs).

Six of these Provincial REDD+ Task Force and PROs have been established in six northern provinces, which are proposed for an Emissions Reduction Program (ER-Program) under the FCPF Carbon Fund. The seventh province is Champassack, in southern Lao PDR.

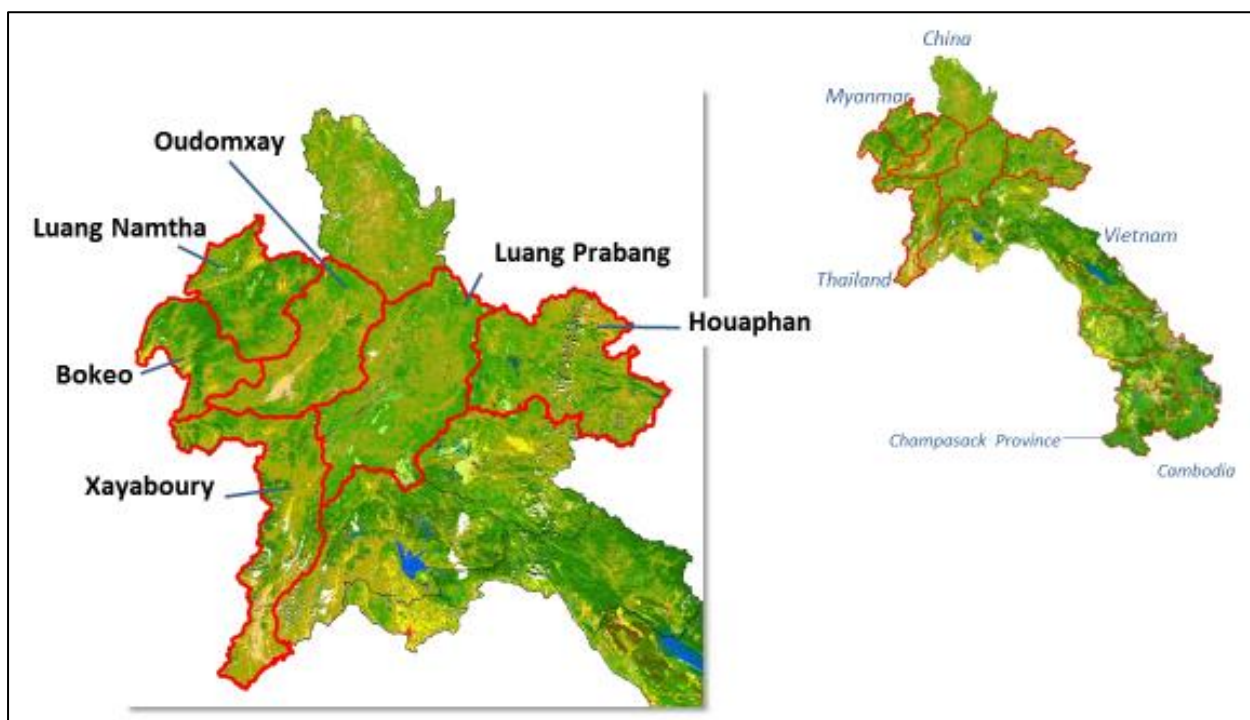
Table 1-1: Key Milestones in National Institutional Arrangements for REDD+

1 November 2007	Prime Minister appointed the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as national member of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility
3 November 2008	MAF established National REDD+ Task Force with 12 members, chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Forestry (DOF) within MAF, and supported by one REDD+ Focal Point
21 December 2010	REDD+ Readiness-Preparation Proposal (R-PP) submitted to FCPF
7 January 2011	MAF expanded NRTF to 15 members, with REDD+ Technical Group under the DOF Division of Planning serving the secretariat function to the NRTF
November 2011	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) established
18 May 2012	DFRM created along with its National REDD+ Division
December 2012	REDD+ Office established under DOF, MAF, to deal with REDD+ projects under MAF
30 October 2014	NRTF restructured under MONRE, with 24 members; DG of the MONRE as the Chair, and the DG of DOF as the Deputy Chair
26 November 2015	NRTF revised with 30 members and the MONRE-Deputy Minister as chair
19 February 2016	MONRE decision to establish six REDD+ Technical Working Groups
29 April 2016	Revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for NRTF approved by MONRE Minister
26 April 2016	Government Cabinet Decision on ministerial reorganization, including assigning the mandate for management of all forests to MAF
18 July 2016	Politburo endorsement of proposed ministerial reorganization
22 July 2016	Prime Ministerial Order No. 57 on government reorganization
19 August 2016	MONRE handed over responsibilities for management of protection and conservation forests, the National REDD+ Task Force, and the national REDD+ Office, to MAF. The two REDD+ offices were merged into one. <i>MONRE retains an oversight role on policy, strategy, law, and regulations pertaining to forests and environmental conservation issues.</i>
23 May 2017	NRTF reformulated under MAF, with 16 members from related ministries and academics
Jan 2016	Provincial REDD+ Task Force and REDD+ Office (PRO) established in Houaphan
May 2016	Provincial REDD+ Task Force and REDD+ Office established in Luang Prabang
June-September 2017	Provincial REDD+ Task Force and REDD+ Offices established in 4 additional Northern Provinces

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xayaboury • Oudomxay • Loungnamtha • Bokeo
January 2018	National ER-PD Consultation meeting in Luang Prabang

Provincial REDD+ - Houaphan, Luang Prabang, and four other adjacent northern provinces have been proposed for a jurisdictional REDD+ program under the FCPF Carbon Fund. Proposed ER-Program has been developed, focusing REDD+ interventions in six northern provinces. This ER-Program will be a sub-national REDD+ program, where the initial implementation activities for the National REDD+ Strategy and National REDD+ Program will be focused.

Figure 2: Map of ER-Program Provinces (Accounting Area)



Six proposed northern provinces for Emissions Reduction Program under the Carbon Fund. (National map also shows additional REDD+ pilot province, Champasak, in southern Lao PDR.)

These provinces are ones that have been working on REDD+ issues, with support from different development partners working with the government (MAF) – CliPAD, F-REDD, SUFORD-SU, ICBF, SNV, Lowering Emissions from Asia’s Forests Program (LEAF), Forest Carbon, and FCPF. Houaphan has been receiving support from several REDD+-related projects, including CliPAD, LEAF, and FCPF. LEAF provided training on biomass assessments methods for FIPD. Luang Prabang has been supported by several JICA projects, and now the new JICA- assisted Forestry and REDD+ (F-REDD) Program. While CliPAD and F-REDD have been supporting REDD+ provincial actions, SUFORD-SU and ICBF are collaborating on forest landscape issues. SUFORD-SU is supporting management of production forests, village forestry, and village development. ICBF is supporting the management of conservation and protection forests in two provinces. These development partners supported the Government to

prepare the ER-PIN and the draft Emissions Reduction Program Document (ER-PD) to be submitted in January 2018.

The ongoing activities in Houaphan supported by CliPAD and FCPF are the most advanced: following discussions between the NRTF and the province in 2014, a Provincial REDD+ Task Force and then a REDD+ Office were established in 2016. The Houaphan Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP) was completed by the end October of 2017. It has been agreed that it will be developed as an Annex to the Provincial Socio-economic Development Plan 2016-2020.

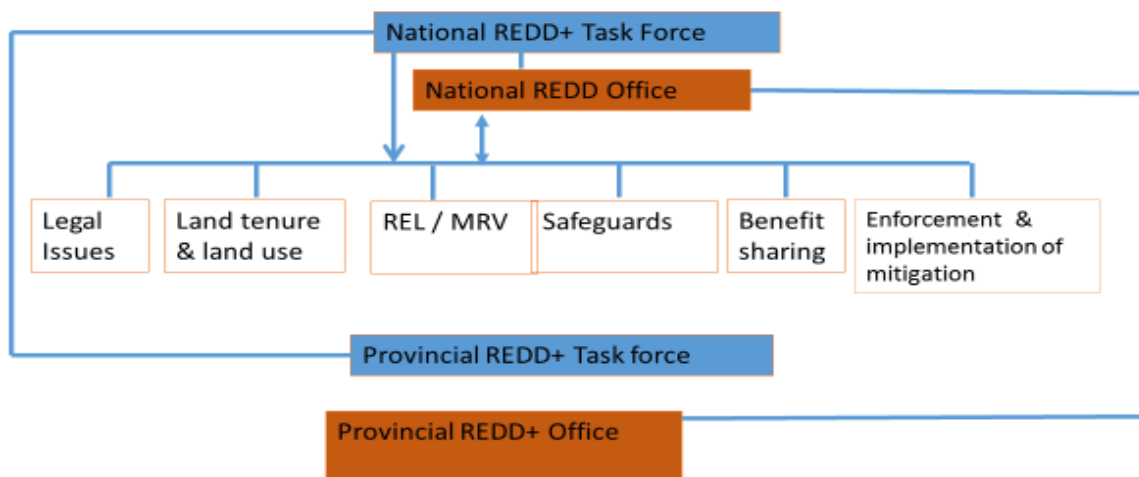
DOF with the three key REDD+ Projects, i.e., the FCPF REDD+ Readiness Project, F-REDD, and CliPAD, has continued providing support to establish the PRTFs and PROs in these six northern provinces in Lao PDR. Guidelines for development of PRAPs were prepared, based on the pilot experience in Houaphan Province. The PROs of five other remaining provinces of ER-Program Area used these guidelines to carry the consultation processes and develop their own PRAPs in 2017. They were supported by DOF and a technical assistance team (consulting firm) employed by the FCPF Readiness Fund and by CliPAD. Now, all of six provinces of the ER-Program area have completed their PRAPs. In addition to the six northern provinces, Champasack is being supported by the FCPF REDD+ Readiness Project, and has established its own PRTF and PRO. Thus, out of Lao PDR's 17 rural provinces, seven now have established PRTFs and PROs.

With support from the Forest Investment Program (FIP) and the Asian Development Bank, the Biodiversity Conservation Corridor (BCC) Initiative has been working with Attapeu, Xekong, and Champasack Provinces on protected area management and REDD+ issues and is assuming support to a voluntary REDD+ project under development for Xe Pian, previously supported by the Government of Austria and WWF. Champasack Province is taking the lead on the Xe Pian project.

1.1.1 Criteria 1: Accountability and transparency

The inception of the FCPF grant and other bilateral support, especially from F-REDD and CliPAD, has been instrumental in the setting up of important REDD+ support institutions, which were originally proposed in the R-PP (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Institutional Structure of REDD+ at National and Provincial Levels



In terms of accountability and transparency, the national REDD+ Task Force (NRTF) is the highest body that directly oversees the REDD+ activities in Lao PDR. The NRTF has recently been chaired by the MAF Deputy Minister, who reports to the Minister. The latter, in turn, reports to the Government,

i.e., the monthly meetings of the Government [periodic meetings with the Prime Minister and his deputies].⁴

At the provincial level, Provincial REDD+ Task Forces are chaired by the Provincial Deputy-Governors, supported by the Provincial REDD+ Office which are currently under PAFOs. Similarly, to the arrangement at the national level, PROs are acting as the Secretariat to the PRTFs, and PROs are technically supported the REDD+ Division of DoF and six TWGs.

Six REDD+ Technical Working Groups (TWGs) have been formed to provide technical advice to the NRTF. They deal with issues of policy and legal framework, land use and land tenure, social and environmental safeguards and stakeholder participation, benefit-sharing, reference emissions levels and monitoring, reporting, and verification (REL/MRV), and enforcement and implementation of mitigation actions, i.e., the National REDD+ Strategy (NRS). The TWGs were established in late 2015 (See Table 2; a complete list of members is provided in Annex 1). Each TWG has prepared its own Terms of Reference, which were approved in August 2016. In addition to specifically assigning certain government staff members to each TWG, the TWGs are also being supported by Lao and expatriate technical advisers working for various REDD+ development partners (i.e., multilateral and bilateral projects, and international non-governmental organizations.)

Table 1-2 The REDD+ TWGs, with their Chair and Co-chair Organizations⁵

TWG area of work	Chair/Co-chair
Policy and Legal framework	Chair: DOF, MAF Co-chair: Department of Legislation, Ministry of Justice
Land-tenure and land-use	Chair: Department of Land Development and Planning, MONRE Co-chair: Land Management Agricultural Planning, NAFRI
MRV/REL	Chair: Forest Inventory and Planning Division, DOF, MAF Co-chair: DFRM, MONRE
Social and environmental safeguards and stakeholder participation	Chair: Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) Co-chair: Lao Women’s Union (LWU)
Benefit sharing	Chair: DOF, MAF Co-chair: Department of State Property Management, Ministry of Finance
Enforcement and implementation of mitigation	Chair: DOF, MAF Co-chair: DFRM, MONRE

Note: The “enforcement and implementation of mitigation” TWG focuses on preparation of a REDD+ strategy that will be enforceable and implementable.

The operating mandate of these REDD+ institutions is clear, as each operates according to its own terms of reference approved at higher levels. They have adequate budget to conduct their functions, from both the government budget and support from REDD+ projects. The National REDD+ Task Force, Provincial REDD+ Task Force, and the six TWGs operate well as multi-sector coordination mechanisms. They bring together key agencies and stakeholders to address issues of improving forest sector management and reducing deforestation and forest degradation – including forestry, forest

⁴ In the R-PP, it was proposed that the NRTF would report to the National Environmental Committee (NEC), chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The NEC has not formally met since 2012. The current Government of Lao PDR, elected in 2016, has been attempting to empower the Ministerial levels in their respective responsibilities and mandates in the hope of improving governance and coordination amongst sectors, and of streamlining governmental bodies.

⁵ The assignment of TWG members has not changed since late 2015, and thus lists their previous affiliations (despite the government reorganization).

inspection (forest law enforcement), agriculture, land, justice, finance, planning and investment. In addition, it is noted that the REDD+ Division has adequate technical supervision and fund management capacity. It manages the REDD+ Readiness project funded by FCPF, the F-REDD program funded by JICA, and the CliPAD program funded by the German Government, with support from GIZ and KfW. It has also managed other REDD+ projects undertaken by INGOs and research institutions, such as collaboration with SNV, WWF, RECOFTC, and CIFOR.

Guided by DOF and coordinated and supported by REDD+ Division and the REDD+ technical advisors, in the past year and a half the TWGs worked hard on implementing activities according to their work plans, drafting sections of the National REDD+ Strategy, Benefit Sharing Mechanism, Legal Framework, SESA and ESMF, as well as the REL and National Forestry Monitoring System. Much of their work is now in the final stages, being submitted for GOL approval. (More details of progress of each element of the National REDD+ Program are described in the respective sections of this report.)

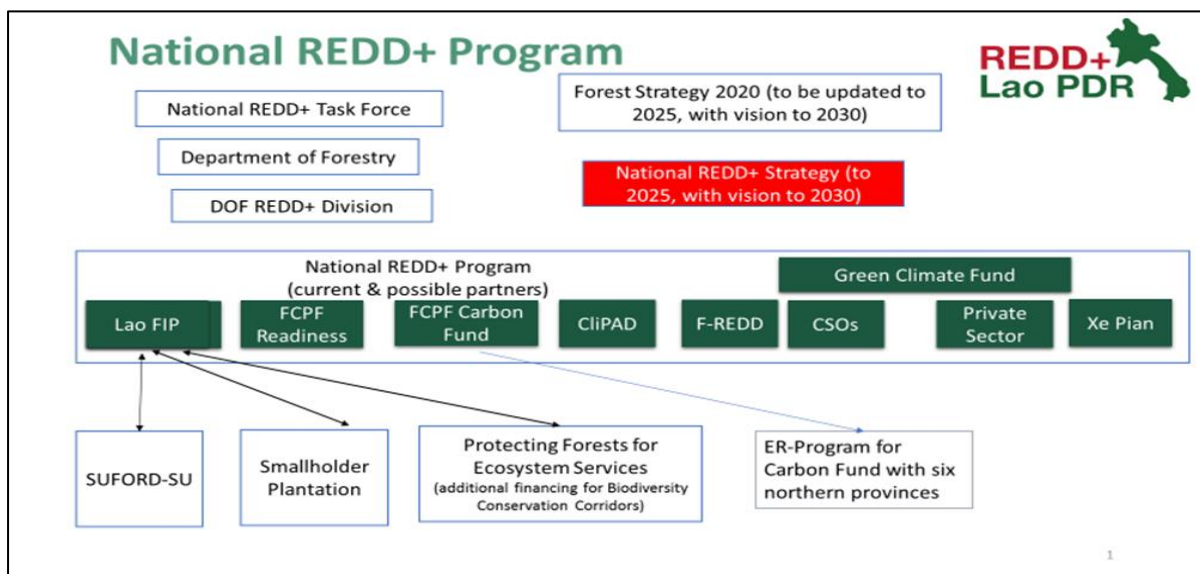
1.1.2 Criteria 2: Operating mandate and budget

The government of Lao institutionalized REDD+ by establishing the REDD+ Division. More authority and mandate has been provided to the Division as they are managing the financing of REDD+ readiness with the FCPF readiness grant secured of USD 3.6 million. This Division has fully well- equipped staff to handle financial management, reporting and procurement. A technical assistance team, comprised of Lao and international experts, aided with MRV, environmental, social, and gender safeguards, and strategy development, and land issues. An international CTA coordinated work, to provide effective support for readiness activities. The REDD+ Division management staff, including the administration and finance staff, has learned to manage FCPF funds following the World Bank Financial Management Manual. A second REDD+ Readiness Grant of USD 4.575 million will provide support for the country to reach a state of readiness in the coming years. This additional fund (AF) will be mainly used to address the remaining gaps and pending issues of Readiness Program at national level as well as to support capacity building for the six provinces of ER-Program.

Development partners have been supporting the Government’s Forestry Strategy with a Vision to 2020 (FS 2020). It is planned to update this Strategy by mid-2019. The development partners meet quarterly with the Government through the Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group (FSSWG), which support FS 2020 implementation. The NRS will be finalized in March 2018 and subsequently incorporated into the anticipated updated Forestry Strategy.

Once the NRS is formally adopted, it is anticipated that all development partners working on REDD+ issues will support this NRS, as indicated in Figure 4. The development partners will provide valuable support and budget to complement the government efforts.

Figure 4: Support to the National REDD+ Program by Development Partners



1.1.3 Criteria 3: Multi-sector coordination mechanisms and cross-sector collaboration

The early days of R-PP development was managed by the NRTF with only one Focal Point. However, with high political commitment for climate change mitigation and adaptation, the government has built effective and transparent institutional structures to include the creation of REDD+ Division, REDD+ offices at national and provincial levels and also created Technical Working Groups. The two REDD+ offices have since been merged into one REDD+ Division, which now supports the NRTF under the Department of Forestry in MAF. The six TWGs provide advice on thematic areas of work under REDD+. Coordination on climate change (including REDD+) is also being strengthened including mainstreaming climate finance-related reporting and monitoring between the forestry sector (DOF) and the climate change focal point (in MONRE). Through the multi-sectoral and multi-ministerial structure of the NRTF and the six Technical Working Groups, discussions and decisions related to REDD+ are consulted across different sectors and coordination is facilitated and continuing to improve as a result. Further coordination exists between bilateral activities being undertaken by the other development partners – especially CLiPAD, F-REDD, and SUFORD-SU, where lessons learned from these programs have been fed into the readiness process. Moreover, the Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group and other national working groups provide additional fora for cross-sectoral discussion and coordination.

The consultation process for the national REDD+ Program, i.e., the NRS, SESA, and the preparation of the ER-PD and PRAPs and other supporting elements has formed the basis of all REDD+ consultation and coordination and has focused on several approaches:

- Guidance provided by the cross-sectoral National REDD+ Task Force, and at the provincial level, cross-sectoral Provincial REDD+ Task Forces;
- Intensive consultation with government members of six inter-agency REDD+ Technical Working Groups, approximately one-third of whom are women government officers;
- Meetings with senior DOF and MAF staff;
- Consultations with selected provinces, districts, and *kumban* representatives;
- Consultation meetings with civil society organizations, private sector, and development partners;
- Consultation meetings with representatives of other sectors and programs, such as agriculture, land, and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade

Efforts have been taken to ensure that community meetings involve different ethnic groups, and women as well as men. (For more details on consultations, see Annex 3.)

