



TERMINAL EVALUATION

of the UNDP-GEF funded project

“Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR’s Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes (ABP)”

(Project ID 0075435)

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Project title

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes “(ABP project)”

Project ID

Project ID: 0075435 / ATLAS Award ID 00060069

Project duration

11 April 2011 – 10 April 2016 (extended to 31 December 2016)

Evaluation Time frame

November 2016 – February 2017

Report dated 20th April 2017

Region and countries included

South East Asia

Lao PDR

Implementing Partners

Department of Planning and Corporation (DoPC) of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)

Other UN agencies

FAO (CTA and short term consultants – though LoA)

Evaluation Team members

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Executive summary

Project summary table

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes “(ABP project)”				
		Financing	Funding at endorsement (million USD)	Funding at completion (million USD)
UNDP project ID	2903	GEF funding	2,265,000	2,265,000
Country	Lao PDR	UNDP	534,900	634,900 ¹
Region	SE Asia	Government	556,200	556,200
Focal Area	Biodiversity	Other	3,345,772	3,345,772
FA Objectives (OP/SP)	Project approved under GEF-5 ² BD Objective 2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors; Outcome 2.2: Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks.	Total Co-funding	4,436,872	4,536,872
Executing agency	UNDP	Total project cost	6,701,872	6,801,872
Implementing agency	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (Department of Planning and Cooperation)	ProDoc Signature (date of project start)		April 19, 2011
Other partners involved	FAO, SDC/TABI, various others involved in project activities	Operational Closing Date:	Proposed April 10, 2016 extended to (no cost extension) December 2016	Actual December 2016

Project description

The Lao PDR “ABP project” is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded full-sized project (FSP) working to conserve biodiversity in agricultural landscapes in Lao PDR through mainstreaming biodiversity focused measures in Lao PDR’s agriculture and land management policies. The project addressed impacts of agriculture on biodiversity both on-site and off-site, with an emphasis on species of global significance, and considered biodiversity at the wider landscape scale within agro-ecosystems. The project began in April 2011, and completed in December 2016. The project is within

¹ An additional cost of \$100,000 was provided in October 2016 , highlighting the commitment towards the achievement of the project objectives.

² Note that while final GEF clearance, CEO Endorsement, occurred in the GEF-5 period, the project was approved for inclusion in the GEF work program during GEF-4 and is using GEF-4 resources. However, the project may be considered as contributing to the GEF-5 strategic results framework targets.

the GEF biodiversity focal area. GEF funding is US\$ 2.27 million, and with planned co-financing of US\$4.44 million the total project budget is US\$6.80 million.

The project is executed under UNDP's National Implementation (NIM) modality (i.e. national execution), with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) Department of Planning and Cooperation as the national executing partner. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was the primary partner for technical assistance.

The Lao PDR ABP project's objective was "to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agricultural biodiversity within farming systems of Lao PDR" which will be realized through two outcomes:

- Outcome 1: National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use and in-situ conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems
- Outcome 2: Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels

Evaluation rating table

The evaluation ratings are presented below based on following the definitions;

<i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution</i> 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	<i>Sustainability ratings:</i> 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	<i>Relevance ratings</i> 2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR) <i>Impact Ratings:</i> 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
<i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

The rating made by the Terminal Evaluation;

Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	Reasons for rating
M&E design at entry	(S)	A manual was developed and used the basis for M&E. Baselines studies were undertaken for the target areas. The manual should have elaborated on procedures for internal evaluations.
M&E Plan Implementation	(MS)	The implementation focus was on collection of data to be able to verify progress in relation to targets set (PIR). Documented evaluations of field activities and evaluation of value of training programmes were never systematically completed. The results of evaluations are the most important parts of a M&E system.
Overall quality of M&E	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings
IA& EA Execution	Rating	Reasons for rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation	(S)	UNDP has to follow NIM procedures for management of this kind of projects. UNDP's recruitment of ABP experts have not been timely. Particularly project staff.
Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	(S)	The first two year period of the project suffered from late recruitments and slow moving project implementation. During the last two years substantial achievements have been made, meaning that most targets have been met
Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	(S)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings
Assessment of Outcome 1	Rating	Reasons for rating
Relevance	(R)	The Outcome is highly relevant
Effectiveness	(MS)	The tasks were systematically implemented with some delay in delivery of results to villagers
Efficiency	(MS)	Due to administrative and financial procedures, start up and implementations of tasks were slightly late
Overall Project Outcome Rating	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings
Assessment of Outcome 2	Rating	Reasons for rating
Relevance	(R)	The Outcome is highly relevant
Effectiveness	(S)	The various capacity development activities were systematically planned and implemented. If time had permitted some follow up training activities had been useful

Efficiency	(S)	Due to administrative and financial procedures, start up and implementations of tasks were slightly late
Overall Project Outcome Rating	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings
Sustainability	Rating	Reasons for scoring
Financial resources:	(ML)	Financial resources are missing to allow the continuation of ABP initiated activities and use of material produced. Maybe follow on funding/projects will be developed or mechanisms developed for cooperation with other ongoing
Socio-political:	(ML)	Top down instructions are the basis for development, where local opportunities and constraints are less used as basis for development.
Institutional framework and governance:	(L)	The institutional framework is institutionalized by having completely formulated NABP II, PBSAP Xiengkhouang and established ABD SSWG as a platform.
Environmental :	(ML)	Short term gains are dominating over long term damages. Even if a reasonable legal frame work is in place, the law enforcement is weak
Overall likelihood of sustainability:	(ML)	Above reasons in combination lead to this scoring
Impact	Rating	Reasons for raring
Scoring:	(M)	On local level and based on initiatives by dedicated farmers or government staff impact may be substantial, but in general much more work in terms of awareness raising, education and extension is required

Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

ABP has achieved their mandate and many results have been created. Overall the institutional Framework for agro-biodiversity conservation related actions by integrating into land use policies and land planning have been set and ABP has therefore been the pioneering project as intended. ABP could be an example for similar projects in term of implementation method and coordination with other agencies working completely formulated NABP II, PBSAP Xiengkhouang and established ABD SSWG as a platform.in agro-biodiversity conservations issues.

The impacts created on the targeted beneficiaries are summarized below will be sustained if ABP initiatives will find continued uses:

Government staff and organizations

ABP has supported Government staff of the implementing partners to enhanced knowledge through the training events arranged, through study tours to neighbor countries and through dialogue with visitors from neighbors during their visits to ABP project sites. Government staffs have through TOT

been equipped with required skills to extend and explain the content of ABP developed tools. The Government staffs involved in ABP activities have now enhanced knowledge in biodiversity conservation issues and how to use tools developed by ABP in formulating local strategies for natural resources management and conservation.

