



SUMMARY

European Joint Programming for Lao People's Democratic Republic 2016-2020

Agriculture & Rural Development



OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The focus of European Joint Programming in this sector is:

- Sustainable development in rural areas through fair agriculture development preserving the interests of small holders and contributing to poverty reduction.
 - Reducing pressures to extend agricultural production to forested areas
- Improving social conditions, including better nutrition, access to markets and social services through better and more rural roads, safe water and climate change resilience.



The Government of the Lao PDR has made significant headway in addressing rural poverty. Opening the agricultural sector to markets, the rise in contract farming and large-scale investments have brought many opportunities. However, areas of concern have also emerged: pesticide use is on the rise, soil quality and agrobiodiversity are falling and access to land has been reduced by land concessions. These phenomena, coupled with climate change, are exacerbating farmers' vulnerability to shocks and natural disasters.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

SO 1 – Improve Agricultural Practices

Farmers need support to improve their agricultural practices, including:

- Improved and adapted varieties
- Crop diversification
- Managing soil fertility efficiently to sustain their cropping system.

Further JP initiatives support:

- Training in managing pests and disease affecting crops and livestock
- Stakeholder capacity building, vocational education and enhancing research capacities.

SO 2 – Strengthen the Role of Family Farming
Supporting family farming is essential to combatting food insecurity and improving nutrition. To maintain the role of family farming, it is necessary to strengthen their capacity and increase empowerment through

farmers' organisations, the number of which has increased, due to European partner interventions.

Farmer groups



SO 3 – Improve Economic Efficiency

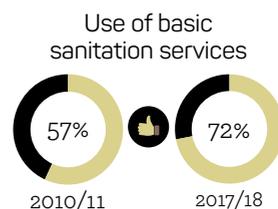
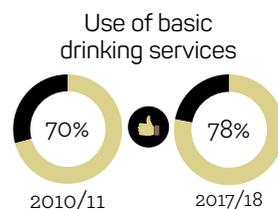
Production processes are to be enhanced by:

- Improving products' post-harvest techniques
- Development of new food chain systems
- Better market linkages.

Various commodity value-chains could be addressed through better use of market information systems that provide access to better opportunities for farmers, traders, civil servants and the private sector. Commodity organisations are also supported to enable value chain stakeholders to exchange information on opportunities, risks and challenges.

SO 4 – Improve Service Delivery in Rural Areas

Poverty reduction activities in rural areas seek to improve the income of target populations and availability of and equitable access to social services (nutrition, water and sanitation, health and education). Needs-based local planning and administration is also essential for the development of rural livelihoods in remote areas and to improve socio-economic conditions.



UPDATE



Wide-scale continuation of monoculture farming, pushed by contract farming and large agricultural concessions, leads to:

- soil fertility and erosion issues
- farmers forced to use more chemicals to maintain production.



Recent reports show that the use of pesticides has boomed. Pesticide residues in food products, the environment and even in consumers' blood have reached worrying levels in just a few years.



- Large number of good agricultural practices and initiatives have been developed and are ongoing
- Demand for organic products is increasing
- Agro-ecological practices are strengthened, and the Lao PDR has taken the ASEAN lead on agroecology, with the Lao Initiative on Conservation Agriculture.
- Decree on pesticides management approved in 2017.
- Banning of new banana concessions, where environmental and social damages can be particularly high



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Pigeon pea and watershed © NU DP.
Pig rearing in Phongsaly as part of NU-PCR © EU.
Namhoum fish farm © Embassy of Hungary.

JOINT PROGRAMMING CONTRIBUTION IN THIS SECTOR FROM 2016 TO 2020



Technical cooperation is particularly close on matters like agrobiodiversity, land governance, village development planning and funding, youth in agriculture, green agriculture and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

Germany supports people in remote and mountainous areas with roads, bridges and markets to connect them to provincial markets

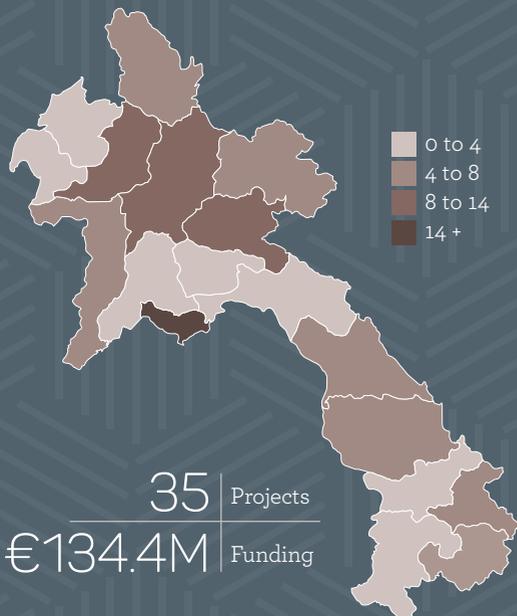
and improve their living conditions.

France co-chairs the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Luxembourg supports rural development in vulnerable villages in Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Bokeo and Vientiane Province.

Hungary was active in strengthening the food chain safety system, developing diagnostic capacities and establishing model farms and agricultural facilities.

The map below shows the geographical distribution of Agriculture and Rural Development programmes funded by European Partners through Joint Programming. Projects with national coverage are reported in Vientiane Capital.



IN FOCUS

Northern Uplands – Piloting Climate Resilience (NU-PCR)

In Laos and throughout the world, adaptation of agricultural systems to climate change has become an imperative. Project partners CARE, Comité de Coopération avec le Laos (CCL) and Sustainable Agriculture & Environment (SAEDA) provide support and expertise to upland smallholder farmers by giving them the tools and knowledge required to take strategic decisions regarding the development and strengthening of sustainable and value-added livelihood activities, such as tea production.

“Tea production has changed everything for our village. Before, only pig raising enabled some income when we needed to buy rice or staple products. Today, every family of the village has comfortable income thanks to tea production.”

- Mr. Bountong,
Nhot Ou District,
beneficiary of the
NU-PCR project



PICTURE ABOVE: Hand picked tea leaves © NU-PCR.

FRONT PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Rural access road supported by Lao30 © LuxDev. Vegetable cultivation in dry season © NUDP. Health Laboratory, part of the food chain safety system established © Embassy of Hungary. Exchanges between farmers on pests © NUDP.