The preparation of the ER-PIN and the drafting of the ER-PD were undertaken through the ER-Program Working Group led by the National REDD+ Focal Point, REDD+ Division, as well as the international partners actively engaged in REDD+, namely FCPF REDD+ Readiness Project, GIZ CLiPAD, SUFORD-SU, JICA and the UN-REDD Program of FAO. The ER-Program adopted the same stakeholder grouping for its stakeholder consultations, by building on the results of the consultations for the NRS. This common approach helped the stakeholders to further their understanding on REDD+ and the approaches of Lao PDR. The consultations with provincial and district staff, and village representatives in selected *kumban* for the six ER-Program provinces were conducted as part of the preparation of the six PRAPs. It was more intensive than the SESA approach used in central and southern Laos, as the PRAP process visited all 50 districts in the 6 provinces, and 50 different *kumbans*. Going forward, this is the approach that Lao PDR will use for development further sub-national level actions plans and implementation of REDD+ and other related programs.

While the REDD+ offices are in place, operationalization at the national levels and in selected provinces, and development of protocols for coordination among these offices for monitoring REDD+ progress, with a focus on the 6 northern provinces proposed for the FCPF Carbon Fund ER-Program is the next step. Additional capacity and finalization of the necessary institutional, regulatory, and

financial arrangements for supporting REDD+ implementation is also necessary. The additional funding will be used for undertaking some of this work.

1.1.4 Criteria 4: Technical Supervision Capacity:

The NRTF is chaired by the Deputy Minister of MAF deputized by the Director-General of Forestry. Other members of the Task Force are Directors, or Deputy Directors of their Departments or Divisions.

The Government recognizes that the capacity within national and sub-national institutions is variable. DOF and other institutions have adequately trained professionals, but the volume of work for both MAF and MONRE offices to effectively undertake duties in the vast areas of land they oversee and particularly in contrast to the limited financial resources, is overwhelming. Part of the REDD+ readiness process has been to build additional capacity in these institutions and this will continue with the FCPF additional finance. Currently the DOF REDD+ Division has 14 staff members, which include a Director and 3 Deputies.

The NRTF members are technically capable to supervise most of the National REDD+ Program activities, but they do not have sufficient time to devote to this responsibility. Certain topics, such as REL / MRV and safeguards, are more technically challenging, and may require further capacity building and/or technical assistance.

The DOF REDD+ Division has the mandate and the time for management of the National REDD+ Program activities, i.e., management of the individual REDD+ programs and projects. The Director and Deputy Director have long experience and good qualifications in REDD+ issues, but many of their staff need further training and development, to build their capacity for technical supervision in this area.

In the six ER-Program provinces, Provincial REDD+ Task Forces (PRTF) have been established, which are chaired by the provincial Deputy-Governors, and supported by the Provincial REDD+ Offices (PRO). The PROs were initially established under the Provincial Offices of Natural Resources and Environment (PONRE) but have since been transferred to the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs). The PROs act as the Secretariat to the PRTFs and are supported by the REDD+ Division of DOF and six the TWGs. At the sub-national level, this set is not yet implemented nationwide hence a significant proportion of the additional finance is earmarked for this component.

1.1.5 Criteria 5: Fund Management Capacity:

The government of Lao PDR has its own policies and procedure for fund management, which also apply to REDD+ related fund management. The DOF REDD+ Division (national REDD+ office) has enhanced its capacity to manage the procurement processes and financial aspects with the support of World Bank's financial management and procurement policies to help enhance efficiency. They have successfully procured consulting services from international firms to conduct studies on FREL, MRV, SESA and other readiness components. In this process, staff members within this office learned to handle both procurement and fund management related processes effectively and efficiently. The FCPF REDD+ Readiness Project has been audited. However, considering the expanding scope on REDD+, more staff to oversee fund management may be required. As required by the World Bank, annual audits have been conducted -- no major issues were identified.

1.1.6 Criteria 6: Feedback and Redress Grievance Mechanisms:

Lao PDR has an existing national Feedback and Grievance Redress Mechanisms (FGRM). An assessment of FGRM was conducted as part of readiness where the various methods of FGRM used in country are outlined and consist of several alternative mechanisms for registering grievances and feedback and seeking redress. These existing mechanisms consist of: 1) traditional, customary complaint resolution processes, which vary by ethnic group; 2) village mediation units; 3) the judicial system, with regional, provincial, and national courts, and with the accompanying law enforcement authorities; 4) the administrative system of government, going for example, from the village to the relevant district office to the relevant provincial office, to the national ministry, or going to the district justice office, Department of Home Affairs, then the Justice Department at the Ministry of Justice, and ultimately the Central Cabinet; 5) the Party system, wherein complaints can be registered with the Lao

Women’s Union or Lao Front for National Construction, then the Central Party Cabinet; or 6) the legislative system, with appeals to the Provincial Assembly or National Assembly.

Additional work will be done as part of the additional financing to include, but not be limited to: analyzing the institutional frameworks for implementing FGRM, assessment of the legal and regulatory frameworks for facilitating FGRM, Safeguarding FGRM, identification of capacity gaps and strengthening for the effective implementation of FGRM, stakeholder consultations and social mobilization campaign to sensitize relevant stakeholders on how to utilize FGRM especially forest communities, marginalized forest users and different ethnic groups to facilitate people’s understanding of the REDD+ program, its objectives and safeguards, benefits associated with REDD+, and their avenues for feedback and grievance redress. It is noted that while villagers are aware of customary dispute resolution and village mediation units, and others are knowledgeable about the public “hotline” for reporting problems, such as illegal logging, to the National Assembly, other avenues of redress are less well known. This challenge is an important element of strengthening forest governance.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: *Progressing Well, Further Development Required.* National and provincial REDD+ management arrangements are progressing well, but further development is required. The REDD+ management and co-ordination structures are functional, and operate in an open and transparent manner. Regular and Ad-Hoc meetings with related offices and established TWGs have been organized to ensure good REDD+ coordination and implementation. The REDD+ Division has increased its staff capacity to cover areas such as PRAP formulation, Communication, Stakeholder Engagement, MRV, Safeguards and monitoring and evaluation. Further enhancement of the REDD+ division staff capacity is still needed, to meet the upcoming REDD+ management and implementation work. The GRM is well-developed, but work is needed to make these GRMs more broadly known and accessible.

Table 1-3: Sub-Component 1a Self-assessment

	Self-Assessment		
	Core Team	TWG	Combined Rating
1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements			
1. Accountability and transparency			
2. Operating mandate and budget			
3. Multi-sector coordination mechanisms			
4. Technical supervision capacity			
5. Funds management capacity			
6. Feedback and grievance redress mechanism			

Additional work

- Accountability and transparency continue to improve. But the identified underlying drivers of deforestation suggest the need for ongoing technical support, and for better definition of roles and responsibilities within relevant institutions at both national and sub-national level.
- Multi-sectoral coordination and coordination remains weak, hence coherence in policy implementation across the major sectors (forestry, agriculture, energy, land) also remains weak.

The combined rating in the self-assessment reflects the involvement of institutions in technical working groups at national level. At the sub-national level, in stakeholder consultations, coordination in implementation of policies, laws and regulations was considered to be weak.

- Sub-national institutions still require capacity building for technical supervision to be effective in policy, regulatory enforcement, and financial management specifically for REDD+.

1.2 Sub-Component 1B: Consultation, Participation, and Outreach

1.2.1 Criteria 7: Participation and Engagement of Stakeholders:

The government administration structures facilitate stakeholder participation and consultation. For the forestry sector, significant consultation and stakeholder participation is organized during the development of various programs. Specifically, during the development of the R-PP in 2009-2010, the preparation of the Forest Investment Plan in 2011, and the development of the ER-PIN for the Carbon Fund in 2015, and SESA, ESMF, NRS and ER-PD between 2016 and 2017.

Several existing sector and sub-sector working groups enable stakeholder participation in policy discussions. Some key groups include the Natural Resource Sector Working Group (NRSWG), the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Working Group (ARD-SWG), the Forestry Sub-Sector Working Group (FSSWG), and the Land Sub-Sector Working Group (LSSWG) which all provide important ongoing forum for Government and development partners, including civil society, to discuss important issues. The FSSWG generally meets on a quarterly basis and provides inputs into the annual Government-Donor Round Table meeting. It also follows up on the implementation of the *Forest Strategy to 2020*, which was adopted by the Government in 2005. The FSSWG was originally under the leadership of MAF and reported to the ARD-SWG, then moved to MONRE and reported to the NRSWG, but returned to MAF and the ARD-SWG. Many consultations have been held at various levels, ranging from grassroots to national level, and among representatives of different stakeholder groups. (See Annex 3.).

The role and engagement of the private sector in REDD+ is evolving and the government recognizes the importance of the sector. The participation of the private sector could be stronger, and this is especially highlighted in the draft ER-PD. Engaging the private sector and mobilizing commitments for climate-smart and REDD+ investments is emerging as a critical component for supporting the transformation of the agricultural sector and to help safeguard forest resources. For instance, the ER-Program activities aim to support the mobilization of the private sector through the establishment of a private-public dialogue on REDD+ and climate smart agriculture. For this to happen, the government notes the need to create the necessary enabling environment and creating awareness on REDD+ and climate-smart agriculture and sustainable investment opportunities. This aspect remains weak in the REDD+ readiness process and is one of the priorities over the next two years.

REDD+ Technical Working Groups

The government has established balanced institutional arrangements and management to enhance participation and stakeholder engagement in REDD+ readiness and processes. At the national level, six REDD+ Technical Working Groups were established by MONRE in late 2015. The organization of these TWGs was based on a sharing of responsibility between MONRE and MAF. In addition to specifically assigning certain government staff members to each TWG, the TWGs are also being supported by Lao and expatriate technical advisers working for various REDD+ development partners (i.e., multilateral and bilateral projects, and international non-governmental organizations). The six TWGs have developed their own Terms of Reference. These TORs were endorsed on 23 August 2016, following two training workshops conducted for these six TWGs, on 27-28 July and 16-17 August 2016. The TWGs are responsible for providing technical input and support on specific REDD+ components. As such, the TWGs were the main bodies working on the development of the NRS providing advice to the NRTF. These TWGs also provided support to the National REDD+ Division on the preparation of REDD+ Annual Work Plans which will be reported to the NRTF.

Some of the remaining tasks to strengthen participation and engagement of key stakeholders, which will be addressed with the additional funding include: institutional strengthening of the national REDD+ technical body, the DOF REDD+ Division; and the decentralized Provincial REDD+ Task Forces and REDD+ offices; greater outreach with civil society organizations and forest communities to be included as part of these bodies.

1.2.2 Criteria 8: Consultation Processes

The government has made concerted efforts in supporting consultations in country. Starting with the development of R-PP, a stakeholder analysis was conducted with the aim of identifying who the relevant stakeholders are in REDD+ and who are those stakeholders most likely to gain or lose from REDD+ design and implementation. As a result, key stakeholders in Lao PDR were categorized into five major groups: communities, civil society organizations including educational and research institutions, government sectors engage in land use, private sector, and development partners. While the original mapping of stakeholders under the R-PP had listed 85 different stakeholder groups, the updated mapping lists 120 stakeholder groups.

Since 2008, many different development partners, including bilateral and multilateral donor organizations, and international NGOs, have been working with the Government on a range of different REDD+ issues and REDD+ related projects, programs, and activities that have involved many types of stakeholder engagement. The government recognizes the complexity of understanding REDD+ principles therefore there has been continuous use of a number of methods to engage with stakeholders for both consultation and capacity building for understanding creating meaningful engagement. These range from regular and targeted meetings, theme specific meetings and focused workshops, training seminars, study tours and conferences where knowledge products are distributed and presented in the local language, or where necessary, are translated. Since the preparation of the R-PP, engaging and consulting stakeholders has improved due the clear thematic definition of REDD+ components. Through various projects supported by development partners, engaging and consultation with stakeholders has in fact been continuous and can be exemplified by the structured processes of projects such as CliPAD, Lowering Emissions from Asia's Forest, JICA and of course the FCPF supported programs. The government has required each of these projects to ensure participation of national staff and community level engagement and consultation that is effective and builds the capacity for understanding of implications and enable feedback.

During the preparation of the Lao Forest Investment Plan (Lao FIP), in 2011, several stakeholder consultations were conducted, including some with Lao non-profit associations. The global forest Investment Program (FIP)'s Dedicated Grant Mechanism (DGM) had tentatively set aside USD 4.5 million for Lao PDR, to support the participation of local communities and civil society in FIP activities. A DGM program, however, has not yet been developed for Lao PDR. Under DOF leadership, the Lao FIP preparation team went to many provinces to organize the consultation workshops with the stakeholders to discuss the FIP concepts, and general issues on sustainable forest management, national forest strategy and REDD+. Most of these development partners REDD+ activities have been carried out in collaboration with the Government, such as a workshop on REDD+ safeguards issues conducted in May 2014.

In October 2014, a two-day stakeholder workshop was held on forest governance. The Department of Forestry jointly organized this workshop, with support from the World Bank, the FCPF REDD+ Readiness project, CliPAD, and SUFORD-SU. This workshop was the first to use a methodology developed by the Program on Forests (PROFOR), to involve a range of stakeholders in assessing various elements of forest sector governance. In December 2015, SNV and the REDD+ project collaborated on workshops related to benefit-sharing, and earlier in May 2015, along with RECOFTC and other development partners, in a workshop on REDD+ safeguards. Two national workshops on benefit-sharing, safeguards and multiple benefits were held in 2015.

In 2015, stakeholder consultations were held during preparation of the Lao PDR concept note (ER-PIN) for the FCPF Carbon Fund. Workshops were conducted at national and provincial level specifically to discuss and consult on the proposed ER-Program. In March 2015, the Early Idea Presentation was discussed within the FSSWG and with the National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF), before it was presented to the Carbon Fund in April. In July and August 2015, two regional workshops were held to discuss the ER-PIN development with the proposed six provinces. One was held in Bokeo, for three provinces (Bokeo, Luang Namtha, and Oudomxay). The second meeting, held in Luang Prabang, for the remaining three provinces (Luang Prabang, Houaphan and Xayaboury). Further consultations were done with the FSSWG in September 2015, prior to the presentation of the ER-PIN at the Carbon Fund

meeting in October 2015. After acceptance into the Carbon Fund pipeline, further consultations took place with all six provinces in December 2015. A more recent meeting with these six provinces was organized on 9 September 2016. In addition to meetings of the NRTF, the Provincial REDD+ TFs, and the six REDD+ TWGs, the government has carried out workshops to raise awareness of REDD+, with one meeting at the national level, and several meetings in the provinces. (See Annex 3.)

The government developed a comprehensive overall REDD+ Stakeholder Engagement Plan in 2016, which was verified at a national stakeholder workshop in November 2016. The stakeholder engagement plan mapped out an initial plan for the stakeholder involvement in the activities of the six TWGs, consultations to be conducted as part of the SESA, and stakeholder engagement on other key REDD+ elements.

The REDD+ Readiness process has involved good participation and engagement of key stakeholders. As detailed in the SESA report, in February and March 2017, consultations were held with 5 provinces, 6 districts, and 8 kumban, representing 66 villages, in Central and Southern Lao PDR. For development of the six PRAPs, consultations have been held in 6 northern provinces, between mid-2016 and late 2017, in all 50 of their districts, and in 50 kumban, with representatives of 339 villages. The NRTF, TWGs meetings and consultation processes organized since July 2016 are shown in Annex 3.

While to date many consultations have taken place at the national or regional level, increasingly consultations will be done at the provincial, district, and local levels, especially in the six provinces targeted for the Carbon Fund Emissions Reduction Program. It should be noted, however, that some of the stakeholder groups listed are rather large and diverse. For example, one stakeholder group is “ethnic groups and local communities.” Lao PDR has recognized 49 different ethnic groups belonging to four major ethno-linguistic families. The population of the eight ethnic groups belonging to the Lao-Thai linguistic family is the most numerous and comprises two-thirds of the national population.

The other one-third of the national population consists of 41 ethnic groups, which belong to the other three language families. These latter three groups meet the World Bank criteria of “indigenous peoples,” although that term is not used in Lao PDR: nonetheless, the Government and the Bank have agreed that safeguards policies apply to their engagement. As many of the latter are more likely to live in forested regions of the country, and more likely to be poor, the challenge is to reach and engage with these stakeholders, build their capacity so that they understand, support, participate in, and benefit from REDD+ activities. Although the civil society sector is not well-developed in Lao PDR, the forest sector has made use of the mass party organizations, the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) and the Lao Women’s Union, to facilitate grassroots engagement with different ethnic groups and women.

The REDD+ work will draw upon the experience of many development partners to work with local communities throughout the country on different forms of participation in sustainable forest and natural resource management. While the FCPF grant funding will support some of this outreach and engagement work, much more is needed.

Further consultations and strengthening broader participation that will be addressed with the additional funding summarized in Table 1-5. Such work will include improvement of the communications with stakeholders, through the REDD+ website, and other communications, information, and education materials.

1.2.3 Criteria 9: Information sharing and accessibility of information:

National REDD+ institutions and management arrangements, such as NRTF and sub-national REDD+ Task Forces, TWGs, REDD+ Division and provincial offices, have been set up to enhance transparent, consistent, and timely sharing of information related to all readiness activities, including the development of REDD+ strategy, reference levels, and monitoring systems). Information related to these studies and their final reports are in the process of being translated for sharing on the DoF website. Furthermore, to address needs for information sharing and accessibility of information, the DOF REDD+ Division has prepared a REDD+ Communication and Outreach Strategy. To date, information has been primarily provided through traditional means of consultation meetings. Implementation and

public disclosure of consultation outcomes is ongoing as various elements of the National REDD+ Program have been under development, but further work on communication materials and uploading materials on the website is needed.

Impacts of these outreach efforts have not yet been found fully effective: many consultation workshop participants emphasized the need for greater efforts at outreach, participation and inclusion, especially mentioning the need for greater engagement of women, different ethnic groups, and vulnerable and forest-dependent communities, among others. Appropriate communications materials, such as posters or leaflets, will need to be developed to aid with consultations and stakeholder engagement, especially for local communities and civil society organizations.

A DOF bilingual website for REDD+ (Lao and English) is required to be upgraded and further improved, which will facilitate communication on REDD+ issues with stakeholders more effectively, and coordination among REDD+ development partners.

Establishment of a web portal for access to data and maps regarding the forest sector is also under discussion. The REDD+ Data Management Systems and a web-based REDD+ Geo Portal is being developed and this is described in more detail under Criteria 33.

1.2.4 Criteria 10: Implementation and Public disclosure of consultations:

Consultations are generally carried out to seek views and feedback on some specific issues from diverse stakeholder representatives. In all the readiness studies, such as strategy development, SESA and technical activities related to reference level and monitoring and information systems development, outcomes of consultations were fully integrated in these reports. Reports are available but are yet to be openly published.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: Progressing well, further development required. Important results obtained with regard to stakeholder consultations at different levels in Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Lao PDR, through SESA consultations, PRAP preparations, and engagement around the National REDD+ Strategy. Efforts have been made to ensure communications at local level are in appropriate languages and formats, and use appropriate media. SESA consultations have been undertaken at community level, with focal group discussions with different stakeholder groups, including women and different ethnic groups. Engagement from the private sector has been limited, as few local private companies are working on REDD+ issues. The outputs of consultations have fed into and informed emerging strategy development process in a transparent way. Communicating on REDD+ issues has been challenging, given the fact that it is a complex and abstract concept, and that it is yet to be operational. The rating of this component reflects the need for further work to develop sub-national level institutions and build capacity for implementation.