Vertical and horizontal communication within ministries and in between has been eye openers useful for future applications in ordinary working situations and within other projects. As a specific example can be mentioned, that the cooperation with other agencies could contribute as technical service providers.

Villagers

The villagers in ABP target villages have learnt about the agro-biodiversity conservation issue and knowledge. Interested villagers (model farmers) have been provided with opportunities to conserve local plant varieties such as wild tae, fish conservation and Milentha for preservation and livelihood's improvement. Other villagers have observed and in discussions with the model farmers learnt which techniques are feasible and under what conditions.

Weak aspects of ABP

There was no systematic internal evaluation process of strengths and weaknesses of procedures and tools developed, as the focus was more on achieving the targets as according to the log frame.

The selection criteria of target districts and target villages could also have included criteria related to poverty and food security to develop insights into how poorer communities deal with agro-biodiversity issues.

Some agro-biodiversity activities implemented by ABP were not paid much attention by the local partners due to the heavy engagement of TABI in two targeted districts and the initial focus on few priority villages could not be done.

Due to the administrative procedures for planning, reporting and financing, the speed in implementation was slow especially during the first two years.

Recommendations

ABP was a first strategically important project dealing with integrating the biodiversity conservation in land use policies. Accordingly ABP initiated a number of steps to concretize actions for mainstreaming agro biodiversity conservation in land use policies and plans. These included;

- Mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into agricultural and land management plans, laws, strategies and guidelines.

- Capacity building at the Provincial, District and community levels (government staff and farmers) through workshops, trainings and study tours
- Development of links between different actors within Government to jointly and in complementary ways cooperate as well as
- Creation of valued added biodiversity products for farmers` income activities
- Dissemination of results through materials describing techniques, posters, booklets, videos
- IPM/FFS programme, Study tours and seminars to inform, share experiences and network both within Lao PDR but also in the region for south to south cooperation

All these actions are important steps for finding and implementing solutions for mainstreaming agro biodiversity conservation in land use policies and plans.

Lessons learnt

A project with objective and design as ABP need to be long lasting, the ABP project period was too short. First steps in awareness raising, education and testing have been taken, but to create sustainability and lasting impacts, longer duration projects are required.

From the outset of the project it is important to allocate committed full-time counterparts with strong team building skills and technical expertise. In case of failures, effective systems should be in place to quickly and smoothly react without creating tensions.

It is important to allocate sufficient time for in-depth discussions with villages and their conservation and development priorities with help of independents consultants rather than using a top-down wish-list approach

It is important to find ways to institutionalize results; this will be achieved if the project design includes gradual adjustments of procedures to fit into the Lao owned system.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABDI	Agro-biodiversity Initiative
ABP	Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes Project
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BEI	Biotechnology and Ecology Institute (MoST)
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CC	Climate Change
CITES	<i>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species</i>
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DFID	Department for International Development
DFRM	Department of Forest Resource Management (MoNRE)
DLF	Department of Livestock and Fisheries (MAF)
DoA	Department of Agriculture (MAF)
DoF	Department of Forestry (MAF)
DoPC	Department of Planning and Cooperation (MAF)
FALUPAM	Forest and Agricultural Land Use Planning, Allocation and Management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	Farmer Field School
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMO	Genetic Modified Organisms
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
iNGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
ITM	Institute of Traditional Medicine
ITPGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union)
LUP	Land Use Planning
LARReC	Living Aquatic Resources Research Center (NAFRI)
LURAS	Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service (Project)
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoST	Ministry of Sciences and Technology
NABP	National Agro-Biodiversity Programme
NAFRI	Forestry Research Institute
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
NUDP	The Northern Uplands Development Programme
NUoL	National University of Lao PDR
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PBSAP	Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans
PDR	Project Delivery Report
PPC	Plant Protection Center
PPP	Public Private Partnership
ProDoc	Project Document
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Assistance
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TABI	The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WREA	Water Resources and Environment Agency

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

This project *“Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR’s Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes”* (ABP) ended 30 December 2016, after a five year implementation period with a six month no cost extension.

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full-sized and medium-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. The evaluation has used the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact as explained in *UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF funded projects*³.

The TE **purpose** is to provide an independent external view of the progress of the project at the project’s closure, and to provide feedback and recommendations to UNDP and project stakeholders that can help strengthen the project exist strategy and sustainability.

Additionally, the Terminal Evaluation also serves:

- To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments
- To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF-financed UNDP-supported activities
- To contribute to overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefit

The evaluation has aimed at both assessing results and providing recommendations and future directions for possible continued support to the initiatives implemented (compare ToR in annex 1).

1.2. Scope and Methodology

The evaluation team studied documentation related to the project, conducted site visits and interviewed selected project stakeholders (see annexes). Based on the definition in the UNDP guidance, stakeholders are; *“all those who have been or are likely to be affected by the project or activity, those who have participated in or contributed to the project, and those who in other ways have a stake in the outcomes of the project or activity”*.

Documentation was reviewed and included minutes of meetings, quarterly reports, annual reports and products produced under the project. These documents gave an insight to management

³ UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations

processes, accomplishment of outputs and the materials prepared and disseminated. Stakeholder interviews included community members and other beneficiaries in order to determine the project impact, as well as national, provincial and district government staff to determine alignment with relevant policies and priorities. Site visits were also conducted to assess the actual implementation of activities on the ground and the investments made by the project.

As a basis for the evaluation, the team prepared a set of evaluation questions to secure the comprehensive screening of the project (annex 6).

Based on study of documents (annex 5), site visits (annex 2 and 4), interviews (annex 3) and experiences and judgments of the evaluation team, the project performance has been rated with use of the following scales:

<i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution</i> 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS) 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	<i>Sustainability ratings:</i> 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	<i>Relevance ratings</i> 2. Relevant (R) 1.. Not relevant (NR) <i>Impact Ratings:</i> 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
<i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

1.3. Structure of the evaluation report

The structure follows the outline as provided as part of the ToR (Annex 1) i.e.

- An executive summary
- A brief description of the project
- Findings
- Project results including the evaluation team's assessment of overall results, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, country ownership, mainstreaming , sustainability and impact
- Conclusions, recommendations and lessons

2. Project description and development content

2.1. Project start and duration

The ABP project was launched in April 11th 2011 and is coming to its formal end on 30 December 2016 after five and a half years of implementation.