Table 1-4: Sub-Component 1B Self-Assessment Summary

1: READINESS ORGANIZATION AND CONSULTATION	Self-Assessment		
	Core Team	TWG	Overall rating
1b: Consultation, Participation, and Outreach			
7. Participation and engagement of key stakeholders			
8. Consultation processes			
9. Information sharing & accessibility of information			
10. Implementation & public disclosure of consultation outcomes			

Additional work

- As the assessment illustrates further development is required to improve engagement of the stakeholders. More importantly, the government recognizes the need to create the enabling environment for private sector participation.
- Transparent and broad information-sharing mechanisms still need to be established

Table 1-5: Component 1 work planned under the additional funding

National and Provincial REDD+ Management Arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing capacity building for the REDD+ Division, NRTF and TWG members on emerging trends and issues with regards to REDD+• Technical support and capacity building for PROs for implementation of ER-Program interventions• Technical support, capacity building and training workshops for other stakeholders and communities ,
Stakeholder Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-sector capacity needs assessment for the implementation of NRS, ER-PD, and PRAP interventions and preparation of Capacity Development Plan• Workshops, training and capacity building to meet identified capacity needs as identified in the Capacity Needs Assessment. -- and specifically for cross-sector land use planning and management in the context of REDD+• Awareness raising and dissemination of REDD+ material at the national level (workshops, campaigns, pamphlets and other publications)

2 COMPONENT 2: REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION

The development of the NRS is at the core of the FCPF Readiness Grant support, as well as that of other development partners. Lao PDR is in a somewhat unique situation, with significant Readiness progress through bilateral and multilateral projects working at national and provincial levels on REDD+, which created the necessary building blocks for the draft NRS which is anticipated to be endorsed by the government by the end of March 2018. The government drafted the NRS based on these building blocks, which include institutional setting that has continued to evolve and reflects an increasing focus on strengthening institutional, coordination, policy integration, and clarification of roles and responsibilities. Stakeholder participation and engagement in general climate dialogue and more specifically on REDD+ has been strongly supported by multiple multilateral and bilateral programs at national and sub-national level (CLiPAD, SUFORD SU, FREDD-JICA, SNV, World Bank, FAO).

The FCPF Readiness support is particularly important in the consolidation of various efforts by development partners who have, over the last ten years, directly or indirectly contributed to REDD+ as indicated in the introductory section of this document. The support provided by the FCPF and Carbon Fund, for the preparation of the R-PP, R-PIN, the ER-PIN and ER-PD, have been particularly instrumental in supporting the national institutional set up, the consultation process, and the packaging of the NRS. On the other hand, specific development partners have supported thematic areas, such as NFMS, MRV, REL supported by JICA, while GIZ through CLiPAD has provided policy advice and capacity development supporting the establishment of the national and provincial REDD+ framework and REDD+ planning processes at the provincial level (PRAPs).

As noted, development partners have contributed or pledged roughly USD 65 million for the ten-year period from 2011 through 2020, including the ongoing FIP. Anticipated support through the Green Climate fund could increase this value to USD 78 million by 2020 (and additional support beyond 2020), in addition to the government's own fiscal and indirect contribution. In the NDC, Lao PDR assigned USD 12.5 million for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions (0.14 % of GDP in 2012). For the forestry sector mitigation and adaptation action implementation, the Government is seeking international financing of USD 220 million and USD 709 million until 2030 for the agricultural sector-related adaptation measures. As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Lao PDR faces financial challenges and persistent high fiscal deficits and public debt⁶ – which are major barriers to making effective and long-term public-sector investments. Thus, the progress reflected in the REDD+ readiness of the country reflects the multiple support programs as well as impact of the broader national economic development strategies in the various sectors.

The financing of the ER-Program will rely on national, provincial and international sources to cover the estimated program cost of USD 136.5 million. This amount will come from Government budgets, anticipated ODA resources with varying degrees of donor commitment, and expected RBP from the Carbon Fund.

The NRS becomes one of the important intervention tools to address increasing deforestation and forest degradation in the country. The importance of forest resources and its sustainable management are enshrined in the country's highest-level policies, including the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED 2016-2020), the Green Growth Strategy (under drafting), the Central Party's Resolution on Land (2017), the Forestry Strategy 2020, as well as in Lao PDR's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The NRS will be the official government document for guiding REDD+ implementation including sustainable forest management, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the country. It aims to improve the quality and extent of forests nationwide to provide economic, social, and environmental values. The NRS vision encourages all stakeholders, including households, communities, and the business sector, to be active in strategy implementation to resolve

⁶ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/overview>

deforestation and degradation. The government will provide guidance for appropriate land use and conservation of forest resources, with the goal of increasing forest cover.

The government is committed to ensure the design and implementation of intervention programs across the forestry, agriculture, land, energy and other sectors are strategically integrated and aligned. As a result, the NRS has been developed in alignment with the key national policies and strategy documents. The government is currently focusing on making the policy environment favorable for implementation of the interventions opportunities such the ER-Program. It recognizes the need to invest sufficiently into creating and improving the enabling environment, particularly in terms of improved capacity among provincial and local level government authorities to implement and enforce existing policies and regulations.

It is also important to note that at the sub-national level, each of the six provinces involved in the ER-Program have prepared PRAPs through a consultative process in identifying the drivers and appropriate interventions to address these drivers. Adequacy of institutional technical and financial capacity have been identified as critical success factors for both the NRS and the ER-Program, hence they are well prioritized. The ER-Program consolidate the interventions outlined in the PRAPs, and adopt the strategic-level interventions outlined in the NRS.

Among key national strategies that will enable success of REDD+ is 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP: 2016-2020). The overall objective of the NSEDP is “Reduced poverty, graduation from LDC status with sustained and inclusive growth through promotion of national potential and comparative advantages, effective management and utilization of natural resources and strong international integration.” As a Least Developed Country (LDC), Lao PDR puts due emphasis on the need for economic development and the national policies to promote this, there is clear focus on the need to balance this development with sustainable natural resources management, equitable, and inclusive growth. Namely, the national target of achieving 70% forest cover is echoed in all national policy documents that relate to natural resources management and highlight the importance that the Government place on recovery and sustainable management of its forest resource base.

As the NRS is a key document to support the Forestry Strategy 2020, it will support important sector targets as follows:

- To improve quality of existing forested area, by naturally regenerating up to 6 million ha and planting trees up to 500,000 ha in temporarily unstocked forest areas as an integral part of a rural livelihood support system encompassing stable water supplies and prevention of natural disasters.
- To provide a sustainable flow of forest products for domestic consumption and to generate household income through sale and export, thus contributing to livelihood improvement, fiscal revenue and foreign exchange earnings whilst increasing direct and indirect employment.
- To preserve the many species and unique habitats, which are, for different reasons, threatened both within the country and elsewhere.
- To conserve environment including protection of soil, conservation of watershed and climate.

The NRS will further contribute to the NDC, which also specifies the two main activities that act as implementation measures for the Forestry Strategy to 2020 are to increase and maintain forest cover to 70%, and achieve sustainable community forest management, promote agriculture and forestry, and alleviate poverty. If these activities are implemented effectively, a forest cover of 70% (16.58m ha) will be achieved, along with 500,000 ha of planted forests, and forests will be sustainably managed by 2020. If so, Lao forests may be able to remove 60,000-69,000 kilotons of carbon dioxide emissions (ktCO₂e) by 2020.

Additional work is still required to implement the NRS and scale up lessons from the ER-Program nationally. Perspectives on REDD+ strategy options are outlined in detail under Component 2b.

2.1 Assessment of Land Use, Land Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance

2.1.1 Criteria 11: Assessment and analysis

A comprehensive analysis and assessment of land use change, deforestation and forest degradation has been conducted in Lao PDR over time. Analysis of satellite imagery provides a summary of the trends of the changes on forests and forest land. It demonstrates that in 2015, of the country's total land area of 23 million hectares (ha), forest cover accounted for 58.0%. Compared to the forest cover estimated at around 70% in the mid-1960s, the country has lost significant forest cover. Changes in land use have been analyzed using the FIPD forest cover maps, which were developed from analysis of multi-temporal satellite imagery.

In 2015, of the country's total land area of 23 million hectares (ha), forests accounted for around 58 percent, compared to around 70 percent forest cover estimated in the mid-1960s. In the past ten years, land cover data based on the Lao Forest Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD) forest type maps, shows that the net deforestation has been at around 3.1% (approx. 735,000 ha), while during the same period, agricultural land expanded by approximately 2.1% (approx. 500,000 ha, not including shifting cultivation). Another significant change is the increase in tree plantations (mostly rubber) ⁷from 25,000 ha in 2005 to 142,000 ha in 2015.[1] Water bodies have increased, from 286,000 ha in 2005 to 360,000 ha in 2015, largely due to new hydropower reservoirs.

In addition to the national level analysis of drivers and agents of deforestation and forest degradation, comprehensive analysis was carried out in the six northern provinces in the ER-Program and the results are outlined in detail in the respective PRAPs. But key statistics show that the annual gross deforestation and forest degradation in the ER-Program area in 2005-2015 was ; approximately 40% of the national deforestation and degradation.

Furthermore, forest degradation, which includes decreases in tree stocking, changes in species composition, size structure, loss of wildlife and plant habitats, and declines in wildlife and plant population, is as concerning as deforestation. There are no direct measurements for monitoring degradation. Degradation is largely (but not exclusively) associated with rotational shifting cultivation and is regarded as areas that if left undisturbed for sufficient periods could return into forest. These areas account for approximately 6.1 million ha, or roughly a quarter of the national land cover, as of 2015. The Northern part of the country where the ER-Program is located contains nearly half of such lands within the whole country. This rapid change in land use over the past two decades, was driven mainly by demand for agricultural products, hydropower, and minerals from the dynamic South East region.

In the forestry and agriculture sector demand is increasing for growing commercial trees such as teak, eucalyptus, agar wood and rubber as well as a wide range of cash crops. In addition to conversion of forest to cash crops and commercial tree plantation, a steady fragmentation of forest blocks and decline in the average growing stock within residual forest is also occurring, both reducing carbon stock and negatively impacting biodiversity through the loss of connectivity that promotes species migration and dispersal.

Analysis of land tenure and land use rights as part of the analysis of land use land tenure and governance has been done on the national level by the REDD+ Technical Working Groups on land issues and on policy and legal issues. More detailed information on land tenure patterns has been collected from the six provinces for the ER-Program design.

The Forestry Law defines tenure rights and management responsibilities within forests. Natural forest and forestland are considered property of the national community, with central management authority vested in the State and ownership rights granted over planted forests to duly recognized individuals and

⁷ Many believe that rubber plantations are under-estimated. This discrepancy is due to the challenge of distinguishing young rubber plantations from regenerating vegetation, especially in hilly regions in the North.

organizations. There are a wide range of forest resource tenure rights, including state property; communal rights that may be shared by members of the community (Village Use Forests, both inside and outside of production and designated forest areas); private rights assigned to individuals, corporate bodies and non-profit organizations; and open access on “uncategorized forests.”

As a result, several different stakeholders may have rights and interests, and consequently different incentives to invest in long-term sustainable management of land and resources. Many ethnic groups often do not hold registered title and enforceable rights over the land they manage. Furthermore, issues such as overlapping land allocation, conflicts in land use, and unclear boundaries in land allocation on the ground presents additional challenges. Efforts are made through the NRS and proposed interventions in the ER-Program area, amongst other programs, to facilitate security of tenure (including customary ownership) through several activities to include interventions on integrated land use planning, land use planning at the village level, land allocation and registration, village forest management planning and agreements, etc.

2.1.2 Criteria 12: Prioritization of direct and indirect drivers/barriers to carbon stock enhancement

Prioritization - Direct and indirect drivers have been identified as part of the NRS and in the draft ER-PD. The NRS summarizes 12 drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and their underlying causes that were discussed with all stakeholders. These drivers are classified into five categories: 1) Expansion of agriculture land into the forests, 2) Conversion of forest land for infrastructure development and mining (including resettlement, mining, hydro-power, urban expansion), 3) Forest degradation from unsustainable timber harvesting and NTFP collection, 4) Shifting cultivation and forest fires, and 5) Conversion of natural forest to commercial tree plantation areas. The arrangement of these five categories of drivers (programs) was based on the results from numerous consultation meetings, such as from the meetings between the TWGs and relevant stakeholders at central level and the meetings of the NRTF. Specifically, it could be summarized that the first two categories are drivers of deforestation whereas the remaining three categories are drivers of forest degradation.

The detailed analysis of drivers and agents of deforestation and forest degradation identified in the six ER-Program provinces are categorized as agricultural expansion – further separated into 1) permanent agriculture including agricultural and tree crops (mainly rubber), 2) shifting cultivation, 3) infrastructure development, and 4) unsustainable timber harvesting.

Table 2-1: Indirect and direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Activity	Indirect underlying	Direct
Forest degradation	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity Poverty (Lao PDR is an LDC) Population growth Shift in rural livelihoods from subsistence-based to market-based Limited trade/market access for non-shifting agroforestry and fruiting crop commodities Displacement of subsistence agricultural plots into natural forests Food security requirements of rural population at risk Issues of land tenure and forest access insecurity	Pioneering shifting cultivation for expansion of agricultural area
	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity High international demand for timber Quotas allowed for salvage logging alongside infrastructure projects etc.	Legal and illegal selective logging
Deforestation	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity International demand for agricultural crops as food and other inputs incomplete land use zoning and titling	Concessions and contract farms converting forests (or once shifting cultivation sites) into agricultural farm areas
	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity International demand for agricultural crops as inputs (feed, paper, rubber etc.) and national development strategies in support	Concessions and contract farms converting forests (or once shifting cultivation sites) into commercial tree plantations
	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity International demand for minerals and national development strategies in support	Mining projects converting forests
	Weak governance, limited resources and institutional capacity International demand for electricity and national development strategies in support	Hydro Infrastructure converting forests

(Source: ER-PIN)

Within rural Lao landscapes, the greatest pressure on forests comes from agricultural expansion. Government economic development strategies have been promoting agricultural concessions and commercial production of cash crops, such as coffee, sugar cane, bananas, and maize, as well as expanding livestock production. Commercial agriculture is being promoted through both concessions and contract farming (smallholder out-grower schemes). In many areas, as agricultural land is converted to such commercial agricultural uses, then villagers may encroach on forest areas for their own subsistence agriculture and create new pioneering shifting cultivation.

A related challenge is the lack of clarity on the ground as planned and authorized land use, i.e., to what lands have been classified as forest lands, and what lands have been allocated for other purposes. A draft National Land Use Master Plan is currently under discussion. In addition, in August 2014, the

National Assembly requested that Government undertake a re-delineation of the three forest categories (national production, protection, and conservation forest areas), to clarify and rationalize land use plans.

Weak governance, limited institutional and human resource capacity, and incomplete land use planning and titling are identified as underlying drivers (causes) behind all the direct drivers. Poverty and associated issues of food security, forest and land tenure security are also important underlying drivers. What significantly adds to the complexity of the issue are the cross-border nature of some of the key drivers; notably, the regional demand for timber, agricultural products, minerals and energy.

2.1.3 Criteria 13: Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities

The NRS interventions are proposed based on the outcomes of the assessment of the drivers, barriers and broad consultation through the SESA process. The multi-pronged analysis of deforestation and degradation drivers and agents has clearly shaped the prioritization of intervention options. The Draft NRS once finalized, will be the official government document for guiding REDD+ implementation including sustainable forest management, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in the country. It aims to improve the quality and extent of forests nationwide to provide economic, social, and environmental benefits. The NRS vision encourages all stakeholders, including households, communities, and the business sector, to be active in strategy implementation to resolve deforestation and degradation. The State will provide guidance for appropriate land use and conservation of forest resources, with the goal of increasing forest cover.

Barriers to addressing drivers are complexly interlinked with many of the underlying causes, particularly those underlying causes associated with institutional and policy contexts. The first major aspect regarding barriers to REDD+ is related to the economic growth imperative. National and provincial policies sometimes tend to be at odds. For instance, various provincial targets promote cash crops for export; other policies aim to strengthen business partnerships with Vietnamese and Chinese companies in the agricultural sector. While these policies are important for the country to meet its development targets and support the national and provincial economies, the important function of forest ecosystems tends to be overlooked.

The second broad barrier is weak inter-sectoral coordination and monitoring of plans and competing land uses (agriculture, rubber, mining, hydropower among others), which are managed under different provincial agencies including the Department of Energy and Mining, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Department of Transport. While each department may undertake planning processes, cross-sectoral and spatial planning is often weak, and results in overlapping plans on the ground. To date, efforts to encourage integrated spatial planning at provincial level have not yet been very successful. Without a strong culture of monitoring policy, plans and projects, and periodically updating them, many plans have gone unimplemented or ignored, which ultimately undermine the rationale for planning.

The third major issue relates to forest law enforcement. While the policy, legal, and regulatory framework is adequate for managing the country's forest resources, challenges with implementation and enforcement mean that the situation on the ground is generally quite different from what is planned. This situation is not unique to the forest sector – rather the country faces the challenge of strengthening and enforcing the “rule of law”.

Generally, institutional financial capacity is a significant barrier to effectiveness in policy and regulatory enforcement. However, during the past decade, key government departments such as the Department of Forest Inspection (DOFI) have received support for operations and capacity building from a growing number of development partners. In 2016, DOFI received major political support to improve control of logging, when Prime Minister's Order (PMO) No. 15 was issued, restricting international trade in logs and unfinished timber, and providing increasing support for control of illegal logging. Since PMO No. 15 was issued, prosecutions for forest crime and corruption have increased, and exports of logs and timber to neighboring countries have dramatically decreased.

The strategy specifically aims to reduce carbon emission by increasing sustainable management of forests and reducing the effects of deforestation and forest degradation across the country. The direct link exists between the proposed REDD+ strategies and activities. The NRS specifies objectives for the

development of the forestry sector, policies, programs, and sub-programs/ strategic interventions (including a total of five programs and 23 Strategic Interventions) with ideas of grouping strategic interventions under: 1) capacity enhancement and dissemination of policy, legal, 2) formulation and improvement of the planning (processes), 3) implementation of plans, and 4) improvement and implementation of monitoring systems. Each program has assigned key stakeholders to lead in coordination and implementation. To address these causes effectively, they have been grouped into programs according to the sectors in charge, as follows:

- Program 1: Development of sustainable agriculture in coordination with forest protection
- Program 2: Infrastructure and mining development including resettlement and urban expansion in coordination with forest protection
- Program 3: Sustainable timber harvesting and forest management (wood and forest products)
- Program 4: Turning pioneering shifting cultivation to sedentary cultivation, controlling forest fires and forest restoration (carbon stock enhancement)
- Program 5: Development of sustainable commercial tree plantations.

The aim of the first two programs is to not to stop agricultural, infrastructure and mining development, which are important to national socio-economic development. The aim is rather reduce – and if possible prevent -- deforestation, by ensuring compliance and enforcement of the national policies, laws, and regulations, to prevent encroachment of these other development activities onto forest land. The development of more sustainable agriculture also aims to provide livelihood development alternatives for those people who currently rely upon the forests.

2.1.4 Criteria 14: Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance

The Government is continuing to address land issues through multiple measures including policy reviews and regulatory reforms. This effort is, in part, a recognition of the critical importance of land tenure security for the success of REDD+ and other climate change response strategies. The Party's Central Committee (Politburo) issued a Land Policy in August 2017. Revision of the Land Law is progressing and expected to be submitted to the National Assembly in late 2018. The new policy and legislation are intended to address issues of communal land tenure (including village forests), land titling, concessions, compensation, and other urgent issues affecting national development.