2.2. Problems that the project sought to address

The project document identifies and describes a variety of threats to agro-biodiversity in Lao PDR, and barriers to the effective conservation of agro-biodiversity (section 1.6 and 1.7 of the project document). These are listed as:

Threats

- Replacement of traditional varieties by high yielding and commercial varieties
- The intensification of agriculture is also linked to increased inputs and stabilization of swidden agriculture
- Overharvesting of products from natural habitats that are within the wider agro-ecosystem landscapes
- Conversion from natural ecosystems to less diverse agro-ecosystems
- Vulnerability to invasive alien species and climate change impacts

Barriers

- Biodiversity considerations not properly integrated into national policy and institutional frameworks related to agriculture, land management
- Weak capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels.
- Additional details are provided in the project document and inception report on all the threats and barriers.

The ABP project is in alignment with the Government of Lao PDR's 7th National Socio-economic Development Plan, III (3) - Measures on rural development, poverty eradication and environmental protection to achieve sustainable development.

The project is in alignment with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Outcome 1: By 2011, the livelihoods of poor, vulnerable and food insecure populations are enhanced through sustainable development (within the MDG framework).

The project is also in alignment with the UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme and Country Programme Action Plan as follows:

- **UNDP Strategic Plan Environment and Sustainable Development Primary Outcome:** Mainstreaming Environment and Energy
- **UNDP Strategic Plan Secondary Outcome:** Expanding Access to Environmental and Energy Services to the Poor

- **Expected CP Outcomes(s) - Outcome 1:** Improved and equitable access to land, markets and social and economic services, environmentally sustainable utilization of natural resources.
- **Expected CPAP Output(s) - Output 1.2:** The role of biodiversity, agro-biodiversity, land management and environment in general in the livelihoods improvements and poverty reduction strengthened through enhanced knowledge and management capacity; Output 1.3: Enhanced management capacity of the Government in meeting its international environmental obligations through strengthened implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements and related national policies and legislation.

2.3. Immediate and development objectives of the project

The Lao PDR ABP project's objective is *"to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agricultural biodiversity within farming systems of Lao PDR"* which will be realized through two outcomes with 10 outputs:⁴

2.4. Baseline indicators established

The following baseline indicators were established:

On Objective level (National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use, and in-situ conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems)

- Number of areas of provincial agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use allocation

On Outcome 1 level (National policy and institutional frameworks)

- Institutionalization - Number of new national plans, policies, laws, and guidelines with agro-biodiversity and Number of tools developed to support and enhanced incorporation of agro-biodiversity into national and institutional frameworks.
- Coordination- Number of yearly agro-biodiversity inter-sectoral coordination meetings and national workshops with BD contents.
- Incorporation of Agro-biodiversity - Number of tools developed to support and enhanced incorporation of agro-biodiversity into national and institutional frameworks

On Outcome 2 level (Capacities of mainstreaming BD in local level planning)

- Adopting skills - Number of farmers adopting skills and techniques promoted through FFS and farmer field days and Number of Technical Service Centers in cluster villages with agro-biodiversity conservation. However, some farmers needs to experiment more about the techniques because only one crop tested during the FFS training

⁴ In the project document a third outcome for "Effective Project Management" is included. Edits to the wording of the project outputs was made at the inception phase. These changes are indicated here through underlined italics.

- Planning- Number of cluster villages with pFLUP plans and Number of districts with in-situ agro-biodiversity conservation plans.
- Public-Private engagement in BD - Number of private-public sector agro-biodiversity agreements identified and Number of private-public sector agro-biodiversity agreements.

2.5. Main stakeholders

The main stakeholders at the national level were:

- UNDP
- Implementing Partner
 - Department of Planning and Cooperation (DoPC) of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)
- ABP project management team
 - National Project Coordinator
 - Technical and Operations Manager
 - Financial Officer
 - Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)
 - Two District Facilitators
- UN Food and Agriculture organization
- Other agencies providing consultancy
 - Center of Plant protection (MAF)
 - LARReC
 - Consultants

The main stakeholders at the Provincial level (Luang Prabang and Xiengkhouane) were:

- Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)
- Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (PoNRE)

The main stakeholders at the District level (Phonexay and Phoukoud) were:

- District Administration office (Vice Governor)
- District Agriculture and Forestry office (DAFO)
- District Natural Resources and Environment Office (DoNRE)

Field activities were carried out in cooperation with selected farmers in 7 villages evenly distributed across the 2 target districts. The villages were selected based on their status in relation to agro-biodiversity.

Selected secondary and high schools in the 2 districts were also targets beneficiaries. Other project stakeholders on district levels included Lao Women Union (LWU), Technical Service Centres (TSC).

2.6. Expected results

The project was designed to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity within the farming systems of Lao PDR, strengthening Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels. At the same time, improved agro-biodiversity products marketed for local or international markets needed to be introduced on the ground together with income generating activities to introduce alternative livelihood options for poor rural communities.

The expected results were an initiated and a still continuing process through which the project stakeholders gradually applied knowledge and practices introduced by the project for the improvement of capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels.

3. Findings

3.1. Project design/formulation

The outcomes of the project as designed, were **specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART)**. Specificity was determined in having quantitative outputs and outcomes, as well as some qualitative output, which were of course measurable. Most were determined to be achievable and time bound. However, as the project had to be extended, some time frames were adjusted. As indicated in Section 2, the project was aligned with national priorities and with UNDP programming at both the global and national levels.

Partnerships in the project were identified prior to the project inception. The main partnership was with the UN food and Agriculture Agency (FAO) to provide technical advisory services for the duration of the project. This arrangement was included in the Project Document that was approved by the GEF and was facilitated through a signed Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the two UN Agencies.

3.1.1. Analysis of LFA Results Framework

The objective and the two outcomes were logical and complimentary. Most of the targets set were realistic and achievable. The project managed to implement and tried to achieve all of them. All planned activities were implemented even though the project was delayed at the start.

The targets have to be expressed in measurable values and an overview of to what extent targets set have been met is presented in Annex 7. The ambition level has been set high. One target set was too

ambitious related to number of national plans, policies, laws, and guidelines (identified) incorporating biodiversity, and especially agro-biodiversity and to integrate them in 8th NSEDP (2016-2020) and MAF master plan. The ABP project has provided significant inputs to NBSAP, PBSAP, and the Upland Development Strategy but to implement these plans is still difficult because of the capacity of relevant partners.