The Government implemented two phases of the Land Titling Projects during 1997-2011, with International Development Association (IDA) funds from the World Bank and Australian Aid (AusAID) grants for technical assistance. The two projects limited the scope of land titling in urban and peri-urban areas in nine provinces in the Southern, Central and Northern regions. By the end of 2011, a total of about 800,000 parcels of land titles were issued, including 750,000 parcels of individuals and juristic entities and 50,000 parcels of state organizations. Thereafter, land titling has slowed down due to government's limited budget. Under the Seven National Socio-Economic Development Plan (7th NESDP) during 2011-2015, the Department of Land Administration (DOLA) under MONRE was able to issue only 190,000 titles during the period of 7th NESDP and total cumulative of 990,000 million by 2015.

The issue of communal land titling has become very important, as certain ethnic groups prefer to manage their land as a community, rather than as individual households. The issue is also pertinent with respect to safeguarding that land remains with the community, rather than being allocated to investors. Communities vary in their practices but may assign individual agricultural plots to households on a rotational basis, but then manage their village forests, grazing lands, and other communal use areas together. In many areas, the village forests are currently "uncategorized forests," which are the forest areas most severely affected by land use conversion pressures, and thus a high priority to bring under stronger protection. As work is ongoing now to develop village forestry, many argue that it is vital to go beyond merely registering village forests to acquiring communal land titles.

This approach has been piloted in a few areas, i.e., for communities resettled from the Nam Theun II hydropower dam.

Numerous different working groups have been discussing these issues, including the Land Issues Sub-Sector Working Group (LISSWG), which is underneath the Natural Resources and Environment Sector Working Group (NRE SWG). The latter reports to the annual Government-donor Round Table meeting.

Forest Law, Policy, and Governance Issues. The R-PP had outlined an institutional framework for the national REDD+ program, with the NRTF to report to the high-level inter-ministerial forum, the National Environmental Committee (NEC). Due to recent changes of Government's policy, the NRTF and MAF report directly to Prime Minister through the cabinet monthly meeting usually attended and chaired by the Prime Minister or his representative. REDD+ issues have already been incorporated into key policy and strategies documents, such as:

- Lao's Intended Nationally-Determined Contribution (INDC) to climate change;
- the Eighth National Socio-economic Development Plan (8th NSEDP, 2016-2020);
- MONRE's National Biodiversity Action Plan, 2016-2025;
- MONRE's Vision Toward 2030: Natural Resources and Environment Strategy, 2016-2025.
- the draft revised Forest Law, which is expected to be submitted in 2018 for National Assembly approval after the revised Land Law is approved, and when the REDD+ process and implementation arrangement have been finalized.

Since the issuance of Prime Ministerial Decree No. 15 (PMO 15) in 2016, the current administration has been taking tough measures to increase forest law enforcement, through its prohibition of exports of logs and unfinished timber, increased road checks of vehicles, seizures of illegal timber and equipment used in illegal logging, and closure of more than 1000 illegal furniture businesses and twenty illegal sawmills. Relevant ministries, such as MAF, MONRE, and Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC) are each developing their own plans for implementation of this decree. Research by Forest Trends note that the volume of logs and timber imported into Vietnam and China have decreased by almost 75 percent following PMO 15.

2.1.5 Criteria 15: Implications for forest law and policy

In the past few decades, the Government has worked very hard to improve management of the forest sector, including REDD+ policy and strategy issues. Work will begin in 2018 on an updating of the National Forest Strategy, to cover the strategy through 2025, with a vision to 2030. DOF aims to get this strategy approved by mid-2019. As indicated, the REDD+ Strategy has been designed to fit within the updated larger national Forest Strategy. Once these strategies are developed and adopted, then further work will be done on more specific action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, and governance.

Sub-component 2A Self-Assessment Results

Overall assessment: Significant Progress Achieved. The updated assessment of land use change and deforestation drivers was very technically comprehensive, and used the recent (2015-2016) land cover map to inform the analysis. Drivers were analyzed and prioritized based on possible forest carbon stock restoration and enhancement. Drivers were also identified through three main approaches; namely 1) a land-use change analysis based on national wall-to-wall maps; 2) a spatial drivers' analysis (based on the global Hansen treeforest cover loss data and attribution of disturbances for changes), and 3) stakeholder consultations. Barriers and constraints to addressing drivers were well developed in the National REDD+ Strategy development process. The strategy contains a legal action plan, to address legal gaps and inconsistencies, but other action plans will need to be developed. The Government of Lao PDR considers REDD+ important for sustainable forest management, and has incorporated new Articles on REDD+ in the draft revised Forest Law.

Table 2-2: Sub-component 2a self-assessment results

2: REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION	Core team	TWG	Overall rating
2a: Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance			
11. Assessment and Analyses			
12. Prioritization of driver/barriers to forest carbon stock enhancement			
13. Links between drivers/barriers and REDD+ activities			
14. Action plans to address natural resource rights, land tenure, governance			
15. Implications for forest law and policy			

Additional work

- Finalizing and endorsing the NRS are important milestones that the government targets to achieve by the end of March 2018
- After the NRS is approved, then work will be done to develop on a national-level REDD+ Action Plan for its implementation

2.2 Sub Component 2B: REDD+ Strategy Options

2.2.1 Criteria 16: Selection and prioritization of strategy options

The NRS is earmarked to be finalized by the end of March 2018. The strategy has been prepared in the Lao language and a draft English translation version is also available. Stakeholder consultations were held with various stakeholder groups, between October and December 2017, to refine the elements of the NRS. Meetings usually were in Lao with English translation for international consultants and experts.

At their meeting on 28 December 2017, the NRTF has endorsed the draft strategy acknowledging the extensive stakeholder consultation process and identification of the priority response options to the drivers and barriers to REDD+. REDD+ strategy options were identified in the SESA consultations and in TWG analytical work, with a focus on addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.

Due to the very consultative process followed, and the engagement of the six REDD+ Technical Working Groups, the National REDD+ Strategy has been prepared in Lao, and agreed by Lao stakeholders, resulting in high national ownership of the NRS. Various stakeholder groups and sectors broadly agree that the strategy options are feasible for implementation. The feasibility of the strategy options will need to be underpinned by in-depth economic analysis and scale emissions reduction potential. The DoF will review the NRS before submitting it to the Minister in February 2018, for approval before the end of March 2018.

2.2.2 Criteria 17: Feasibility Assessment

In preparing for the feasibility assessment of the strategy options, the government will consider several aspects such as the ease of implementation, urgency, capacity needs and existing financial support and additional finance required. Further assessment of the strategy options will be undertaken, drawing from the approach used in developing the ER-Program for the six northern provinces. In line with the NDC, the feasibility assessment will how to support the government's plan for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions in the forestry sector noting that the government is seeking international financing of USD 220 million and USD 709 million until 2030 for the agricultural sector-related adaption measures.

The financing of both the ensuing National REDD+ Program interventions and ER-Program will rely on national, provincial and international sources. A comprehensive financial and economic assessment has been carried to determine the cost to cover implement the ER-Program and this estimate at USD 135.45 million. The government plans to undertake similar analysis for strategy options based on strategic interventions (also referred to as Policies and Measures, or PAMs) correspond directly to the five identified clusters of drivers as outlined in the table below as follows:

Table 2-3: Interventions to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

	Proposed interventions	Driver(s)
1	Reduce deforestation from development and expansion of agriculture	Agricultural expansion into forests
2	Reduction of deforestation from infrastructure development, resettlement, urban expansion, and mining	Conversion of forest land for infrastructure development and mining
3	Sustainable forest management	Forest degradation from unsustainable logging and NTFP collection
4	Management of tree plantation development and forest rehabilitation	Conversion of natural forest to unsustainably-managed tree plantations
5	Management of shifting cultivation and forest fires	Forest degradation from shifting cultivation and forest fires

2.2.3 Criteria 18: Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies

The NRS will contribute to the broader economic development agenda noting that the importance of forest resources and its sustainable management are enshrined in the country’s highest-level policies, including the NSEDP the Green Growth Strategy under drafting, the Central Party’s Resolution on Land (2017), the Forestry Strategy 2020, as well as in Lao PDR’s NDC. The design of the ER-Program indicates how the proposed interventions lay the foundation for the implementation of sustainable land use and develop the enabling conditions to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in the key sectors, namely the agriculture and forestry sectors, but also in other land use sectors, such as infrastructure development. The NRS aims to mainstream REDD+ into the national and province level socioeconomic development planning and designing of policies and regulations that address the key drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and building capacity for its implementation. Improved law enforcement and planning activities will be achieved by establishing and institutionalizing national- and province-level monitoring systems. Strengthening of institutional capacities to monitor and sanction forest violations (including legal and illegal logging and infrastructure development investments) will improve enforcement of existing laws by national, province and district level authorities. For instance, as indicated earlier, Lao PDR is currently engaged in negotiation of a FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreement with the EU, to which the NRS and the ER-PD are closely linked.

While the government of Lao PDR is fully committed to implementing the ER-Program and the broader national REDD+ framework, existing challenges will need addressing to ensure REDD+ is successful. Such challenges include the improvement in cross-sectoral and vertical coordination among sectors and government levels (i.e. central to local), and capacity building to coherently implement and enforce regulations and programs among the different government levels.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: **Significant Progress Achieved.** The National REDD+ Strategy has been drafted through wide stakeholder consultation and input. The development of the strategy was a participatory, technical and rational process that identified and selected strategy interventions using multi-criteria analysis and review of underlying drivers to addressing deforestation drivers as well as appropriate policies and measures needed. Due to high national ownership of the NRS, stakeholders agree that significant progress has been made. They recognize, nonetheless, that further work will be needed to develop action plans to implement the NRS.

Table 2-4: Sub-component 2B self-assessment results

2: REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION	Core Team	TWG	Overall rating
2b: REDD+ Strategy Options			
16. Selection & prioritization of REDD+ strategy options			
17. Feasibility assessment			
18. Implications of strategy options on existing sectoral policies			

Additional work

- Although the NRS has set the vision and objectives of the National REDD+ Program, development of relevant action plans and broad economic analysis remain outstanding.
- Analysis of NRS financing options once national action plans have been developed.
- Capacity building for mainstreaming REDD+ into provincial economic development plans

2.3 Sub-Component 2C: Implementation Framework

Progress and major achievements

The implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy will be guided by relevant legislation and regulations, including some currently under revision. The main tools for guiding implementation will be the REDD+ Action Plans, including both a National REDD+ Action Plan (to be developed under FCPF Additional Financing) and the six Provincial REDD+ Action Plans.

According to the R-PP, three main instruments to be used for REDD+ implementation in Lao PDR are institutions, fiscal measures and the regulatory framework. Together with qualified personnel, stakeholder participation and information management, these are some of the main elements of the REDD+ Implementation framework

Institutions. Current institutional arrangements for REDD+ -- consisting of the national and provincial REDD+ task forces, REDD+ Division and Provincial REDD+ Offices, and six REDD TWGs, dealing with various issues of REDD+ (refer to Section 2.1.1) to support DOF -- are strong institutions, which should be able to carry out the REDD+ implementation in Lao PDR going forward. Experience of changes and evaluation, as well as lessons learnt from demonstration REDD+ activities at sub-national level, have been considered in the current institutional arrangements for REDD+. Now that forestry issues are under the responsibility of one ministry, MAF, implementation is improved, but it will require strong coordination and support from other relevant ministries and sectors.

Fiscal Measures. The DOF REDD+ Division, with support from the DOF Financial Section, has institutional arrangements in place for financial management of the FCPF REDD+ Readiness Grant and other REDD+ Projects. Other work, such as establishment of a national REDD+ Fund and provincial funds, will be developed in 2018.

Regulatory Framework. The policy and legal review has already been discussed above. For adequate implementation of the National REDD+ Program and National REDD+ Strategy, certain implementing regulations may need to be developed. For example, regulations may be needed to clarify benefit-sharing arrangements, or financial modalities.

2.3.1 Criteria 19: Adoption and implementation of legislation/regulations

Adoption and implementation of legislation is expected to occur, but it is not clear yet. In the meantime, the government is currently revising the Land Law, Forestry Law, and Decree on the Forestry and Forest Resource Development Fund. The government recognizes that mitigation measures such as REDD+ are important components of national climate change response which need to be included in sectoral policies and regulations. For instances discussions are already underway on how the NRS can and will support the Forestry Strategy which is also expected to be updated. Considerations will be given to whether any additional legislation and regulations, such as a REDD+ Decree is necessary.

The Land Law (2003) is the principle legislative instrument governing the management, protection and use of land in Lao PDR. Article 3 of the Land Law reaffirms Article 17 of the Constitution, through which land is under the ownership of the national community, and the State is charged with the centralized and uniform management of land, including allocation. Land may be State land, State asset, public land asset or land for which 'ownership' or land use rights are held by individuals, communities or other organizations. Under the Land Law, all land is classified into a category for which boundaries must be determined. The category of land determines the scope of use, including allocation to the State, individuals or for lease, concessions or infrastructure development. The change of land from one land category to another can be made only if it is necessary to use the land for another purpose without

inflicting negative impact on the natural or social environment and must have the prior approval of the concerned management authorities.⁸

The Party Resolution on Land reaffirms the Government's ambition of restoring 70 % forest cover. Based on this Resolution, the Master Plan for national land allocation will act as the primary document, to classify all land area into the eight land categories, including agriculture and forestry lands under management by MAF. Such a Master Plan is assumed to have a major impact on land use, and therefore REDD+, and how the Master Plan will address any unresolved concerns regarding assignment of the administrative three forest categories and its overlap with village residential areas⁹ is still to be fully examined. This Master Plan is expected to strengthen forest protection, and particularly within the three administrative forest categories.

The government is yet to establish the processes for developing and enforcing of this Master Plan on the ground. For the successful implementation of REDD+, particularly the integrated spatial planning and land use planning related interventions including those proposed for the ER-Program, the government notes the importance of engaging in dialogue to ensure REDD+ objectives are mainstreamed in the process, and that actual local level land use planning should be agreed and implemented through participatory processes, applying the Master Plan as a reference document.

A process of examining the issue of benefit-sharing, to establish a framework that can be used by different REDD+ projects and programs, including the ER-Program is underway and supported by the additional funding. For instance, during the development of the ER-PD, the Benefit Sharing TWG examined the issue of carbon rights. The Constitution (2015) and Land Law (2003) stipulate that natural resources (i.e. understood to include forest carbon) belong to the national community (or population) and is managed by the State on its behalf. Under the Forestry Law (2007) it is stipulated that natural forests belong to the national community, and are managed by the State, whereas planted trees belong to the individuals or entities that plant them. The owner of the forests is the owner of the forest carbon contained within those forests.

Lao PDR is a signatory to several multilateral environmental agreements. Those specifically relevant to REDD+ include the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Other agreements include the ASEAN agreement on trans-boundary haze pollution (2002), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 2004), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (2010). Responsibility for reporting and communication on all these agreements lies with MoNRE, except CBD, CITES and ASEAN agreements, which are under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

These are important agreements that demonstrate and support Lao PDR's efforts to contribute and achieve its national climate change goals. In terms of climate change adaptation and mitigation, Lao PDR submitted its intended nationally-determined contribution (INDC), now NDC after signing the Paris Agreement, to the UNFCCC in September 2015 covering topics from emissions reductions to reforestation efforts and increased resilience. Lao PDR through its UNFCCC Focal Point at the Department of Climate Change, plans to submit its 3rd National Communication to the UNFCCC in 2018 and its 1st Biennial Update Report (BUR).

The government has taken bold steps as outlined under Criteria 16 in aspects of land tenure reform and law enforcement to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.

⁸ The authority involved in approving the land use conversion depends on the size of the land area involved.

⁹ This was issued by the National Assembly in 2014 as Notice 273 on the review/consideration, for endorsement, of the three forestry categories (Protection Forest, Conservation Forest and Production Forest).

2.3.2 Criteria 20: Guidelines for implementation

No specific REDD+ guidelines have been developed yet but this will be an important component during the development of national REDD+ action plans. In the interim, the six PRAPs for the ER-Program provide an important framework for developing implementation guidelines. As indicated, under the additional funding, the government plans to undertake a detailed capacity needs assessment within and across sectors responsible for implementing REDD+ followed by a capacity development plan.

Improving both national and subnational capacity for REDD+ implementation is a key priority for government. This capacity enhancement will take a multi-pronged approach and includes awareness raising and knowledge generation through direct and indirect engagement with stakeholders. More importantly, the government is creating the necessary enabling environment, which is demonstrated through early work in preparation of PRAPs, which are intended to be the operational frameworks for provincial institutions to mainstream REDD+ under business as usual.

2.3.3 Criteria 21: Benefit-sharing mechanism

The NRS has high-level directions for the REDD+ benefit-sharing framework. The timeframe for developing the benefit sharing framework is critical to the signing of the ERPA therefore the government will ensure this work is completed before June 2018. The government recognizes the fundamental principles relating to types of REDD+ benefits, beneficiary identification distribution, and these are described in detail in the NRS. The BS TWG agrees that benefit-sharing needs to be based on principles of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. Moreover, there is need to consider various rationales for the sharing of benefits, including legal and customary rights, emissions reductions, investments, and facilitation of REDD+ projects and programs. Benefit-sharing agreements will consider total benefits, both monetary and non-monetary in nature.

Potential beneficiaries include the following three types of **beneficiaries**: 1) rural forest-dependent communities (including non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups), 2) State bodies (at all levels), and 3) other stakeholders, such as private sector, civil society organizations, projects (by CSOs, private sector and development partners), and research institutions and will be subject to benefit sharing agreements based on the rationales listed below.

Furthermore, the benefit-sharing rationales¹⁰ to be employed in the NRS, and namely, in the ER-Program are: 1) legal rights, 2) emissions reductions (combined with 3) the pro-poor rationale), 4) investment (costs), and 5) facilitation rationales.

- **Legal Rights holders:** the national community, which is represented by the government to manage lands and natural resources including natural forest, trees, lands and soil and the rights to gain benefit from the sale of forest carbon, and those holding customary rights in these forests; for planted trees, the individuals or organizations who planted the trees, provided this planting has been authorized and recognized. The REDD+ TWGs agreed that benefit-sharing arrangements for REDD+ payments for performance do not need to rely upon carbon rights, as such, but can use other rationales, and thus legal definitions of “forest carbon rights” may not be required. The forest carbon rights, thus, are assumed to convey with the ownership of the forest or the trees.
- **Implementers (emissions reduction performers):** those who have reduced emissions through the use, protection and management of forests and forest resources. This rationale is also to be combined with the pro-poor rationale, i.e., benefit sharing additionally advocate that benefit sharing should be pro-poor, i.e., preferentially benefit

¹⁰ The Benefit-Sharing TWG considered six different rationales identified in CIFOR’s cross-national research on REDD+ and agreed that five of the six would be applicable in Lao PDR.

poorer households, to achieve broader development objectives and reduce or eradicate poverty, which is a particularly important issue for the ER-Program area.

- **Investors:** those directly investing capital and/or labor into REDD+ activities.
- **Facilitators:** those indirectly contributing to REDD+ implementation at all levels in a facilitation role.

The idea is that each specific REDD+ project or program would agree with its own stakeholders on an equitable benefit-sharing arrangement – for sharing of all benefits, both monetary and non-monetary. The Emissions Reduction-Program for six northern provinces, for example, will need to negotiate its own Benefit-Sharing Plan with its stakeholders. The arrangement may differ from that for other REDD+ projects or programs, such as some small REDD+ projects under development for the voluntary carbon market and the Voluntary Carbon Standard (VCS) certification, i.e., Xe Pian protected area in southern Lao PDR, and an agroforestry scheme in Bolikhamxay Province.

In terms of actual “**REDD+ Fund(s)**,” the Benefits-Sharing Technical Working Group (BS TWG) has reviewed three existing national fund models, i.e., the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF), the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), and the Forest and Forest Resources Development Fund (FFRDF). The FFRDF, EPF and PRF have been operating for several years and provide important lessons and potential windows for integrating REDD+ funds.