3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks

The following major risks were listed in the ProDoc on objective level;

- *Mainstreaming Agro-biodiversity concept and measures in 5 year Development Strategy is externally driven meaning that the process will stop when the project comes to the end. This concept is very new for senior government policy makers of Lao PDR and agro-biodiversity as making a significant contribution to the primary objective of poverty reduction and national development strategy for rural populations is not yet highlighted.*
- Threats to agro-biodiversity by commercialization of agriculture including plantations and replacing traditional varieties with few modern varieties, mono-cropping and uncritical/overuse of pesticides and fertilizers;
- *Competing economic interests erode the base and options for Agro-biodiversity conservation to land use planning meaning that short term gains will be prioritized causing long term damages. There is limited linkages between conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.*
- *Reduced access to land and water meaning that farmers will give up farming and leave the area*
- *Population growth meaning constraints on availability of natural resources, particularly land resources and pressure on natural biodiversity.*
- *Land use planning is still an issue in the target areas. As mentioned in the ProDoc, Land ownership and access rights will continue to be unclear and land allocation will be slow.*

On the outcome level risk related to lack of coordination between actors including, slow project start, too complicated M&E etc were mentioned. All these risks are and have been real risks. The possibilities for the project management to counter the risks have not been easy tasks.

It could be noted that Sustainable use of agro-biodiversity does not lead to sufficient economic gains or incentives for households at the project site to make them economically attractive. There is now a general move of population from rural areas to urban areas in Lao PDR. The decisions to move are not necessarily related to inappropriate use of agro-biodiversity and sustainable use but generated by better livelihood options through income generation in the urban environment.

3.1.3. Lessons from other relevant projects into project design

During the project preparation period and project formulation, data and experiences were systematically screened (Ministries, UN agencies, Donors, Projects, NGOs, Mass organizations and individuals with experiences and knowledge from work in the sector in Lao PDR). A series of workshops were also held at national and regional levels to inform about ideas and to gather views.

Decisions on how to design the project and which focal areas to select including geographical areas (districts and villages) were based on this process. This process was solid and very relevant.

3.1.3. Planned stakeholder participation

The stakeholder participation as planned in the design of the project has been achieved. This has created strengthened horizontal links (between government bodies in Vientiane and between provincial and district bodies respectively) and strengthened vertical links between ministries in Vientiane and its outlets on provincial and district levels. The entry points for interaction has been concrete tasks related to agro-biodiversity conservation and mainstreaming into the land policies and plans, in terms of, capacity building, development and application of tools (manuals, procedures, technical tools).

3.1.4. Replication approach

Lao PDR has a wide variety of preconditions for supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity conservation, including areas of natural resources, policies and regulations on forest protection, drought, flood and erosion problems. Lao PDR has also areas with villages with a wide variety of status of wealth from severe poverty to well off villages.

From the point of view of replicating approaches to mainstreaming agro-biodiversity conservation in land policies and plans, there have accordingly been valuable learning opportunities for ABP and even more importantly for GoL through work in the selected target districts and villages in different part of Lao PDR.

The inclusion of villages where natural resources and bio-diversity of natural resources and poverty incident were still more dominant, could have been an asset for learning and later on for replication.

3.1.5. UNDP comparative advantage

The UNDP Country Programme 2012 – 2015⁵ and the UNDAF (2012-2016) Outcome 7 and Output 7.3 on government assurance of sustainable natural resources management through improved governance and community participation. More specifically, the ABP project has contributed to local land use planning, conservation and management (including regulations on protection and sustainable

⁵ UNDP CPD 2012 - 2015

use) of wild tea, medicinal plants, Melienta and fish. Further, the ABP project has assisted the local and national government in promoting protection and sustainable use of landraces/ varieties and native livestock as well as farming systems/ecosystems/landscapes in the NABP-II and PBSAP for Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang Provinces. There are important links between the UNDP programme on Ensuring Sustainable Natural Resources and Environmental Management and agro-biodiversity conservation and corresponding sections in the NSEDP 2011 – 2015⁶ and NSEDP 2016 – 2020.

UNDP has the co-chairing responsibility in the Round Table Process, which aims at securing international development assistance to Lao PDR is aligned with national development priorities. UNDP has assisted GoL to strengthening the capacities to formulate and implement strategies and plans related to agro-biodiversity conservation and natural resources management.

UNDP is the co-chair of the SubSector Working Group on Disasters, Climate Change and Environment under the Sector Working Group of Environment and Natural Resources.

3.1.6. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector in Lao PDR

ABP has through capacity development training events for Government staff, study tours, seminars, and workshops spread knowledge about the projects, its objective, outcomes and ongoing activities. These efforts have themselves been invitations to cooperation between ABP and other related Lao based projects. As we can see that ABP has collaborated with many centres/departments under MAF and iNGOs working in the same fields of action.

One strong link between projects in this connection has been the Sub Sector Working Group on Agro-biodiversity), which has been the means of communication it has aimed to be so far. The SSWG met 3 times each year to discuss about the agro-biodiversity strategy and action plans. ABP collaborated with TABI for land use planning, which integrated ABD in the land use planning.

3.1.7. Management arrangements

As a UNDP-supported GEF-financed project, the UNDP procedures for financial management were a precondition for project implementation (NIM)⁷ (i.e. rules for release and management of funds from UNDP to the project).

For the implementation of the technical parts of the project, the GoL procedures both in horizontal and vertical communication were the preconditions (e.g. formal letters from PM to implementing partners to start activities).

3.2. Project implementation

3.2.1. Adaptive management

⁶ The 7th National Socio Economic Development Plan 2011 - 2015

⁷ NIM Rules LOA/MOU 2012

Formally the project was approved for implementation through April 2016, but an extension was requested for eight additional months, so the project was extended through to 30 December 2016, but with no extra funding. The project extension was requested by the Government and approved by the GEF through UNDP.

Adaptive management was based on the recommendations of the MTR⁸ which was carried out in July 2014. Below is a summary of the recommendations with comments related to action taken⁹;

MTR - Recommendation number	Action taken and comments
1. The ABP project should activate and utilize the PSC, representing a selection of key stakeholders in the agro-biodiversity realm. The PSC should serve its intended monitoring, oversight, information sharing, and stakeholder engagement functions. The PSC should be the main oversight mechanism for the project, with the opportunity to provide inputs to annual project workplanning, and approval of annual work planning and budgeting. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Done and implemented
2. This review recommends that UNDP, MAF, and FAO continue to urgently work together to respond to the audit recommendations, furthering the good progress made thus far, and ensure that the same issues are not raised in the audit for 2014. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Done and implemented
3. This review recommends that the ABP execution and implementation partners ensure prior to the 4th quarter of 2014 that adequate human resources will be available in the 2nd half of implementation to fully support highly dynamic and productive project execution, so that the project may achieve the greatest results possible. This could imply contracting additional qualified national- level PMU staff, but in the interest of time, under current circumstances this may just mean revising the TORs of the current CTA and ensuring the budget is available for the CTA position for the remainder of the project. As such, this review recommends a re-assessment of the budgeting for the CTA position for the 2nd half of the project. [UNDP, FAO, PSC]	Done and very valuable
4. This review recommends that the main project execution and implementation partners take immediate action to clearly document and justify actual co- financing amounts committed, with the goal of ensuring that the originally planned co- financing is contributed by the end of the project. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]	Done, The CO-financing was estimated and report in the PIR2014/2015.

⁸ Mid Term Review Evaluation of ABP 2014

⁹ Management Response to MTR May 2016

5. UNDP, FAO, and MAF should strengthen their monitoring and oversight of the project to ensure that the project is fully on-track, there are no bureaucratic delays, and any project risks are identified well in advance and proactively addressed. All project risks should be reviewed at the monthly technical coordination meetings, with discussion about oncrete steps to address risks, and follow-up before the next technical coordination meeting. This review also specifically supports the recommendation from the project audits that decisions made at the monthly technical coordination meetings must be followed-through on in a timely manner. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Done but the coordination between ABP project team and local was somehow difficult.
6. ABP project workplanning should be done in a transparent and consultative manner with all key project partners, with final approval by the PSC. Workplanning for each year should be done in the 4th quarter of the previous year, for approval by the PSC before the end of the year. It must also be assured through the workplanning process that the project activities remain focused, and contribute directly to project results targets. [PMU]	Done and implemented.
7. The ABP project should strengthen support and oversight of field-level activities through quarterly monitoring visits, linked with the district planning meetings. This may be necessary for the remainder of the project, but at least should occur until the ABDI sub-projects are in mid-implementation. [PMU]	Done and implemented, ABP facilitators help to provide monthly report
8. It is recognized that the ABP project and TABI will not be carried out through a joint execution structure as originally planned, and any efforts to establish a joint execution approach with TABI should be dropped at this point. However, it is still necessary to improve coordination with TABI. The ABP project could still potentially utilize the same PSC structure as TABI, as the national stakeholders are likely to be the same for the two projects, and leveraging the same oversight mechanism would support a programmatic approach. There should be a review of TABI and ABP workplans to ensure harmonization and avoid overlap. If logistically feasible, the ABP project and TABI should share physical office space, which would allow the national project coordinator to play his joint role more effectively as the manager of both projects, and which would strengthen coordination between the two projects. [MAF, PMU, UNDP]	Done regularly by the join PSC of TABI and ABP
9. To ensure cost-effectiveness by the end of the project, the project team should focus on delivering project results within the planned timeframe of the end of 2016. [PMU, UNDP, FAO]	Done and implemented. All activities were completed and reported by CTA
10. The ABP project should use the GEF biodiversity focal area tracking tool (available on the GEF website, and completed previously by this project) as a guide toward results-based management, by drawing focus and attention to outcome level	Done. GEF biodiversity tracking tools had been added to the GEF PIR Report.

results focused on the implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of agriculture sector policies supporting conservation of agro- biodiversity. The tracking tool provides inputs to one of the portfolio level indicators for the GEF biodiversity focal area results framework, and is a basic but important means of results monitoring. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]	
11. In the 2nd half of implementation the ABP project needs to have a focused and results-oriented approach; this can be guided by a revised project results framework, including a focus on GEF- biodiversity focal area strategic targets, such a progress toward a score of “6” for mainstreaming of agro-biodiversity in agriculture policies and regulatory frameworks (as assessed through the GEF biodiversity tracking tool), and hectares under sustainable management. This review, therefore, recommends that the project results framework be revised immediately with inputs from UNDP, FAO, and the PMU, for approval by the PSC in the 4th quarter of 2014. This review provides suggestions for revised results framework indicators and targets in Annex 9 of this review report. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]	Completed and very important
12. The project includes an information-sharing component, but little appears to have been done under this part of the project thus far. In the 2nd half of implementation the ABP project needs to emphasize a strategic focus on knowledge generation and information sharing. This should include a basic online presence, such as a minimal web page positioned on the overall MAF website. This could also include activities such as a brief quarterly electronic newsletter updating targeted stakeholders on project activities. By the 4th quarter of 2014 the ABP project should have a webpage as an information dissemination portal, as a sub-page of a large relevant website, such as the MAF website. [PMU, MAF, FAO]	Completed. Still weak for ABP communication.
13. To consolidate results and enhance the likelihood for the sustainability of project results, this review recommends that the project team and key stakeholders focus on documenting and publishing the lessons and experiences of the ABDI projects, ensure that the NABP II is finalized and adopted, and ensure that a few (i.e. 2-4) key publications documenting agro-biodiversity in Lao PDR are produced before the end of the project. The project could also, for example, provide information on the ABDI project experience to be included in the TABI newsletter. In addition, the project should produce a document highlighting the importance in Lao PDR of agro-biodiversity for resilience and adaptation to climate change at least six months prior to project completion. [PMU, NAFRI, FAO]	Steps have been taken – but time has been lacking to complete

<p>14. The project should plan for a specific external independent “sub-evaluation” of the ABDI project portfolio, upon the completion of a majority of the sub-projects. This would not need to be done by an international consultant, and in fact it would likely be much more effective for it to be done by a Lao speaker who understands the rural context. The evaluation should systematically document the results and lessons of the sub- project portfolio, including outcome and impact level results. This “sub-evaluation” would be a critical input to the ABP terminal evaluation, as the terminal evaluation would not have the capacity to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the sub-projects. Similar documentation of sub-project portfolio results have been carried out in UNDP- GEF projects in Bulgaria (GEF ID #2730), Croatia (GEF ID #2105), and Hungary (GEF ID #1527). [PMU, PSC]</p>	<p>Steps have been taken – but it is still difficult because budgeting procedure was at central and local partners does not have capacity to do so.</p>
<p>15. This review recommends that the project shift the focus of Outputs 2.5 and 2.6 to address improving the understanding of the economic incentives and market forces that threaten various aspects of agro- biodiversity in Lao PDR, with a primary focus on crop and crop- associated biodiversity. Economic incentives and market forces are one of primary drivers of threats to agro-biodiversity as outlined in the project document, but do not appear to be clearly understood or documented. This is a significant gap in the project’s logic chain. [PSC, UNDP, FAO]</p>	<p>Done. The project’s result framework has been modified.</p>
<p>16. his review also recommends that UNDP and the ABP project take whatever steps necessary to overcome any bureaucratic issues to the ABP project providing financial support for the organization of the agro- biodiversity sub-sector working group meetings, as this is clearly and specifically indicated in the project document. This would also provide the ABP project with the opportunity to ensure that the working group fulfills its opportunity to be a dynamic strategic guiding body. [UNDP, MAF-DoP, PMU, FAO]</p>	
<p>17. The project results focus must be strengthened, and consequently the project would benefit from an internal discussion to generate a clearly articulated project logic chain, such as can be generated under the GEF Independent Evaluation Office “Review of Outcome to Impacts” methodology.1 [UNDP, FAO, MAF]</p>	<p>Done and very valuable</p>
<p>18. While integrating biodiversity considerations into relevant sector policies, plans, and legislation is a major focus of the project, this review recommends that the project should immediately apply a very focused scope in working on this issue, only taking the opportunity to provide inputs to relevant new policies being developed or revised. The project likely does</p>	<p>Done, APB provided regularly inputs to the ongoing legislation as well as policy and strategy work</p>