The FFRDF is used for sharing financial benefits from timber harvests on national production forest areas (PFAs). Prime Ministerial Decree No. 1 of 2012 increased the proportion of timber harvest revenues to go to local communities, but this decree has not yet been implemented due to a ban on timber harvesting in PFAs that has been in force since that time. The FFRDF is managed by the Department of Forestry, and is set up to provide payments to communities, as well as government entities. The Decree No. 38, concerning how the FFRDF is managed is currently under revision, and will include articles pertaining to REDD+.

The Environmental Protection Fund, which is managed by MONRE, provides funding to government entities, however, but not communities. It has provisions for accepting climate change funding. The Poverty Reduction Fund primarily provides support to infrastructure and targets the poorest districts in the country.

The idea is that a REDD+ Fund account could be established as a sub-account, or funding window, under an existing fund, and then funds could be shared with, or used to support activities of, provincial, district, and village-level beneficiaries. Then, as needed, bank accounts could be established for REDD+ funds at the provincial, district, and/or village levels.

2.3.4 Criteria 22: National REDD+ registry and system for monitoring activities

To date, only preliminary discussions have been held on the National REDD+ (Carbon) Registry system. In the long run, Lao PDR would like to develop its own system. In the near term, however, it may make use of existing registries, i.e., the World Bank system for the ER-PD program, and VCS system for certain voluntary REDD+ projects.

In developing the implementation framework, the government will also prepare a system for monitoring and reporting on REDD+ activities. Wherever possible, existing systems of monitoring will be used to gain information and assess, to reduce transaction costs in monitoring REDD+ activities. The government already has systems in place for monitoring and reporting of program implementation such as departmental quarterly, semi and annual reports. Specific programs are requirement to have monitoring and evaluation demonstrating contribution to the NSEDPs.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: Further development required. To date, no specific REDD+ legislation or implementing regulations are being prepared by the Government of Laos. Articles on REDD+ have, however, been drafted for the revision of the Forestry Law. The legal frameworks review has shown that some laws could potentially be used within the context of REDD+. In the future, specific legal guidance may be needed on selected issues, such as benefit-sharing. Initial work to design the National REDD+ registry and system monitoring activities has been started, but the design work needs to be completed and put into implementation.

Table 2-5: Sub-component 2C self-assessment results

2: REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION	Core team	TWG	Overall rating
2c: Implementation Framework			
19. Adoption and implementation of legislation / regulations		not rated	
20. Guidelines for implementation		not rated	
21. Benefit-sharing mechanism			
22. National REDD+ registry & system monitoring REDD+ activities			

Additional work

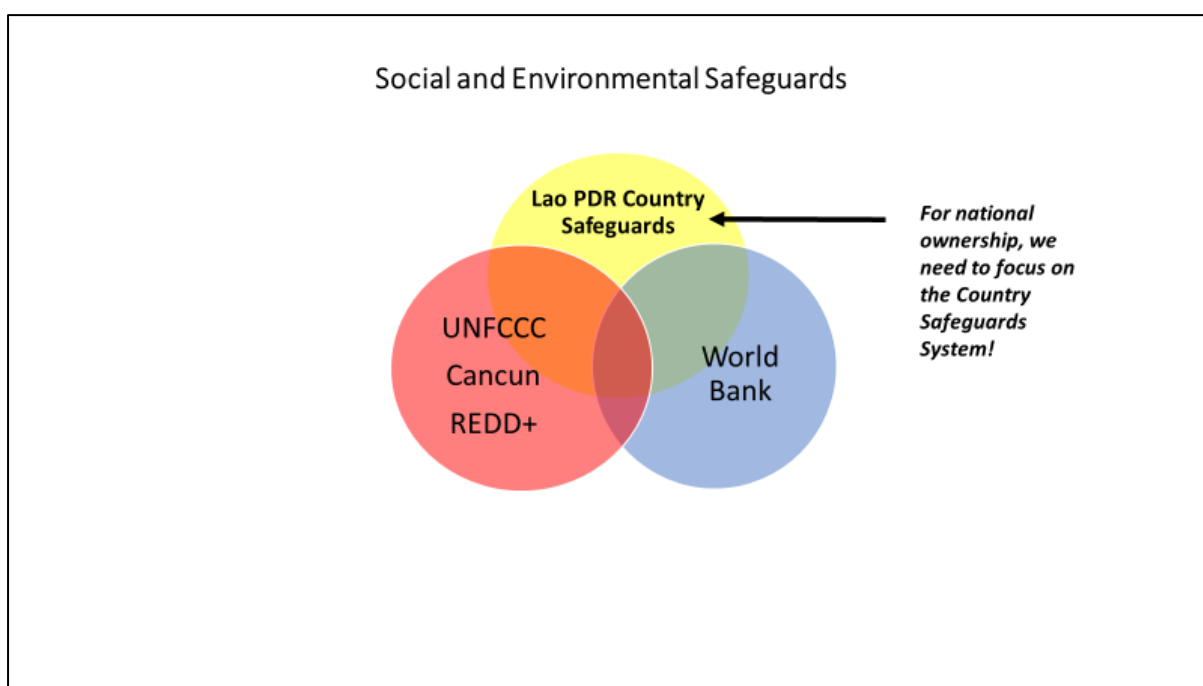
- Determining the implications of the NRS on sector policies, laws and regulations and strategic ways to mainstream REDD+
- Determining the interface between the NRS and Forestry Strategy
- Agreeing upon suitable benefit sharing mechanisms for REDD+
- Preparation of implementation guidelines and monitoring system for REDD+ activities

2.4 Sub-Component 2D: Social and Environmental Impacts

Lao PDR has its own existing national policies, laws, regulations, and institutions that address environmental and social safeguards in forestry operations and development activities. This national policy and legal framework, or Country Safeguards System, specifies how potential environmental and social harm (negative impacts) will be avoided, minimized, and/or mitigated, and how potential positive impacts can be promoted.

In working on safeguard issues, sometimes confusion has arisen among national stakeholders, who mistakenly think that safeguards are just conditionalities, or requirements, of the donor and/or international community. To avoid such confusion, thus, it has been important to stress that the UNFCCC REDD+ (Cancun) safeguards and the World Bank safeguards, or Operational Policies and Basic Procedures, complement and support the national policies, laws, and regulations Figure 5.

Figure 5: Complementarity of UNFCCC, World Bank and Lao PDR Safeguards



Some work on has been done to address REDD+ social and environmental safeguards at the national and international levels, including the UNFCCC Cancun decision and the World Bank requirements. In 2015, the CliPAD project commissioned an important desk review of national safeguards for REDD+, identifying national policies, measures, and gaps. Then the SESA process of stakeholder engagement and other analysis has built upon the CliPAD study, and upon relevant safeguards and FPIC experience with SUFORD-SU; similar work done by PAREDD and F-REDD; Village Focus International's (VFI) promotion of legal literacy; etc. The SESA process has examined not only drivers of deforestation and degradation, possible key strategic interventions, but also key social and environmental issues, risks, and impacts.

DOF is now working on the REDD+ national safeguard plans, i.e., the ESMF and Community Engagement Framework. The approach to safeguards aims to stress the complementarity among the government's own safeguards with those from the World Bank and the UNFCCC REDD+ safeguards. Thus, the emphasis is on national ownership of safeguards, with further support and reinforcement from those of the Bank and UNFCCC.

2.4.1 Criteria 23: Analysis of Social and Environmental Issues:

The SESA has been conducted in a participatory and consultative manner to engage stakeholders in the analysis of issues and options for the NRS, and consideration of possible social and environmental impacts of different strategy options. SESA assessed the likely or potential positive and negative impacts of Lao PDR's REDD+ strategy options and implementation framework and serves as the basis for drafting the ESMF, or safeguards plan, to generate recommendations for ensuring those options are more environmentally and socially sustainable. Between mid-2016 and mid-2017, considerable consultations and analytical work has been done to develop the SESA report. An interim report, or initial Scoping Report, was drafted based upon the discussions with the Safeguards and Stakeholder Participation Technical Working Group and a review of relevant background information and research. Then consultations were organized with 5 provinces, 6 districts, and 8 *kumban* (village cluster), with representatives of 66 villages, as well as with civil society, private sector, development partners, and senior forestry staff.

The initial consultations focused on discussion of drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, possible responses (strategic interventions), and associated environmental and social issues. SESA field consultations were done in central and southern Lao PDR. As part of PRAP preparations, separate teams conducted similar stakeholder consultations in northern Lao PDR for the ER-PD, carrying out the process in 6 provinces, all 50 districts of those 6 provinces, and 50 *kumban* (one per district), with representatives of 339 villages. The SESA work also incorporates a robust approach to “free, prior, and informed consent” (FPIC) in working with local communities and especially different ethnic groups and lays out best practices in its Community Engagement Framework (CEF). The SESA is not only an analytical study, but also a process of engaging with stakeholders to consider different issues in developing the national REDD+ program and strategy.

The key environmental and social issues *identified by stakeholders* in the SESA consultations and PRAP work can be grouped into the following twelve sets of issues. (A longer, more detailed list is provided in the SESA report.)

- a. Limited understanding and inadequacy of forest landscape level planning
- b. Inadequacy of participatory land-use planning and unclear land tenure
- c. Inadequate knowledge and confidence for changing poor farming practices
- d. Improper and excessive use of pesticides and herbicides
- e. Inadequate economic infrastructure
- f. Lack of production groups, associations, or cooperatives
- g. Inadequate capacity for sustainable management of forests
- h. Lack of institutional experience and inadequate framework for forest landscape management, such as for transparent decision-making, implementation, and monitoring of development
- i. Inadequacy of laws and regulations and weak control in implementing development projects
- j. Inadequacy of implementing institutions and programs
- k. Inadequacy of capable human resources and capacity building
- l. Inadequacy of facilities and financial resources

2.4.2 Criteria 24. REDD Strategy Design with Respect to Impacts:

Lao's social and environmental safeguards, i.e., its existing policies, laws, and regulations, are designed to incorporate specific issues as demonstrated by the thorough and comprehensive SESA study that was completed as part of the Readiness phase. The SESA report documents the process and results of a participatory approach for developing the National REDD+ Program and the National REDD+ Strategy. The SESA technical advisers have worked closely with the REDD+ Social and Environmental Safeguards and Stakeholder Participation (SES) Technical Working Group. Through a wide range of

consultations, they have supported greater participation of other TWGs and senior officers of relevant GOL agencies and a wide range of stakeholders throughout the process. As part of the SESA work, attention was focused on issues of land tenure security, customary land and rights, ethnic group and gender issues with respect to uses of forests and its resources. The draft NRS benefited from stakeholder prioritization of the drivers, possible interventions, and related environmental and social issues, because of the SESA assessment conducted. During the SESA development, other development partners provided support, especially on safeguard and benefit-sharing issues, through hosting of study tours in neighboring countries, and workshops, such as those supported by CIFOR and SNV.

By August 2017, the SESA analysis involved a participatory identification of potential environmental and social impacts of 18 possible interventions outlined in Table 2-6. This analysis was done with stakeholders, by the Safeguards and Stakeholder Participation Technical Working Group, technical advisers, and DOF staff.

Table 2-6: Possible interventions

1. Address gaps in policies, laws, and regulations
2. Revise the Land Law and Forest Law
3. Revise laws on concessions and investments
4. Revise the decree on the Forestry Fund
5. Re-delineate the three categories of state forests
6. Revise laws to allow commercial village forestry
7. Pass legislation governing REDD+ and other Payments for Environmental Services
8. Strengthen enforcement of policies, laws, and regulations
9. Improve monitoring of implementation
10. Institutionalize Forest Landscape Management and enhance Participatory Land Use Planning and tenure
11. Enhance research, development and extension services
12. Implement Participatory Sustainable Forest Management of state forest areas
13. Demonstrate models of forest plantation development
14. Organize sustainable village forestry
15. Develop clustered and re-tooled forest industries
16. Raise standards for private and village forest management
17. Develop ecotourism to increase benefits from forests
18. Raise public awareness on key forestry issues

For each of these potential impact, the draft SESA analysis identifies potential social and environmental impacts which are outlined in the draft SESA report.

Some of the interventions may subsequently result in either positive or negative impact depending on how they are implemented in practice. For example, by revising the Land Law and the Forest Law, villagers would be able to obtain a collective right to use a forest in the village. Good management of the forest will reduce or stop deforestation and degradation, biomass reduction, loss of biodiversity and habitat, and carbon emission. The National REDD+ Program is anticipated to have primarily positive environmental and social impacts.

Some interventions may trigger World Bank safeguards, or Operational Policies/Bank Procedures (OP/BPs), related to: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01); Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04); Forests (OP/BP 4.36); Pest Management (OP 4.09); Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11); Indigenous Peoples (this policy in Lao PDR refers to approximately one-third of the national population, or 41 of 49 ethnic groups) (OP/BP 4.10); Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12); and Gender and Development (OP/BP 4.20). It is unclear at this point whether or not the Safety of Dams (OP/BP 4.37) or International Waterways (OP/BP 4.37) safeguards would be triggered, given the possible work on irrigation schemes and the fact that the country's streams and rivers feed into an international waterway, the Mekong River.

Potential environmental and social impacts will be managed during implementation of the National REDD+ Strategy. First, the choice of strategic interventions aims to promote positive impacts and reduce negative impacts. Thus, the impacts are dealt with first, and foremost, in the NRS design phase, and also through following the guidance of the safeguard plans, i.e., the Environmental and Social Management Framework and Community Engagement Framework. The safeguard plans require screening of potential activities. Some activities will not be permitted, if they fall under a “negative checklist of prohibited activities.” Other activities may require re-design, to mitigate moderate or major environmental or social impacts. Second, the NRS implementation will involve monitoring and follow-up, to ensure that the safeguard plans are being followed and safeguards respected. Grievance redress mechanisms will provide for stakeholder feedback and resolution of any filed grievances, including any possible non-compliance with the safeguards, and any possible problems with the agreed benefit-sharing arrangements.

With respect to land and customary rights issues, the government is continuing with work on revising the Forestry and Land Laws aiming to improve forest landscape management and participatory land use planning, including re-delineation of the three types of forests and support to more village forests. All ethnic groups, women and men, in REDD+ program areas will be involved in the design and implementation of activities, and sharing of relevant benefits.

2.4.3 Criteria 25 Environment and Social Management Framework:

The government has just prepared an initial draft ESMF, which is anticipated to be finalized during the early part of 2018. The ESMF and Community Engagement Framework (CEF), will serve as a basis for addressing and mitigating potential environment and social risks and impacts associated with REDD+ implementation. The CEF is an integrated approach to addressing the World Bank’s policies on ethnic groups (Indigenous Peoples), resettlement and loss of access to resources, and gender. As part of the development of the ESMF, three sets of safeguards are reviewed: the country (Lao PDR) system of policies, laws, and measures; the UNFCCC “Cancun” REDD+ safeguards; and the World Bank Operational Policies and Basic Procedures that constitute environmental and social safeguards.

The ESMF and CEF would serve as the safeguards plans and would outline the procedures and best practices to be followed for assessing and managing potential environmental and social risks, enhancing potential benefits and mitigating potential negative impacts of specific policies, actions and projects during the implementation of the finally selected REDD+ strategy. These safeguards plans will provide guidance for both the national REDD+ strategy implementation, as well as the implementation of the ER-PD.

Mainstreaming safeguard measures in development programs across all sectors is part of the Government’s priorities. In acknowledging the value and importance of the support from the World Bank with regards to the ER-PD, and the ensuing obligation to meet relevant safeguards, the Government also recognizes that opportunities will arise for funding from other development partners. The budget presented in the ER-PD outlines several potential sources of funding: hence the ER-Program activities may take many forms, and may be implemented by a wide range of actors within the accounting area. However, the Government notes that the Carbon Fund Methodological Framework is more explicit in Criterion 24 requiring that “the ER Program meets the World Bank social and environmental safeguards” and no distinction is made on the basis of funding sources and implementation actors. The Government notes that this ambiguity is likely to raise issues of responsibility and supervision of safeguard compliance.

The ESMF will address how the environmental and social safeguards are managed. It will respond to the following World Bank operational policies and basic procedures: environmental assessment, natural habitats, forestry, pest management, cultural resources, and if relevant, dams.

The CEF is an integrated approach to the social safeguards, outlining best practice for working with all different ethnic groups, customary rights, and gender issues. The CEF approach has been used in other World Bank financed operations in Lao PDR. It addresses the requirements for an Ethnic Group Development Framework (Indigenous Peoples’ Policy), a resettlement and process frameworks

(Resettlement Policy), and also the Gender Policy. It provides a process for thorough engagement of all ethnic groups at the community level, and women as well as men. “Free, prior, and informed consent” is built into this process as an ongoing, iterative mechanism.

The government recognizes the importance of retaining ER Program consistency irrespective of the source of funding and implementation actors. Hence being a signatory to the UNFCCC and having a national legal framework, in addition to potential donor specific safeguard measures, the government will have a broad oversight on safeguards compliance and will also undertake necessary due diligence such that proposed intervention activities meet not only the World Bank safeguards, but also the national legal framework, other donor requirements, and UNFCCC safeguards. This approach fits with the government’s own laws on environmental protection and environmental assessment of projects.

Additional work remaining to be done include the development of the national Safeguards Information System (SIS), which will be part of the overall REDD+ Monitoring Systems, with data on the web platform. (This issue is discussed more under Sub-Component 4b, below.), finalizing the draft SESA report and the ESMF, consultations on the ESMF and public disclosure, institutional capacity needs assessment to help strengthen institutions responsible for the implementation and monitoring of safeguards at national and decentralized levels, support the effective coordination and institutional management arrangements for REDD+ safeguards, and safeguards capacity building for implementation of an ER-Program in 6 northern provinces and effective consultations and outreach on SESA/ESMF.

Results of self- assessment

Overall assessment: **Progressing well but further development required.** A detailed and thorough SESA process was conducted that involved consultations as well as validation exercises at sub-national and national levels. The REDD+ Strategy process has incorporated the outputs from SESA process. The SESA process was used to influence the development and prioritization of the strategy options, and where safeguard issues were found, mitigation actions have been identified. A draft ESMF has been produced, but requires further work and further discussion with probable implementation partners.

Table 2-7: Sub-Component 2D self-assessment results

2: REDD+ STRATEGY PREPARATION	Core team	TWG	Overall rating
2d: Social and Environmental Impacts			
23. Analysis of social and environmental safeguards issues			
24. REDD+ strategy design with respect to impacts			
25. Environmental and Social Management Framework			

Additional work

- Finalizing the draft ESMF including relevant consultations

Table 2-8: Component 2 work planned under the additional funding

REDD+ strategy and interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic and economic analysis of intervention potential with a specific focus on public-private investment options and potential to support the objectives of the Forestry Strategy.• Development of a cross-sector spatial analysis framework for land suitability analysis to support the land use and forestry planning and economic analysis of REDD+ interventions.• Broad national economic analysis of REDD+ Strategy Interventions options and prioritization (e.g. cost benefit analysis, investment returns, emissions reduction potential, social benefits and values)• National and sub-national cross sector knowledge sharing, consultation awareness raising and dissemination of REDD+ Strategy Intervention economic analysis results. (includes workshops and other knowledge products)• Capacity building and mainstreaming REDD+ at National and Sub-national level within and across key sectors (forestry, agriculture).

3 COMPONENT 3: REFERENCE EMISSIONS LEVEL/REFERENCE LEVEL

3.1.1 Criteria 26: Demonstration of methodology

Work has been ongoing to develop and demonstrate the methodology for the development of the REL. The FCPF REDD+ Readiness Project and its development partners, especially F-REDD, have been supporting the REL / MRV TWG. Along with other development partners, the project has supported the 2nd National Forest Inventory (NFI), including its field work begun in the 2015 dry season and concluded in the 2017 dry season. The NFI is providing important information for preparation of the national Reference Emission Level that Lao PDR submitted its first REL to the UNFCCC in January 2018.