not have the time or resources to carry out a comprehensive adjustment or revision to all Lao policies and legislation currently on the books that are related to agro- biodiversity. [PSC, MAF, PMU, FAO, UNDP]	
19. National policy priorities in the agriculture sector tend to relate to national production targets, and the conditions and inputs necessary to achieve those targets. This can make it difficult for broader critical agriculture sector goals, such as conservation of Lao PDR's globally significant agro-biodiversity, to be given sufficient attention and priority. This review recommends that the ABP project support the agro-biodiversity sub-sector working group to develop national targets for agro- biodiversity related production, and conservation targets. [PMU]	Done and very important. ABP supported SSWGABD to develop national targets for agro- biodiversity related production, and conservation targets

It can be concluded that the MTR foresaw many of the problems APB had, to on time prepare for use of experiences gained after end of the project period, and the recommendations helped ABP to adopt actions to improve the chances for sustaining use of the valuable project results.

3.2.2. Partnership arrangements

For the systematic process of implementation a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established and chaired by Vice Minister of MAF. The PSC had annual meetings to discuss progress made on project implementation, to take related decisions and to review and approve the next year's Annual Workplan.

The main oversight mechanism in place has been the monthly coordination meetings between the PMU, UNDP, and FAO. UNDP has also conducted an annual "spot check" of execution of activities in the field. In addition, the project has had audits conducted annually.

Mainly the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) in Phoukout and Phonexay districts have been the key entry point for the local collaboration by having delegated implementation responsibilities for a total of 10 local agro-biodiversity initiatives. ABP project team and UNDP had quarterly meeting with the Local partners.

The regular monthly meetings are an important part of the institutionalized procedures of Lao PDR in which besides GoL internal matters, important ongoing project activities are presented and discussed.

The GEF focal point in GoL was also continuously informed about the project and the progress made and invited to participate in project events.

The project partnership arrangements were solidly anchored into the Lao and UNDP system partly through the application of ordinary procedures for meetings/information sharing and further strengthened by the project designed mechanisms for cooperation, information sharing and decision making.

3.2.3. Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

A systematic screening of ABP and its performance was undertaken during the MTR. The recommendations from the MTR have been used for adjustments in project operations. This procedure was also stated in the M&E manual¹⁰, which was developed for the project based on the UNDP procedures for project implementation.

Additionally, all the annual PIR's were completed by the project and these were reviewed in the Terminal Evaluation. Along with the recommendations of the MTR and the findings of the PIR, the adaptive management techniques applied covered three main areas:

Management – there was a change of the department within the Ministry as Implementing Partner

Targets – Re-alignment of targets, with the approval the GEF Regional Technical Advisor, to ensure accuracy of data presented

Policy Framework and Dialogue – Regarding the establishment of the ABD Sub Sector Working as a part of the Government's official Aid Effectiveness Platform

These and other areas are covered in detail in Section 3.2.1 (Adaptive Management).

The main focus of project operations was to ensure that the expected results and agreed targets were achieved.

3.2.4. Project Finance

In the table below the actual project funding is displayed.

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes "(ABP project)"				
		Financing	Funding at endorsement (million USD)	Funding at completion (million USD)
UNDP project ID	2903	GEF funding	2,265,000	2,265,000
Country	Lao PDR	UNDP	534,900	634,900 ¹¹

¹⁰ M&E Manual for ABP 2011

¹¹ An additional cost of \$100,000 was provided in October 2016 , highlighting the commitment towards the achievement of the project objectives.

Region	SE Asia	Government	556,200	556,200
Focal Area	Biodiversity	Other	3,345,772	3,345,772
FA Objectives (OP/SP)	Project approved under GEF-5 ¹² BD Objective 2: and Outcome 2.2:.	Total Co-funding	4,436,872	4,536,872
Executing agency	UNDP	Total project cost	6,701,872	6,801,872

In reality the co-financing that was not cash contribution should have been labeled parallel funding to better clarify relationships between the projects and the donors. Parallel funding is however accepted as co-funding, if it has contributed to the achievements of results of a project.

In the project document , it is also stated that “ *As part of the project implementation strategy project management will be pro-actively engaged to source further co-finance during the implementation period*”. The PMU prepared two project proposals (EU and the Arabic Development Fund), but none of them were successful, meaning that no additional co-funding was received.

The UNDP-supported GEF-financed project inputs are carefully accounted for¹³ and audited by independent audit companies¹⁴ on annual basis (the audit of expenditures for 2015, will take place after the end of the project). The Audits have only minor remarks on use of fund and this is the result of the strict rules for fund management at UNDP through the NIM.

The project went over the originally determined budget because of the required extension to complete the work and the required cost for the technical advisor. However, the delays in project implementation during the course of the project actually resulted in delayed expenditures also, so funds were available to complete the required activities. UNDP supported by providing additional funds in the final year to FAO to cover the costs of the technical advisor to the end of the project. Due diligence was exercise in the expenditure of funds and UNFP procurement policies and guidelines were adhered to.

Government co-financing was completely integrated into the project and included in-kind co-financing for office space and staff time. As noted before the parallel co-financing should have been indicated as such. Opportunities for engaging with parallel co-financiers were sought throughout the project and included ensuring that synergies among projects were maximized.

¹² Note that while final GEF clearance, CEO Endorsement, occurred in the GEF-5 period, the project was approved for inclusion in the GEF work program during GEF-4 and is using GEF-4 resources. However, the project may be considered as contributing to the GEF-5 strategic results framework targets.

¹³ Cumulative Financial Report from 2011 to 30 June 2015 (2015)

¹⁴ Audit of ABP for 2014 (2015)

Partnership with the TABI Project and the formation of the ABD Sub Sector Working have been important aspects of integration into the broader development framework and towards sustainability of project initiatives.

3.2.5 Monitoring and evaluation design at entry and implementation

The ABP project M&E plan is outlined in the project document under Part 5, p. 69. The project document describes each of the planned M&E activities, including roles, responsibilities, and timeframe. The identified M&E activities include inception workshop and report, annual progress reporting (APR/PIR), PSC meetings, quarterly status reports, the independent mid-term and terminal evaluations, project terminal report, audit, and monitoring visits from UNDP and FAO. The M&E system was created through a process, starting with the development of a manual and managed only by CTA and project provincial facilitators.

GEF SP-2 Tracking Tool Score for policy and regulatory frameworks has been added. One of key indicators is to develop and improve capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn. ABP could achieved this indicator and aligned with the M&E framework of the project. All indicators were followed up by the ABP project.

The resulting M&E system is a tradeoff between the energy and resources needed for implementation of project activities and the energy and resources required for M&E activities i.e. the more time spent on M&E – the less time is left for implementation.

It would have been very useful if more time had been allocated to systematically screen and analyze what has been successful and what is now expanding “on its own” and what is less successful and why and to feed this into the third step Learning and knowledge management (Outcome 3) and also to reflect on how the results could be used after the ending of the project.

For training and study tours the participants had to complete evaluation forms, indicating their views and suggestions on the event. Similarly, systematic analysis of these forms with the systematic conclusions and feeding back into Learning and Knowledge Management would have been valuable.

In terms of at project end link back to the baseline studies and draw conclusions about changes and related activities, most of activities have been recently implemented for last two years before the end of the project. These activities have just introduced to the farmers such as FFS, FCZ, Wild tea conservation areas but there are no properly supporting activities (e.g monitoring or impact assessment for local partners) are provide. So for the time constraints have not made this possible to follow up and to provide advice or adjustment.

At the end of ABP, the risk is now that the system will not be used any longer, as no field project successors who will follow up the activities and as no Government staffs so far are assigned to maintain the M and E system and follow up the continuing implementation of all project products () - it is an ABP project system product which has been institutionalized (FFS, tools, guides, manuals...), but could be applied at PAFO or PONRE for provincial level due to lack of fund and exit strategy plans or any scaling up action for sustaining the project outputs.

Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating	Reasons for rating
M&E design at entry	(S)	A manual was developed and used the basis for M&E. Baselines studies and Impact studies were undertaken for the target areas for potentials of biodiversity and programmes implemented by ABP. Many reports were in English
M&E Plan Implementation	(MS)	The implementation focus was on collection of data to be able to verify progress in relation to targets set (PIR). Documented evaluations of field activities and evaluation of value of training programmes were never systematically completed.
Overall quality of M&E	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings

3.2.6. UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation/execution

UNDP has throughout the life of the project maintained frequent contact with ABP project team, both formal and informal, through regularly scheduled meetings, participation on the Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings, provision of feedback on plans and reports and through keeping ABP informed about any event or development within UNDP related to ABP.

UNDP focused on ensuring results were delivered in timely manner and in keeping with UNDP Policies and Guidelines. Risk management was an on-going process and is reflected in the annual PIR's.

The Executing Agency (DoPC/ABP) has had much turn over in staffing and has not been able to systematically undertake planned activities, which has led to the some troubles in delay and in completing the activities planned. However, the project team could manage to implement the project's activities and achieved all project activities.

Overall the quality of implementation is commendable and within a limited time, ABP has produced substantial results.

IA& EA Execution	Rating	Reasons for rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation	(S)	UNDP has to follow NIM procedures for management of this kind of projects. UNDP's recruitment of ABP experts have not been timely. There has been a frequent turnover of staff at ABP office.
Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	(MS)	The first two year period of the project suffered from management and implementation issues and slow moving project implementation.
Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings

3.3 Project Results

3.3.1. Overall results including relevance, effectiveness and efficiency

On Objective level (Supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity)

The project has developed an **institutional framework for agro biodiversity conservation** in Lao PDR, for which now a number of tools (material, manuals and procedures) are available and where the implementing partners have defined roles and responsibilities. It has basically been implemented in 4 steps – partly parallel in between IPs but through a coordinated process

1. Support to strategies plans by integrating agro-biodiversity conservation
2. Land use planning and delimitation of area under improved management for Agro-biodiversity conservation
3. Identification of agro-biodiversity taxonomic groups
4. Capacity building and extension

For continued use and development of the framework, there is a need of a Lead agency, which has staff and financial resources. At all levels of the Government, the lack of funding has been stated as the main reason for difficulties to apply results beyond the ending of ABP. Most of extension activities have just been implemented and need to be followed up closely.

The most suitable lead agency would be the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MAF) as they are Chair of the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development (SWG ARD under MAF) and the Sub-sector Working Group on Agro-biodiversity is under this Sector Working Group. Responsibility for implementation of the National Agro-biodiversity Programme II (NABP II) rests with

the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) which is also a department under MAF. ABP is the first piloting project dealing with the integration of agro biodiversity into agricultural and land management policies and planning. The ABP outputs should be capitalized and duplicated in other regions where agro-biodiversity is an issue.

The future use and application of government driven planning tools (fPLUPs, NPSAP-XK, NPB-II) will depend on Government funding or ongoing projects, which are ready to adapt ABP products and provide funding.

On village and farm levels, some ABP interventions will be used beyond the ending of the project, others will be discontinued, based on assessment of the feasibility by the villagers. Among the most successful interventions are various Oyster mushroom/wild species conservation (Wild tea, Melientha, Fish conservation zones). The access to markets is in this connection an important sustainability factor. The Public-Private partnership for Value chain development will need more support and developed for the future.

Other successful technical interventions are the introduction of IPM programmes under Farmer Field School (FFS) activity and demonstration plots for FFS. The concept of agro-biodiversity was introduced and promoted to apply for rice cultivation and vegetable/home gardens for agro-biodiversity conservation. Even if for the integration of biodiversity concept in farming system, there are now risks that IPM techniques will be abandoned due to absence of continuing follow-up by the FFS team. It should be noted that IPM techniques/programme need a couple of years (at least 2-3 years) to produce results.

When promising techniques are scaled out, the basis for their introduction should be the responsibilities of the farmers to invest and cover costs on their own. The ability of farmers to invest also depend on their economic status. The well-off are obviously able to invest more (and take more risks) than poorer farmers. The access to suitable credit options have therefore also to be considered (interest rates, amortization terms).

On Outcome 1 level (Legal framework support)

The mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into agricultural and land management legislation, including the development and promotion of policies that encourage and support sustainable use of agro-biodiversity in agricultural landscapes has been carried out. The ABP project has together with its implementing partners developed tools and organized workshops/training events for agro-biodiversity conservation in order to be a mediator/coordinator for supporting and enhancing incorporation of agro-biodiversity into national and institutional framework. Linked to the tools the knowledge among the implementing partners has increased. The most important tools and resulting products are;

Support to strategies plans

The ABP worked in cooperation with different partners to mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into agricultural and land management legislation, including the development and promotion of policies that encourage and support sustainable use of agro-biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. ABP supported and contributed inputs to the development of strategic plans. Number of new national plans, policies, strategies, and guidelines with agro-biodiversity concerns were developed such as Upland development strategy, the second **National** Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NABP) to 2015, the AichiTargets in the 5th National Report to the CBD, Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Xieng Khouang Province (PBSAP-XK), National Agro-biodiversity Programme (NABP II), and Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP). These outputs are very relevant and useful for the national action plans to protect and sustainably use of natural resources. The ABP helped to develop the institutional framework to conserve the agro-biodiversity at provincial level. However, to implement these strategic plans, it needs some continuing support and financial support for local partners who directly benefit. Coordination between key stakeholders is still a key challenges to achieve the success of the implementation of strategic plans.