This submission follows substantial work and key decisions on forest definition, land use and land cover analysis as well as pointed analysis of drivers and agents of deforestation and forest degradation. According to the Land Law (2003) and Forestry Law (2007), forest and forest resources in Lao PDR occur in lands that are designated by the Government as forest lands, and in areas outside forest lands, and includes both stocked and temporarily un-stocked forests.

The land and forest classification system of the country applies two levels of classification, namely, Level 1 consisting of seven classes including “current forests” and “potential forests” among others, and Level 2, which further classifies the “current forest” class under Level 1 into six natural and plantation classes. Lao PDR has a national definition of forests, for which a summary is shown in the Table below. This same definition is used in the construction of the REL at national level as well as for the ER-Program Accounting Area.

Table 3-1: Lao PDR forest definition

Items	Value
Diameter at Breast Height	Minimum of 10cm
Crown Density	Minimum of 20%
Area	Minimum of 0.5 ha

The REL work, including the facilities and equipment necessary for preparation of historical data and development of the forest information database system has been supported by Japan or other Programs operating at the national level. They include construction of the Forest Resource Information Center and installation of data servers, computers, remote sensing and GIS softwares based at the Forest Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD) of DOF, including equipment and software with capacity development. The database system, still in development, will include the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) needed for REDD+ MRV, monitoring of drivers/interventions and carbon registry. However, the database system will be broader in scope, as it will include other information needed for management and administration of the forest sector.

Other development partners contributed to the national-level REL work. German support through the CliPAD program (both Technical and Financial Cooperation) and the SUFORD program (both SUFORD-AF and SUFORD-SU) provided technical support to FIPD through mapping and inventory work in their Provinces and 41 Production Forest Areas respectively. They also provided important lessons and advice to the national level work. As part of its regional efforts, the USAID-supported Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests (LEAF) Program supported capacity building for the development of reference levels for REDD+ in Lao PDR through training workshops.

3.1.2 Criteria 27: Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstances

Substantial analytical work has been carried out to understand the options based on the hot spot analysis and historical land use and land cover data from 5-year period maps in relation to national circumstances, specifically the analytical work on agents and drivers of deforestation and forest degradation. Under DOF leadership, and with support from F-REDD, SUFORD-SU and FCPF, wall-to-wall land use, land use change and forestry maps for 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 were developed. The maps are being generated using 2010 as the bench mark map, and the maps for the other years

developed through applying a change detection method to maintain consistency of classification and interpretation. Through the course of this work, issues such as forest definition and stratification have been discussed thoroughly and agreed among the related Government agencies and the TWG for REL/MRV.

The forest definition and stratification were approved by DoF in January 2018. Based on this work and data from the 2nd National Forest Inventory (NFI) and development of country specific allometric equations for three major forest types, the forest carbon stock for the four different time points and its changes for three 5-years periods have been estimated. In addition, emissions from selective logging inside forest have been estimated by measurement of stumps as a part of NFI. Other important elements, e.g., reference period, pools, gasses, national circumstances, etc. have been examined and in principle agreed at REL/MRV TWG meeting for both UNFCCC and ER-Program.

Harmonization between the national REL and one for the ER-Program has been carefully considered. In principle, the two RELs use the same dataset, reference periods (2005-2015), methodologies, and were both prepared by the team in DOF. For example, given the large size of the proposed ER-Program Area, which is more than one-third of the total land area of the country, and to be consistent with the approach of the National REDD+ Program, the national land/forest maps will be used for identification of activity data, and the forest biomass data from the 2nd NFI will be used for identification of emission factors for the ER-Program Accounting Area.

3.1.3 Criteria 28: Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPPC guidance and guideline

The technical approach for the development of REL is following UNFCCC/IPCC guidelines taking into account national circumstances. The national REL has been constructed and has submitted to the UNFCCC¹¹. The DOF is preparing for the up-coming Technical Assessment of the UNFCCC with continued technical support mainly from JICA and FCPF. As mentioned above, the same data set is used for the REL of the Accounting Area of the Lao ER-Program.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: Significant Progress. A REL has been developed with support from JICA. It followed the UNFCCC/IPCC methodology framework using Forest Type Maps of 2005, 2010 and 2015. The REL result was very comprehensive, and the final report submitted to UNFCCC in early January 2018.

Table 3-2: Component 3: Self-assessment results

3: REFERENCE EMISSIONS LEVEL/ REFERENCE LEVELS	Core Team	TWG	Overall rating
3. Reference Emissions Level / Reference Levels			
26. Demonstration of methodology			
27. Use of historical data, and adjusted for national circumstance			
28. Technical feasibility of the methodological approach, and consistency with UNFCCC/IPCC guidance and guidelines			

¹¹ The submitted national REL and supporting documents can be downloaded from <<http://dof.maf.gov.la/en/publications/>>.

Additional work required

- Areas related to activity data: improvement of map classification (e.g. Mixed Deciduous (MD) and Regenerating Vegetation (RV), Upland Crop (UC) and Other Agriculture (OA))
- Areas related to emission factors: improvement of NFI design and sampling size, carbon stock of Regenerating Vegetation (RV), development of data aiming higher tier.
- Other thematic areas: inclusion of carbon pools and non-CO2 gasses currently not accounted for, measurement of emissions from forest degradation by selective logging.

Table 3-3: Component 3 work planned under the additional funding

Component 3: Reference Emission Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• updating of REL, and design of national MRV system• Procurement and updating of hardware and software including relevant training in spatial systems, data collection, updating and management in line IPPC and FCPF requirements (national and sub-national level starting with 6 provinces in the north and 2 others in the south)

4 COMPONENT 4: MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS

4.1 Sub-Component 4A: National Forest Monitoring System

4.1.1 *Criteria 29: Documentation of Monitoring Approach*

Lao PDR has a national definition of forest, which is used in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of forests. This definition is consistently used in the construction of the Reference Level as noted above.

This definition was used for the past two National Communications on Climate Change. It has been agreed to use this definition for the future national GHG inventory, starting with the Third National Communication, which the GoL plans to submit to the UNFCCC in early 2019.

Lao PDR initiated the development of its national Forest Type Maps (wall-to-wall maps of the entire territory) in the context of REDD+ around 2010. The government and key stakeholders first reviewed the land and forest classification system to be applied for the mapping. An important point was to ensure the classification system is in harmony with the land-use category definition of the IPCC, to maintain consistency between the REDD+ and GHG Inventory while meeting national needs for various applications.

Another issue was to determine how to categorize the temporarily un-stocked forests (“regenerating vegetation: RV”) and upland crop (UC) areas in the classification system. This issue reflects the unique situation of forests and forest use in the country, and, the prevalence of pioneering slash-burn and more stabilized shifting cultivation, and presence of vast areas of forest fallow. This land-use is seen throughout the country but is particularly characteristic of the hilly and mountainous Northern landscapes, including the ER-Program Accounting Area. In this region, a significant area is under forest fallow stages of shifting cultivation and regenerating through natural vegetative succession -- and thus “in” and “out” of temporarily un-stocked states.

Table 4-1: National level classification system with IPCC definition on land use categories

IPCC Definition	National level classification system		
	Level 1	Level 2	
Forest Land	Current Forest	Evergreen Forest	EG
		Mixed Deciduous Forest	MD
		Dry Dipterocarp Forest	DD
		Coniferous Forest	CF
		Mixed Coniferous and Broadleaved Forest	MCB
		Forest Plantation	P
	Potential Forest	Bamboo	B
		Regenerating Vegetation	RV
Grassland	Other Vegetated Areas	Savannah	SA
		Scrub	SR
		Grassland	G
Cropland	Cropland	Upland Crop	UC
		Rice Paddy	RP
		Other Agriculture	OA
		Agriculture Plantation	AP
Settlement	Settlement	Urban Areas	U
Other land	Other Land	Barren Land and Rock	BR
		Other Land	O
Wetland	Above-ground Water Source	River (Water)	W
		Wetland (Swamp)	SW

The Forest Type Maps (wall-to-wall maps) for year 2005, 2010 and 2015 were developed through consistent methods, and the forest cover change for the periods of 2005-2010 and 2010-2015 were

assessed with spatially-explicit observations of land use and land-use change, satisfying “Approach 3” of the IPCC¹².

Consistent with the methods applied for the REL, for the future, the activity data will be derived as the amounts of changes in areas that relate to emissions and removals. This analysis will be based on periodic wall-to-wall forest mapping. However, following the innovations in remote sensing technologies, use of various data, such as multi-temporal satellites, high resolution satellites, and freely available global dataset will be explored to create robust data.

Similarly, the emission factors will be developed consistent with the methods applied for the REL, by taking the differences between the carbon stocks among land and forest types. The data will be collected through the future NFI campaigns including recording of tree stumps for measuring the emissions from forest degradation by selective logging.

To ensure transparency, the data will be made accessible to the public (although with different levels of access rights, depending on the user) through the NFMS Web portal, which is currently under development.

4.1.2 Criteria 30: Demonstration of early system implementation

Lao PDR plans to conduct its first national MRV in 2019 with technical and financial support from JICA and FCPF. The areas for improvements summarized in Section 3.1.3 will be addressed, as applicable at this MRV.

As a stepwise development of NFMS, in addition to the supporting the MRV, Lao PDR has initiated discussions to extend the scope of NFMS, by developing functions to monitor the deforestation and forest degradation drivers, and the effectiveness of interventions. This extension will require both technical support for the development of robust monitoring methods (from technical to institutional aspects) and financial support for the purchasing and/or up-grading of monitoring equipment (e.g. satellite imagery, secured network system and various hardware and software).

Several projects have already been showing their interest to support the government. For example, F-REDD funded by JICA is planning to develop and pilot a near-real-time deforestation monitoring system to monitor the impact of major drivers, such as agriculture and infrastructure. ProFLEGT funded by GIZ has been piloting identification of illegal logging and forest clearing through remote-sensing in cooperation with the Joint Research Center of the European Union.

For the ER-Program, the land use and land cover maps were used to conduct design-based estimation of areas of Activity Data, and to assess the accuracy of the maps. The resulting information was also analyzed as a time series from 2000-2015, to better understand recent trends in land cover change in the ER-Program area, and to inform the development of the program strategy. The national program will maintain close consultation with the ER-Program in order to harmonize the methodologies and approaches, and to synergize the efforts.

4.1.3 Criteria 31: Institutional arrangements and capacities

The FIPD of DOF has been and will continue to be the national agency responsible for MRV and operationalization of NFMS. They have been increasing their remote sensing and field survey capacity with the technical and financial support from development partners and projects. With the current rapid innovations in remote sensing, GIS and IT technologies, the demand for sufficient number of competent engineers is increasing. The skills and knowledge of the experienced senior engineers need to systematically be passed on to the younger technicians. Also, a need is emerging for IT engineers who can manage and operate database systems that handle large and diverse range of digital data.

¹² GPG LULUCF, 2003/2006.

To periodically develop the activity data and emission factors for the MRV, continuous capacity building efforts are necessary. Development partners can continue to play an important role in systemizing the know-how, training on planning, development and analysis of data, and support the FIPD and DOF staff to catch-up with the globally-innovative technologies. Other development partners have also been working on building national capacity in FIPD and elsewhere, for work on REL and MRV issues:

- SUFORD-SU continues developing RELs and REDD+ monitoring systems for all its project target areas, i.e., 41 Production Forest Areas (PFAs) and 30 villages piloting village forestry. Monitoring systems are being developed for both emission reductions and all possible safeguards.
- The Protecting Forests for Ecosystem Services project (FIP additional financing for the Biodiversity Conservation Corridor (BCC) initiative, supported by the Asian Development Bank) has had discussions with DOF for a harmonized REL and MRV system development for their project areas, which will include water monitoring for downstream hydropower payments.
- Scientists on the Impacts of REDD (I-REDD) European research consortium project developed an MRV method for REDD+ in dynamic shifting cultivation landscapes of Laos.
- CliPAD conducted a REDD+ Priority Mapping exercise to identify high potential REDD+ areas across Lao PDR using the global MODIS Hansen dataset.
- The Faculty of Forestry at the National University of Laos (NUOL) has been involved and will be involved in research projects looking at forest cover monitoring and change analyses across Lao PDR with donors, such as Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation. They have also been assessing carbon content in different land use areas with the I-REDD project, and will look at monitoring socio-economic aspects in Northern Laos with the Kunming Institute of Botany.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: Progressing well, further development required. To date, the monitoring approach has been documented and there has been progress demonstration of early system implementation. Institutional arrangements are in place, and capacity building has been ongoing for quite some time. Developing a fully-functional National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) will still take some time, and work is planned for 2018-19. Consultations have been held and an MRV road map is in place. The REDD+ Registry is still in the planning stage, and will require further technical assistance support for design and implementation.

Table 4-2: Sub-Component 4A Self -assessment

4: MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS	Core Team	TWG	Overall rating
4a: National Forest Monitoring System			
29. Documentation of monitoring approach			
30. Demonstration of early system implementation			
31. Institutional arrangements and capacities			

Additional work required

- Step-wise development of NFMS to support transparent, robust and consistent monitoring of REDD+, particularly in the areas of forest monitoring and data management.
- Continued institutional capacity building at national-level and outreach to sub-national level

4.2 Sub-component 4B: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards

REDD+ implementation produces carbon benefits, and many other co-benefits including rural livelihood enhancement, conservation of biodiversity, and ecosystem services. REDD+ has the potential to influence improved governance and security of tenure for forest communities. Effective monitoring of these benefits would ensure that REDD+ implementation does not impede quality of the benefits. A web-based monitoring system is currently being designed to be capable of reporting how variables representing the benefits and safeguards are being addressed and respected during the implementation of REDD+ activities. Recognizing the high dependency on forest resources by forest dwellers, non- carbon aspects of REDD+ are highly prioritized in the Lao REDD+ readiness process.

Governance issues have been examined through a background study on forest governance and a forest governance multi-stakeholder self-assessment workshop conducted in 2014, using the PROFOR methodology. The Government has subsequently reorganized institutional mandates. It has issued decrees to strengthen forest governance, such as PMO 15. The Government has also begun negotiation with the European Union on a Voluntary Partnership Agreement pertaining to Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade (FLEGT).

4.2.1 Criteria 32: Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues:

The NRS, SESA report, and interventions in the draft ER-PD have identified non-carbon benefits relating to REDD+ implementation to include: improved livelihoods for forest communities, biodiversity conservation, improvement of forest governance, improved ecosystem services for people and the environment, and customary land tenure security especially for different ethnic groups and other vulnerable forest-dependent communities. As part of addressing environment and social issues, strategic options were developed for the SESA including land tenure, benefit sharing; community-based forest management; biodiversity and ecosystem management of forest and other land types, payments for ecosystems services, cross sectoral issues including agriculture and infrastructure; law enforcement, governance and institutional issues. Social and environmental risks and impacts of REDD+ strategy interventions have been thoroughly analyzed and detailed in the SESA document. An ESMF is currently being drafted and will serve as the basis for addressing social and environmental risks and impacts. In addition, the Community Engagement Framework already used in World bank projects in Lao PDR is being adapted, to serve as the best practice guidelines and mitigation tool, which would be combined the ESMF to address safeguards for REDD+ implementation.

4.2.2 Criteria 33: Monitoring Reporting and Information sharing:

Work on Lao PDR's REDD+ monitoring reporting, and information sharing modalities is planned for the coming year: the data management and registry system is under consideration. A data management system is already under development, and is intended to include a registry function, into the future. This registry is considered to be a part of the country's national carbon registry for all sectors (if and when available), to ensure integrity and consistency in the context of the NDC, Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHG-I), the National REDD+ Program, and with the domestic carbon market, if established into the future. In the context of the REDD+ credits under the ER-PA, a centralized registry management by a third party will be used to ensure that each ER unit is appropriately issued, serialized, transferred, retired, and/or cancelled; and ensure that ER are not issued, counted, or claimed by more than one entity.

The Forest Information Platform supported by the Forest Preservation Program of Japan and currently operated by DOF and FIPD, is currently restricted for use within a Local Area Network (LAN) for DOF and FIPD.

- Lao PDR's NFMS associated databases, as the basis for carbon accounting to manage data including Activity Data, Emission Factors, average annual emissions over the reference period, auxiliary data, background reports and metadata, among others;
- Data on REDD+ programs and projects including on project boundary, project entity, ER entity, project location, scope of REDD+ activities and carbon pools, reference level; and
- Monitoring data and results on REDD+ drivers and interventions, safeguards and non-carbon benefits, as applicable.

Currently, under the ER-Program, no confirmed commitments to, or ongoing activities have transferred ERs to any other GHG mitigation initiatives.¹³ In the future, the ER-Program is open, however, to the possibility of other initiatives that may be launched within the ER-Program area, which may include the transfer of ERs in their scope. The intention of the Government is to facilitate 'nesting' of such projects within the ER-Program, by, requiring as far as possible the application of a FREL/FRL and MRV that is consistent with that of the ER-Program. Such information is currently internally available to the Forest Inventory and Planning Division, and other units within DOF. Agreement must be reached on what data will be made publicly available on the web portal.

The current NFMS cannot be viewed by other stakeholders or the public. One of the UNFCCC requirements for national forest monitoring systems (and MRV) is "transparency." The dissemination of REDD+ related information through a Web-Portal has been discussed and planning for establishment of a Web-Portal for REDD+ in DoF is underway. FCPF is processing the procurement of software for developing the Web-Portal.

Specific components of REDD+ program implementation already have monitoring systems, and these are articulated in the SESA and ESMF.

As the government considers the national benefit-sharing framework, it will also undertake intensive assessment of how best to monitor the effectiveness of such a plan. Monitoring of benefit sharing has several important elements, including: i) monitoring of fund distribution with respect to rules and safeguard plans, ii) monitoring the use of proceeds against plans, and iii) monitoring of performance for the distribution of conditional performance-based benefits. For monitoring of funds distribution with respect to rules and safeguard plans, the specific rules and safeguards that pertain to the REDD+ will be institutionalized for the identified REDD+ fund (e.g. the FFRDF) potentially including provisions for independent third-party monitoring of funds distribution.

In Lao PDR, the development of information systems for multiple benefits, other impacts, governance, and safeguards is focusing on two issues. First, as part of its work on Knowledge Management, a

¹³ Outside the ER Program area, there are two REDD+ projects registered under the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) in Lao PDR:

- VCS Project ID 1684 "Mitigation of GHG: Rubber based agro-forestry system for sustainable development and poverty reduction in Pakkading, Bolikhamsay Province": The project has an area of 969.20ha, in Bolikhamsay province in Central Lao PDR, and expects to sequester approximately 1.1MtCO₂e during its 30-year project period from 2008-2037 (36,916 tCO₂e/year), and;
- VCS Project ID 1398 "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Carbon Enhancement in Xe Pian National Protected Area" (in Champasack province, in Southern Lao PDR). The Project Area has an area of 141,963 ha of the Xe Pian NPA, excluding the core parts of the NPA (of 51,892 ha), and is expected to sequester approximately 5.7MtCO₂e during its 30 year project period from 2014-2043 (64,981 tCO₂e/year).

national REDD+ web platform is being designed, which will make a wide range of REDD+-relevant information available to stakeholders and the public.

Second, as mentioned in the R-PP, Lao PDR plans to develop a REDD+ Safeguards Information System (SIS). Lao PDR needs to develop its own national Country Safeguards System and clarify how that will address the National REDD+ Program and ensure that it meets both the UNFCCC REDD+ Safeguards and the current World Bank Safeguards, or Operational Policies and Basic Procedures. This work will build upon a national safeguards gap analysis study already supported by CliPAD. For instance, options are being reviewed as to how a SIS database will be integrated into or linked to the NFMS database managed by the Department of Forestry's Forest Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD). A REDD+ web-portal is currently under design, and it is envisaged that relevant and appropriate data related to safeguards monitoring would be made available on this web-portal.

The SIS will be developed with support of the Additional Grant of the FCPF Readiness Fund and completed by early 2019. CliPAD plans to support development of the initial SIS reporting system on the UNFCCC REDD+ (Cancun) safeguards. More work will then be needed to incorporate reporting on the World Bank and national safeguards. But ideally the government would like to have one integrated Safeguard Information System, rather than separate monitoring and reporting systems for each set of safeguards.

4.2.3 Criteria 34: Institutional Arrangement and Capacity:

The SESA report has identified to need to enhance the institutional capacity of institutions responsible for implementing EIAs. Although capacity building of key government staff has been supported, especially through their participation in key international and regional REDD+ safeguards training workshops, institutional capacity needs assessment should be done with the aim of strengthen these institutions for effective delivery and monitoring of safeguards during program implementation. These knowledge management and capacity building activities are central to the successful development and implementation of the REDD+ program. Considerable capacity building of national colleagues is anticipated through their participation in these activities, especially for the relevant government staff in the national and provincial REDD+ offices, task forces, and technical working groups. The communication and outreach strategy, however, will also place emphasis on reaching a broad range of stakeholders, especially women and men at the local community level. However, it should be noted that a national level Safeguards and Stakeholder Technical Working Group was set up as mentioned in the SESA section. The composition includes: representatives of mass organizations and relevant government representatives. This Technical Working Group supervised the SESA process and provide quality assurance as well as facilitated the many consultations and outreach that took place. Through workshops at national and decentralized levels, they sensitized and enhance various institutions responsible for safeguards. The capacity of the TWG members was also enhanced in the process.

Additional remaining work to be done with additional financing include: the development of the SIS to be able to demonstrate how the Cancun seven safeguards principles will be addressed and reported to the UNFCCC, development of a web-based monitoring system to be able to monitor and report on implementation of safeguards, development of indicators for monitoring non-carbon benefits, consultations and awareness-raising on safeguard institutional and capacity development for the management of information systems.

Results of self-assessment

Overall assessment: Further development required. A forest governance self-assessment using the PROFOR methodology has been conducted, and Government has taken steps to improve governance. To date, there has been limited progress with developing a functional Safeguard Information System. Consultations have been held, and an MRV road map and SIS plan developed. The big challenge is to get the information system designed and operating, so that REDD+ information can be shared with key stakeholders and the general public.

Table 4-3 Sub-Component 4B Self-assessment

4: MONITORING SYSTEMS FOR FORESTS AND SAFEGUARDS	Core Team	TWG	Overall rating
4b: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards			
32. Identification of relevant non-carbon aspects, and social and environmental issues			
33. Monitoring, reporting, and information sharing			
34. Institutional arrangements and capacities			

Additional work required

- Further work on identification of non-carbon benefits
- Develop a registry system
- Development of the Safeguard Information System
- Further capacity development

Component 4 work planned under additional FCPF Readiness financing:

Component 4: Monitoring System for forests and safeguards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of national Safeguards Information System including procurement of hardware, training and roll out. Rolled out in two phases starting with the ER-Program provinces • Institutional Capacity building on NFMS, MRV, SIS

5 CONCLUSION

The government of Lao PDR believes that good progress has been made in the evolution of the national REDD+ Program. The results of the self-assessment reflect the complex nature of REDD+ and the challenges that the government faces. Over the past decade the government recognized the need to improve the effectiveness of institutional arrangements. Significant institutional adjustments made in 2016 between the MAF and MONRE reflect the government's commitment towards effective response to national economic development imperatives and climate change. The capacity and effectiveness of these institutions remains low, however, especially for effective decentralization of REDD+. Further development is still necessary and it is the rationale for allocating a large proportion of the additional funding to readiness organization and consultation.

Lao PDR has faced challenges in implementing national policies, legal and regulatory instruments largely due to lack of institutional coherence, and cross-sector coordination. As observed, international support to strengthening these aspects has been strong over the last decade, with extensive dialogue and effort to develop strategies, policies and regulations with strong capacity building at the national level. The REDD+ readiness process and support received since the submission of the R-PP, and the broader dialogue on climate change leading to the preparation of the country's FIP, NDC, the 8th NSEDP, a series of decrees and PMOs, (specifically PMO 15), has had a cumulative positive impact on governments' ability to progress quicker with developing the NRS. The goal now is to get the NRS approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Work to further develop the national strategy with continue, with preparation of the national implementation framework and action plans. As the national Forest Strategy 2020 is updated in 2018-19, and the 2007 Forestry Law is revised, some additional adjustments or updating of the NRS may occur.

The government also understands that REDD+ must provide positive social and environmental impacts to the communities, hence there is need to understand the potential negative impacts and establish risk mitigation measures. The SESA and ESMF address these issues, but the complex social-economic fabric in the country means these processes may take longer to finalize. Addressing issues of land tenure and access rights are at the core of developing the implementation framework, with considerable further work to be done. It is particularly critical that the ER-Program in the six northern provinces succeeds and provides lessons for the rest of the country. To support the ER-Program, the government is placing significant focus on preparing a long-term capacity development plan based on an extensive capacity needs assessment. The analytical work on drivers of deforestation and degradation highlights critical capacity gaps in both national and sub-national institutions in regulatory enforcement, policy implementation, and technical expertise.

The self-assessment reflects the views of key stakeholders: It is realistic and has given the government an opportunity to adequately prioritize work for the next two years. Key stakeholders, including the core team, TWGs, CSOs, private sector representatives, and development partners, rated and discussed the national REDD+ Readiness. Summary scores are presented below at sub component level (

Table 5-1). Overall, the assessments identified three sub-components – assessment of land use, land-use change drivers, forest law, policy, and governance; REDD+ Strategy Options; and Reference Emission Level -- as having made significant progress (green). Four sub-components - on the National REDD+ management arrangements; consultation, participation, and outreach; social and environmental impacts, and national forest monitoring – are progressing well, but needing further development (yellow). Two sub-components - on the NRS implementation framework and the information system for multiple benefits, impacts, governance, and safeguards - need development (orange).

It should be noted that the stakeholders rated the progress in comparison with the starting point, prior to REDD+ Readiness activities. Thus, a green rating of “significant progress” does not mean that readiness activities are completed, but that much has been accomplished to date, which serves as a solid basis for moving forward. Readiness work and capacity building will be required in all areas.

Table 5-1: Self-Assessment Summary

Component	Sub Component	Summary scores
Readiness organization and consultation	1a. National REDD+ Management Arrangements	Yellow
	1b. Consultation, participation and outreach	Yellow
REDD+ Strategy preparation	2a. Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	Green
	2b. REDD+ Strategy Options	Green
	2c. Implementation Framework	Orange
	2d. Social and Environmental Impacts	Yellow
Reference Emission Level / Reference Level	3a. Reference Emissions Level/Reference Levels	Green
Monitoring system for forests and safeguards	4a. National Forest Monitoring	Yellow
	4b. Information System for Multiple Benefits, other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	Orange

The next section summarizes major achievements under the first Readiness grant and outlines the government’s plan and timeframe for utilizing the additional funding.

6 NEXT STEPS

Under the first FCPF REDD+ Readiness grant, technical assistance has supported the government to develop key elements of the National REDD+ Program, as shown in the following table:

Table . Lao PDR REDD+ Readiness Elements supported under first FCPF REDD+ Readiness Grant.

Table 6-1: REDD+ Readiness activities supported under the first FCPF REDD+ Readiness Grant

Element	Status (as of early 2018)
Updated Stakeholder Map	Approved at national workshop Nov. 2016, and used to guide subsequent work
Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Approved at national workshop Nov. 2016, and used to guide subsequent work
Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment	Process provided major stakeholder engagement and contribution to development of National Strategy, as well as identifying key environmental and social issues to be addressed. Field work and analysis done by June 2017, then report prepared, reviewed, and revised.
Satellite Imagery Analyses i.e., Deforestation “hot spots”	Contribution to analysis of drivers of deforestation and degradation; Work was used in selecting consultation sites. Done by February 2017.
Other remote imagery analyses of land use change	Contribution to analysis of drivers of deforestation and degradation. 2016-2017.
Environmental and Social Management Framework and Community Engagement Framework, including Grievance Redress Mechanisms	A draft ESMF and CEF have been prepared by late 2017, and need further elaboration to meet the needs of the Lao government, and guide implementation. Discussions will be needed with development partners to implement REDD+ programs, and with MONRE regarding government oversight of safeguard screening, monitoring, and reporting. As part of the Community Engagement Framework, the Grievance Redress Mechanism is well developed, but needs consultation and dissemination as part of the safeguard plan consultations.
National REDD+ Strategy in Lao and English languages, which includes the following:	Six REDD+ Technical Working Groups and other key stakeholders did major work to develop NRS in Lao; English translation for international partners to provide further contributions and for broader communication about NRS. Strategy to go to Ministry in February 2018 for approval by March 2018
-Benefit-sharing principles	ER-Program and other REDD+ programs or projects will need to negotiate with beneficiaries on specific Benefit-Sharing Plans
-Analysis of options for REDD+ Fund	Benefit-sharing TWG analysed three existing funds, and PMO 01/2012, on timber revenue benefit-sharing, to suggest arrangements for REDD+ Fund flow at national, provincial, district, and village levels

-Policy and legal review of forestry and land use issues	Legal action plan comprises a section of the NRS. It will need follow-up to see how gaps and inconsistencies in policies, laws, and regulations can be addressed.
Communications and Outreach Strategy	Strategy developed in late 2016-early 2017, but limited implementation to date. Major focus on developing website.
DoF launched a website to host National REDD+ Program (bilingual)	Some REDD+ documents in English are available (with limited Lao content). October 2017.
Web portal	Initial concept development and identification of further support and procurement needs done by late 2017.
REDD+ Carbon Registry	Preliminary analysis done in late 2017; further work needed.

Several areas require actions for Lao PDR to be fully REDD+ ready based on the assessment criteria.

- The Draft National REDD+ Strategy (as of January 2018) serves as a guiding document to steer and coordinate the various inputs being provided by different REDD+ actors in Lao PDR. Further improvement of the NRS may still be required after submission to the Ministry for approval, and any further stakeholder review and comments. To operationalize the Strategy, it will be important to develop a REDD+ Action Plan(s). Six Provincial REDD+ Action Plans already exist for the ER-Program Area, but a national action plan is needed. Then additional plans as roll-out of the national program continues.
- The SESA is being finalized, and will need final approval by the World Bank Regional Safeguard Specialists. The ESMF needs further development, and especially consultation with development partners that will be implementing various actions in the six provinces of the ER-Program.
- The REDD+ Division needs additional staff members, and building of their capacity, to meet the REDD+ Implementation work requirements.
- The REDD+ Carbon Registry is still in planning stage. The Government will require a lot of technical assistance support on design and implementation of the REDD+ Registry.

Table 6-2 and Table 6-3 below present the proposed budget allocation for the additional funding and draft implementation timelines respectively. The grant agreement is already in the pipeline for authorization and expected to be signed by end of April 2018. This slight delay is a result of the internal government authorization system, but the REDD+ Division is already starting to prepare relevant documentation for recruiting the team of experts required to undertake the work.

This budget allocation differs slightly from that presented in the original request at the time of the Mid-Term Review. The figures have changed during subsequent discussions, over the course of several World Bank Implementation Support Missions, between DOF and the World Bank on funding priorities.

Table 6-2: Additional funding budget allocation

Component/Activity proposed for Additional Funding	Cost (USD)
1: READINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION	2,175,000
1a: National REDD+ Management Arrangements	1,675,000
1. Ongoing support for the REDD+ Division, NRTF and TWG to finalize the REDD+ Strategy, ER-PD and PRAPs	175,000
2 Technical support and capacity building for Provincial offices for implementation of PRAPs and ER-PD interventions	350,000
3. Establishment and capacity building of up to 4 field monitoring units in selected districts to establish a framework for REDD+ progress monitoring	250,000
4. Support for REDD+ institutional arrangements in 5 additional Provinces in Central and Southern Laos	250,000
5. Procurement Consultant; Financial Management; Consultants/Assistants; Project Management Assistant; Office Management Assistants; Project Implementation Monitoring; Auditing Fee	300,000
6. Technical support, capacity building/training workshops for NRTF, Cross-sector collaboration, including hiring of international experts for specific thematic support	350,000
1b: Stakeholder Consultation and related capacity-building	500,000
National Stakeholder Consultations on National REDD+ Strategy and Intervention Options (across all relevant sectors as identified in the drivers analysis)	100,000
Cross-sector capacity needs assessment for the implementation of NRS, ER-PD, and PRAP interventions and preparation of Capacity Development Plan	150,000
Workshops, training and capacity building in line with identified capacity needs and specifically for cross-sector land use planning and management in the context of REDD+ as identified in the Capacity Needs Assessment.	150,000
Awareness raising and dissemination of REDD+ material at national level (workshops, campaigns, pamphlets and other publications)	100,000
2: REDD+ STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT	1,450,000
2a: Assessment of Land Use, Land-Use Change Drivers, Forest Law, Policy and Governance	460,000
Strategic and economic analysis of intervention potential with a specific focus on public-private investment options and potential to support the objectives of the National Forestry Strategy.	310,000
Development of a cross-sector spatial analysis framework for land suitability analysis to support the land use and forestry planning and economic analysis of REDD+ interventions.	150,000
2b: REDD+ Strategy Options	350,000
Broad national economic analysis of REDD+ Strategy Interventions options and prioritization (e.g. cost benefit analysis, investment returns, emissions reduction potential, social benefits and values)	250,000
National and sub-national cross sector knowledge sharing, consultation awareness raising and dissemination of REDD+ Strategy Intervention economic analysis results. (includes workshops and other knowledge products)	100,000
2c: Implementation Framework	340,000

Preparation and finalization of benefit sharing framework including stakeholder consultation and awareness raising	150,000
Development of a national REDD+ monitoring system including hiring of technical experts	190,000
2d: Social and Environmental Impacts	300,000
Design of national Safeguards Information System including procurement of hardware, training and roll out. Rolled out in two phases starting with the ER-PD Provinces	200,000
Capacity building and mainstreaming REDD+ at National and Sub-national level within and across key sectors (forestry, agriculture).	100,000
3: REFERENCE EMISSION LEVEL AND MONITORING SYSTEMS	950,000
3a. Reference Emissions Level	300,000
Support and capacity building for the National Forest Monitoring System, updating of REL, and design of national MRV system	300,000
3b: National Forest Monitoring System	450,000
Procurement and updating of hardware and software including relevant training in spatial systems, data collection, updating and management in line IPPC and FCPF requirements (national and sub-national level starting with 6 provinces in the north and 2 others in the south)	450,000
3c: Information System for Multiple Benefits, Other Impacts, Governance, and Safeguards	200,000
Design and setup of knowledge management system for REDD+ impact monitoring across key sectors	200,000
Total	4,575,000

Table 6-3: Additional Funding draft implementation timeline

Year Month	2018												2019												2020					
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		
Component/Activity proposed for Additional Funding																														
1: READINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION																														
Ongoing support for the REDD+ Division, NRTF and TWG to finalize the REDD+ Strategy, ER-PD and PRAPs																														
Technical support and capacity building for Provincial offices for implementation of PRAPs and ER-PD interventions																														
Establishment and capacity building of up to 4 field monitoring units in selected districts to establish a framework for REDD+ progress monitoring																														
Support for REDD+ institutional arrangements in 5 additional Provinces in Central and Southern Laos																														
Project Management, Monitoring; and Reporting (staff recruitment and equipment procurement)																														
Technical support, capacity building/training workshops for NRTF, Cross-sector collaboration, including hiring of international experts for specific thematic support including targeting the 5 additional provinces																														

7 ANNEXES

Annex 1: National REDD+ Task Force

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

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Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Number: 2750/MAF.,
Vientiane capital, date: 23.5.2017

Decision

Concerning the appointment of National REDD+ Taskforce

- Based on the decree of Prime-Minister, concerning the organization and operation of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, number 99/PM., dated 09 March 2017;
- Based on the proposal letter from Department of Forestry concerning the approval to appoint the National REDD+ Taskforce, number 1164/DoF., dated 09 May 2017;
- Based on the deliberation of Department of Organization and Personnel, number 1255/DOP., dated 10 May 2017;

MAF Minister makes decision as following:

Article 1: Agree to appoint the National REDD+ Taskforce with the following details:

1	Mr. Thongphat Vongmany	Vice Minister of MAF	To be a head
2	Mr. Sousart Xaiyakoumman	DG of DOF	To be a deputy head
3	Mr. Somchai Xanontri	DDG of DoF	To be a member
4	Mr. Anolath Chanthavongsa	DDG of Department of Agricultural Land Management and Development	To be a member
5	Mr. Si-amphone Saengchandala	DDG of Department of Natural Disaster Management and Climate Change	To be a member
6	Mr. Anothai Chanthalasy	DDG of Land Department, MoNRE	To be a member
7	Mr. Angkhansada Mouangkham	DDG of Foreign Currency Department, Ministry of Finance	To be a member
8	Ms. Manivanh Keokomin	DDG of Ethnic Group Department, LFNC	To be a member
9	Ms. Bangthong Thipsomphone	Director of Europe-America Division, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and Cooperation	To be a member
10	Mr. Vonphasao Orlasaeng	Deputy Director of Administration Division, the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, MoNRE.	To be a member
11	Ms. Vanthala Douangmanivanh	Director of Division of International Administration Law, Ministry of Justice	To be a member
12	Mr. Khamman Sorpasert	Director of Energy Conservation and Saving Division, Ministry of Mineral and Energy	To be a member

13	Ms. Vong-akon Phengdalith	Director of Party and Personnel Division, National Lao Women Union	To be a member
14	Mr. Bounthan Philachanh	Director of Planning and Cooperation Division, DOFI	To be a member
15	Dr. Chittana Phomphila	Deputy Director of Research and Technical Management Division, Faculty of Forestry Science, National University of Lao	To be a member
16	Ms. Valy Vetsaphong	Deputy Director of Chamber of Industry and Commerce	To be a member

Article 2: Assign people who are appointed in article 1 to collaborate with related parties and together follow this decision to make sure there is a good outcome and then report to the higher level to know in a timely manner.

Article 3: This decision comes to effect from the date of signing.

MAF Minister

Lian Thi Keo

Send to:

- MAF cabinet office 1 copy
- Department of Organization and Personnel 1 copy
- Related divisions and departments 1 copy
- For keeping 1 copy

Annex 2: Official Members of REDD+ Technical Working Groups

1. Legal Framework TWG:

- Mr. Saly Singsavanh,
Director,
Division of the Planning and Cooperation,
Department of Forest Resource Management,
MoNRE (020 9893 1044)
- Mr. Phomma Pathoumvanh,
Acting Director,
Division of Development of Forestry Technical Standard,
Department of Forestry, (020 5560 1729)
- Ms Vanthala Douangmanivanh,
Director,
Division of Administrative Law,
Department of Law,
Ministry of Justice (020 9938 2038)
- Mr. Immala Inthaboualy,
Director,
Division of Reducing Emission Research,
Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change,
MoNRE (020 5562 9734)

2. Land Issues TWG:

- Mr. Khamphanh Douangvilay,
Director,
Division of M&E of Land Use,
Department of Land Management (020 9990 2181)
- Mr. Phaythoun Philakone,
Deputy Director,
Centre for Survey and Agriculture Land Use and Planning,
Department of Forestry,
MAF (020 9919 7975)
- Mr. Phouthone Syhalath,
Deputy Director,
Division of Protected and Protection forests,
DoF, MAF (020 5580 3159)
- Dr. Sithong Thongmanivong,
Faculty of Forestry Science,
National of University of Lao (020 5559 7559)
- Mr. Khamsene Ounkham,
Deputy Director,
REDD+ office, DoF

- Mr. Taikham Sisouklath,
Deputy Director,
Survey and Measurement Division,
Department of Land Management,
MoNRE (020 5542 2764)

3. Safeguard TWG:

- Ms Manivanh Keokomoh,
Director,
Division of Safeguard Unit,
Lao Front for National Construction
- Ms Vong Akone Phengdalith,
Director,
Division of Human Resources,
Lao Women Union
- Dr Kinnalone Phomasack,
Deputy Director,
REDD+ Office, DoF, MAF
- Mr. Phouvong Onesisaleum,
Deputy Director, EIA Department
- Ms. Keooudone Kasemsouk,
Technical Officer,
Division of Planning and Cooperation
Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
MoNRE
- Mr. Soukvilay Vilavong,
Deputy Director,
Division of Administration and Planning,
Department of Extension, MAF

4. Enforcement & Implementation of Mitigation TWG:

- Mr Savanh Chanthakoummane,
Director,
REDD+ office, DOF, MAF
- Mr. Chaynoy Sisomphane,
Deputy Director,
Division of Inspection of Protection and Protected areas,
Department of Forestry, MAF
- Mr. Thatsaphone Veopaseuth,
Deputy Director,
Division of Department of Planning and Cooperation
Department of Forest Inspection
MAF
- Dr. Kaisone Phengsopha,

Faculty of Forestry Science,
NUoL

- Mr. Immala Inthaboualy,
Director,
Division of Reducing Emission Research,
Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change,
MoNRE (020 5562 9734)

5. REL/MRV TWG:

- Mr. Khamma Homsisavath,
Acting Director,
Forest Inventory and Planning Division,
Department of Forestry,
MAF

Assistants:

- Mr. Sombath Saypaya
- Ms. Yommala Phengsouvanh
- Mr. Khamkong Inthavong

- Mr. Somvang Sihalath,
Director,
Division, Protection Forests and Protected Areas Survey,
DoF, MAF

Assistants:

- Mr. Inpeng Inthalangsy
- Mr. Linthachak Khamdy
- Mr. Vongphachan Tasavanh

- Mr. Phounsap Vilayheuang,
Deputy Director,
Division of Information and Database,
Center for Survey and Agriculture Land Use Planning,
MAF

Assistant:

- Ms. Oulavon Sayavong
- Dr. Thumthone Vongsisouk,
Faculty of Forestry Science,
NUoL

Assistant:

- Dr. Bounthavy Duangphosy

- Mr. Immala Inthaboualy,
Director,
Division of Reducing Emission Research,
Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change,
MoNRE (020 5562 9734)

Assistant:

- Mr. Bounthee Saythongvanh

6. Benefit-Sharing TWG:

- Mr. Keokolakoth Chanthavixay,
Deputy Director,
REDD+ Division
Department of Forestry, MAF
- Mr. Khamsomphou Phaxaysithideth,
Deputy Director,
Ministry of Finance
- Ms Lomekham Sengchanhoudom,
Director,
Forest Development Fund Division,
Department of Forestry, MAF
- Ms Bounphama Phothisane,
Vice-President,
Environment Protection Fund,
MoNRE
- Ms Palina Sisaykeo,
Deputy Director,
Import-Export Division,
Department of Import and Export,
MoIC

Annex 3: Stakeholder and TWG Meetings

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
27/04/2016	1st MRV/REL TWG	30 (2)	DoF Meeting Room	F-REDD
01/07/ 2016	TWG meeting to share a draft ToRs of Land Issue TWG	12 (3)	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
21/07/2016	Participatory Technical Meeting on Safeguards ToRs	5 (3)	DoF Meeting Room	FCPF
28-29/07/2016	Training workshop on REDD+ background, Social and Environmental Safeguards and Benefit-Sharing (for 3 TWGs: SES, BS & Legal)	25 (12)	Thavonesouk Hotel, Vangvieng	SNV
11/08/2016	Internal Meeting on the draft of TWG ToRs	5 (2)	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
16-17/08/2016	Training workshop on REDD+ background, Land Issues, and REL/MRV	34 (7)	KhemNgum Guest House, Thalath	SNV
26/06/2016	TWG meeting on the draft workplan of the Legal and Policy TWG	5 (2)	Mr. Phomma Office	FCPF
02/09/2016	2 nd REL/MRV Technical Working Group Meeting	31 (4)	DOF meeting room	F-REDD
08/09/2016	Meeting with World Bank team on SESA in LPB	26 (13)	LPB PAFO Meeting Room	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
09/09/2016	Consultation workshop with 6 provinces on general background REDD+ and SESA in LouangPrabang	97 (21)	LPB PAFO Meeting Room	FCPF
13/09/2016	TWG meeting on the workplan of Social and Environmental Workplan	10 (5)	Lao Front for National Construction	FCPF
16/09/2016	TWG meeting on the draft of workplan of the BS TWG	6 (3)	REDD+ Office	
20/09/2016	TWG meeting on the Workplan of Social and Environmental Safeguards	13 (6)	Lao Front for National Construction	FCPF
22/09/2016	TWG meeting on the draft of workplan of the EI&M TWG	3	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
30/09/2016	TWG meeting on the Workplan of Social and Environmental Safeguards	39 (14)	Lao Front for National Construction	FCPF
06/10/ 2016	TWG meeting on the final draft workplan of the Legal and Policy TWG	9 (4)	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
07/10/2016	TWG meeting on the Workplan of Benefit-Sharing TWG	5 (4)	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
08/10/2016	TWG meeting on the Workplan of Land Issues TWG	9 (2)	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
16-21/10/2016	Study tour for TWGs on BS and SES to learn experiences from Cambodia	17 (8)	Pnom Penh & KeoSeima	SNV
24/10/2016	TWG meeting on the final draft workplan of the E&IM TWG	4	REDD+ Office	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
05/11/2016	Consultation workshop to exchange experiences on social and environmental safeguards and benefit-sharing from REDD+ between Lao PDR and Vietnam	39	Setha Palace Hotel	SNV
05/11/2016	Consultation meeting on the draft of workplan for Land Issues TWG	7	DFRM meeting room	FCPF
24/11/2016	Consultation workshop on general background of REDD+ and the requirement for the institutional setting-up in Sayaboury	48 (13)	PAFO Sayaboury Meeting Room	FCPF
29/11/2016	Joint Technical Working on 'Drivers' led by FIPD and Masamichi	30 (1)	DoF Meeting Room	FCPF
30/11/2016	Joint TWG meeting (E&IM, LI and Legal) on the 'Outline of the National REDD+ Strategy' and results of the review of 'non-sector forestry strategy'	19 (5)	Land Management meeting room	FCPF
01/12/2016	Joint TWG meeting (Social & Environmental Safeguard, Benefit-Sharing, and E&IM) on the rationals of benefit-sharing mechanisms	21 (8)	Land Management meeting room	FCPF
05-08/12/2016	Training on "Drivers' using remote sensing images (including representatives from 18 provinces)	12(3) 18(2) 24(5) 21(2)	FIPD Meeting Room	FCPF
08/12/2016	JTWG Meeting on 'Issues of Drivers' (SES, BS and some representatives from other groups)	30 (14)	Land Mgt Meeting Room	FCPF
21-22/12/ 2016	JTWG Meeting on identification drivers and strategy options of S&E issues	40 (14)	Khem Ngum Hotel, VTE province	FCPF
06/01/ 2017	SES TWG meeting on the schedule for different events and sharing responsibilities	8	R+ Meeting room	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
10/01/ 2017 8:30-12	JTWG Meeting on 'Strategy Outline of NRS' with all TWG members	29 (8)	FIPD Meeting room	FCPF
10/01/ 2017 13:30-16	JTWG on 'Benefit-Sharing' with the whole BS team, and representatives from BS TWG	22 (8)	FIPD Meeting room	FCPF
12/01/ 2017 8:30-12	REL/MRV and other TWG Meeting on Land Use Change (mapping) and drivers analysis	45 (4)	DoF Meeting Room	FCPF
12/01/ 2017 13:30-16	REL/MRV TWG on NFI progress	24 (4)	DoF Meeting Room	FCPF
12/01/ 2017	Legal team discussion on detail works preparation for 24 th Jan 17	4	Standard Tech Mtg room	FCPF
13/01/ 2017	SES TWG Meeting on 'Outline of the SESA' and list of laws and policies relevant to social and environment safeguards existing in Lao PDR	10	R+ Meeting room	FCPF
17/01/ 2017	Land Issues and Safeguards TWG Meeting on 'Land Use trends, LU change drivers, maps of hot spots	?	R+ Meeting room	FCPF
24/01/ 2017 (half day)	Joint Legal TWG on list of laws, & legislation (forestry sector)	30 (12)	FIPD meeting room	FCPF
01/02/ 2017	TWGs meeting on R+ BS and Safeguards	37 (15)	Vangvieng	FCPF
02-03/02/ 2017	Knowledge sharing on R+ BS and Safeguards in collaboration with CIFOR	37 (15)	Vangvieng	FCPF & CIFOR
09/02/ 2017	Joint TWG meeting on Strategy outline, sharing responsibilities among members and form for R+ database	19	FIPD	FCPF
15/02/ 2017	Land Issues TWG Meeting (monthly), discussion on sharing responsibility	13 (3)	FIPD	FCPF
16-17/02/ 2017	Land Issues TWG Meeting	10	Thalath	FCPF
19-24/02/ 2017	ToT and SESA consultation meeting in Bolikhamxay province	15 24 59	Bolikhamxay	FCPF
22/02/ 2017	Meeting btw FCPF and partners with WB	9 (2)	DoF meeting room	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
28/2 – 1/3 2017	Legal and BS TWG in Thalath (parallel meetings)	5 (3) 5 (1)	KhemNgeum Guesthouse	FCPF
02/03/ 2017	FCPF team meeting with R+ Office on the findings from the ToT and field visit	9 (4)	REDD+ office	FCPF
07/03/ 2017	REDD+ Office and TA (FCPF & CLIPAD) on PRAP	8	FIPD Mtg Room	FCPF & CLIPAD
09/03/ 2017	TA meeting on communication	3	FCPF office	FCPF
09/03/ 2017	FCPF Project management team meeting with the TWG heads	11	R+ Mtg room	FCPF
13-17/ 03/2017	SESA consultation meeting in Attapeu province	17 (5) 29 (6) 31 (9) 23 (7)	Attapeu PAFO office	FCPF
13-17/ 03/2017	SESA consultation meeting in Savannakhet province	22 (5) 35 (7) 28 (5) 30 (4)	Savannakhet PAFO office	FCPF
20-24/ 03/2017	SESA consultation meeting in Khammouan province	19 (4) 32 (5) 36 (8) 43 (5)	Khammouan PAFO office	FCPF
20-24/ 03/2017	SESA consultation meeting in Champassack province	16 (5) 29 (7) 29 (8) 35 (13)	Champassack PAFO office	FCPF
20-21/03/2017	Workshop on Plantations Policy Forum on “Improving policies for forest plantations to balance smallholder, industry and environmental needs in Lao PDR and Vietnam	2 (1)	Vientiane Plaza	NUoL & NAFRI
24/03/ 2017	11th FSSWG Under the Natural Resource and Environment Sector Working Group (NRESWG) and co-organised by JICA	3 (1)	DoF Meeting Room	F-REDD & JICA

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
28/03/ 2017	Internal meeting (TA and project management team) on lessons learnt from ToT and Bolikhamxay field visit (led by Savanh)	8 (5)	R+ Office	FCPF
05-06/04/2017	Strategy, Legal, BS and SES TWGs meeting (parallel meetings)	5 (3) 8(2) 11(4) 7(2)	Khemngum Thalath	FCPF
07/04/ 2017	TA Meeting with Masamichi on the findings	7 (3)	R+ Office	FCPF
25.04.2017	SES TWG Meeting on the SESA parts for NRS	12 (6)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
25.05.2017	Strategy TWG Meeting to update the NRS outline and discuss the details in some sections	11 (3)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
26.05.2017	Consultation workshop with all TWG members to validate the SESA results from 5 provinces field mission, and carbon fund	37 (11)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
27.05.2017	BS TWG Meeting to further discuss on the details BS elements for NRS preparation	7 (2)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
27.04.2017	LI TWG Meeting on the section and elements for NRS preparation	12 (2)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
27.05.2017	Legal and Policy TWG Meeting to discuss on the elements under the parts and responsibility	6 (3)	Thalath Khemngeum	FCPF
02.05.2017	R+ management team and TA meeting on workplan schedule from May to July 2017	9 (5)	R+ meeting room	FCPF
04.05.2017	EIM strategy TWGs and TA meeting on the elements of the NRS and assigned responsibility	7 (2)	R+ meeting room	FCPF
18.05.2017	R+ staff and TA discuss on the BS results as outcome from the consultation meeting with DG (13.30-16.00)	7 (4)	FIPD meeting room	FCPF
24.05.2017	4 th REL/MRV TWG working meeting with other partners on their findings	?	DoF meeting room	F-REDD
30.05.2017	Consultation workshop with private sectors on SESA results (discussion on drivers) (8.30-12.00)	23 (7)	Crowne Plaza Hotel	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
30.05.2017	Consultation workshop with CSOs on SESA results (discussion on drivers) (13.30-17.00)	24 (6)	Crowne Plaza Hotel	FCPF
30.05.2017	Legal TWG meeting on legal part to NRS (13.30-16.00) for NRS writing retreat	3 (2)	R+ Office	FCPF
04.06.2017	LI TWG meeting on land use issues (8.30-11.30) to the NRS or preparation for NRS writing retreat	7 (2)	R+ Office	FCPF
07.06.2017	TA meeting on the preparation of the SESA consultation workshop with development partners	5 (3)	R+ Office	FCPF
08.06.2017	BS TWG meeting on BS part to NRS for writing retreat workshop (8.30-12:00)	7 (4)	R+ Office	FCPF
08.06.2017	Consultation workshop on SESA results with the Development Partners (13:30 - 17:00)	2(1)	DoF meeting room	FCPF
12-14.06.2017	Writing retreat for key representatives of TWGs and TA team	6(3)	Long Ngum View Resort	FCPF
16.06.2017	Legal team meeting on the legal content to NRS	2 (2)	R+ Office	FCPF
19.06.2017	Consultation meeting with the DG of Dpt of Land Management (10.00-11.30) to get his feedbacks on NRS	5 (2)	Land Management Office	FCPF
21.06.2017	BS TWG meeting with other project partners sharing on the up-to date progress of BS TWG on BS mechanism and other lessons learnt	6 (4)	R+ Office	FCPF
22.06.2017	Legal Policy TWG meeting on the legal part to NRS (8.30-11.30) for submission as draft on 26 June 2017	3 (2)	R+ Office	FCPF
22.06.2017	SES TWG meeting on Grievance redress mechanism	8 (3)	R+ Office	FCPF
05.06.2017 (13.00-16.30)	Legal Policy TWG meeting on the legal part to NRS	3 (3)	R+ Office	FCPF
06.07.2017	R+ staff and TA meeting on the improvement of NRS (10.00-12.00)	7 (4)	R+ Office	FCPF
11.07.2017	TA meeting on strategic interventions	4(3)	R+ Office	FCPF
19.07.2017	Consultation meeting on strategic interventions with TWGs and DoF officials	?	DoF Meeting room	FCPF
01.08.2017	TA meeting on NRS update	3(2)	R+ Office	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
15.08.2017	TA meeting on NRS and SESA	6(4)	R+ Office	FCPF
16.08.2017	TA meeting on workplan, SESA and NRS	4(3)	R+ Office	FCPF
23.08.2017	Consultation meeting on 'improvement of NRS' led by the 'Strategy TWG' with representatives from other TWGs (08.30-12.00)	13(4)	R+ Office	FCPF
28.08.2017	Meeting with the representatives of TWGs on NRS update	8 (4)	FIPD	FCPF
28.08.2017	NRS consultation preparation meeting for NRTF by TWGs. (13.30-16.00)	20(8)	FIPD	FCPF
31.08.2017	NRTF consultation meeting on the REDD+ and NRS (08.30-12.00)	?	DoF	FCPF
01.09.2017	TA meeting on SESA and ESMF	4(3)	R+ Office	FCPF
01.09.2017	Preparation meeting for the annual FCPF and FIP meeting in LPB	?	R+ Office	R+ office
02-09.09. 2017	1 st PRTF meeting in ODX, LNT and BK	?	R+ Office	R+ office
04-07.09 2017	1 st PRTF meeting in Xayaboury	?	R+ Office	R+ office
18-23.09. 2017	NRS writing retreat in Pakse and field trip mission to Xepian	12(4)	PAFO	R+ office
25-29.09. 2017	Annual FCPF and FIP meeting in LPB	?	LPB	DoF
11.10. 2017	Participation to the workshop relevant to R+ research in collaboration between NUoL and CIFOR	2 (2)	FoF Mtg room	NUoL
15-19.10. 2017	Consultation meeting on draft NRS, PRAP, SESA and ESMF/Safeguard plan in Oudomxay with 7 Northern provinces	42 (3)	Oudomxay PAFO Meeting room	FCPF
23.10.2017	WB mission kick-off meeting	32 (6)	DoF meeting	DoF
24.10.2017	WB mission with FCPF and other partners		FIPD mtg room	DoF
24-27.10. 2017	WB mission with FCPF and other partners (REL/MRV)	34 (9)	FIPD mtg room	FCPF
25.10.2017	WB mission on separate themes: SESA, ESMF/safeguard, BS, Legal, ?, & communication		FIPD mtg room	FCPF
26.10.2017	WB mission meeting discussion on comparision interventions between NRS and ER-PD (09:00-12:00)		FIPD meeting	FCPF

Date	Topics of Discussion	No of persons, Total (women)	Location	Supported by
26-28.10. 2017	WB Field mission in Xayaboury province via Louang Prabang led by R+ office with CLIPAD and FCPF	10(3) 4(2) WB	Xaya PAFO, governor and PPI Mtg room	R+ office
26-27.10. 2017	Participation to the regional meeting on Safeguard/SESA and SIS in Hanoi	3 (3)	Hanoi	R+ office
29.09-02.10. 2017	Consultation workshop on PRAP in Houaphanh province	66(6)	HP PAFO	R+ office
31.10.2017 13:00-15:00	Wrap-up WB mission meeting	25(6)	DoF Meeting room	WB & DoF
01.11.2017	TA meeting on workplan for SESA, ESMF and safeguard plan	5(3)	R+ Office	FCPF
8.11.2017	Consultation meeting on Xepian NPA Management Plan in Vientiane	3(2)	DoF Meeting room	R+ Austrian
19.12.2017 am	FSSWG meeting on REL, NRS and ER-PD	38(8)	DoF meeting room	F-REDD
19.12.2017 pm	R-Package self-assessment with Development partners, CSOs and Private Sector	14(5)	DoF meeting room	FCPF
20.12.2017	Agriculture and Land Sector consultation meeting on NRS and ER-PD	28(10)	DoFI Meeting room	FCPF

Annex 4: Funding from Key REDD+ Programs in Lao PDR, 2011-2016, and 2017-2020

Programs	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2011-2016 Sub-total	2017- 2020	Total (USD '000)
FCPF					201	869	1070	7,105	8,175
F-REDD	1,565	1,689	1,689	1,083	2,088	1,079	9,193	5,315	14,508
ChiPAD	800	800	800	800	800	1,300	5300	3,020	8,320
SNV			27	27	39	40	133		133
SUFORD	72	437	33	314	103	67	1026	33	1,059
UN-REDD				30	178	150	358	349	707
LEAF	275	275	275	275	275	275	1650		1650
RECOFTC	125	125	125	125	125		625		625
Total	2,837	3,326	2,949	2,654	3,809	3,780	19,355	15,822	35,177