Agro-biodiversity coordination

The ABP cooperated with the sector working groups on Agricultural and Rural development and Environment and Natural resources and has participated in some of the semi-annual meetings of sector workgroup of the Environment & Natural Resources (SWG ENR under MoNRE) in Agriculture and Rural Development (SWG ARD under MAF) meetings. Moreover, the project has been instrumental in establishing the sub-sector working group on Agro-biodiversity, which was launched in September 2013. The preparation of NABP-II was also based on recommendations from this forum. An informal suggestion from NAFRI to establish a coordination committee covering all conventions and treaties related to agriculture, environment and natural resources (such as CBD, ITPGRFA, RAMSAR, CITES and CC), unfortunately has not yet materialized. However, the last meeting of ABP, these issues will be reconsidered and highlighted for other projects and key donors.

At local level provincial and district authorities meet regularly to discuss development issues including progress of ongoing projects, but unfortunately little feed back to the project. This was due to problem of coordination and reporting the outputs of ABP activities to the provincial authority. Reporting and coordinating with the provincial Authority such as Provincial Governance office is the key action to be considered for the ABP project because it could push forwards the implementation of strategic plans at provincial level.

Capacity development

The integration of sustainable use and conservation of agro-biodiversity was highlighted through several meeting and interventions` implemented at central and local level. Many workshops and

trainings were provided and experimented at local level. The technical capacity development of local staff was mainly done through the on-job training including trainings of trainers in IPM of more than 70 extension workers and teachers. However, these events provided only basic knowledge on agro-biodiversity conservation. Deep understanding and how to implementing the development approach still need some supports and interventions in the target areas, particularly where the livelihood depends on natural resources. The project helped to develop the strategies and action plan on agro-biodiversity conservation for the provinces but many local staff did not have opportunities to implement their knowledge and capacities in implementing these action plans. From the field visit in Xiangkhouang, many PONRE has not completed the implementation of the PBSAP. Some technical supports and funds are required to follow up the plans.

Communication tools

A number of tools have been used to communicate and awareness raise agro-biodiversity such as *Production* information/guides for farmers (oyster mushroom production step, medicinal plant book), Training of Trainers materials, brochures (project activities, wild mushrooms, NABP II), Success Stories/Case Stories, Technical reports and booklets for publications and demonstration plots for famers and the public under IPM programme (guides and manuals). These manuals and books are very interesting and useful for other public on agro-biodiversity conservation. However, these manuals have been recently completed printing in colored booklets and need to be distributed to the central and local level.

At Pak Tak Ke Botanical Garden in Luang Prabang, ABP supported the establishment of four ethno-botanical plants to cure digestion problems, skin diseases, disorders, and fractures. Now a day, they have been opened for a public to come to see and learn. Moreover, Various mass media tools have been utilized such as newspapers, TV, and Youtube (video IPM rice and biodiversity day) have been used for communicating the project. These communicating channels can be attractive for national and international visitors but the content need to be updated for maintaining the materials.

ABP organized several meetings promoting Agro-biodiversity and networking on promotion of agro-biodiversity at sector working group meeting, presentations at field during the visit of the UNDP Administrator, Ms. Helen Clark, visits of FAO Rome based permanent representatives, close collaboration with the FAO IPM Programme, TABI and DARWIN projects has continued and regular informal meetings are done with LURAS and the ICBF projects, where also lessons learned are discussed.

To be able to efficiently support the use and continuity of implementing ABP developed activities and communication tools, funding is required, which would allow engagement of resource persons, reproduction of material and operation costs such as fuel, maintenance of vehicles and DSA for Government staff and resource persons.

Impact on beneficiaries

- The Government staffs involved in this exercises have now enhanced knowledge in use of the tools developed and have understanding of what villagers want and prioritize with the variations in preconditions depending on location of villages in relation to national resources management and agro-biodiversity conservation.
- Vertical and horizontal communications within ministries and in between have been eye openers useful for future applications in ordinary working situations and within other projects.
- The Local Government staffs exposed to the strategies and planning exercises have new insights into importance of planning and implementing for national resources protection and agro-biodiversity conservation at provincial and district levels.

Assessment of Outcome 1	Rating	Reasons for rating
Relevance	(R)	The Outcome is highly relevant
Effectiveness	(MS)	The tasks were systematically implemented with some delay in delivery of results to villagers
Efficiency	(MS)	Due to administrative and financial procedures, start up and implementations of tasks were slightly late
Overall Project Outcome Rating	(MS)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings

On Outcome 2 level (Capacities and Incentives to mainstream biodiversity)

Through FFS supported by ABP and FAO, various training events and study tours have been organized for staff of MAF and MoNRE at national, provincial and district levels to increase their capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels. For this outcome, indicators have been achieved although it has been difficult to assess the adoption of knowledge and skills. In case of IPM in schools, the District Education Office staff have been trained and made IPM modules and FFSs with school classes.

Another important part of capacity building has been the TOT of district and TSC staff as well as community leaders for them to be able to further use and spread knowledge related to ABP and agro-biodiversity conservation. ABP has not only provided TOT training within the target districts but to staff from all districts in Luangprabang and Xiengkhouang provinces. In addition a total of 215 students have gone through a IPM/FFS course at three schools.

Local capacity development

During the project period, the local capacity development support to the Technical Service Centers (TSCs) and DAFOs has shifted from basic development training including on-the job-training on

preparation of local Agro-biodiversity Initiatives to monitoring and sustaining on going local activities for Phoukout and Phonexay districts. In Phoukout District, the local officers from DAFO is continuing implementing IPM, Organic production of KKN rice, IPM, Wild Mushrooms, Fish Conservation, and Wild Tea. In the Phonexay District, Nambor TSC plays an important role in the implementation of Oyster Mushrooms, IPM, and Melientha activities whereas the Fish Conservation activities are mainly the responsibility of DAFO. The Nambor TSCs is also responsible for running a small lab for producing mushroom spawns. However, equipment and tools were damaged and need to be repaired. TSC staffs need some funding to support their continuity of implementing their knowledge and skills at village/community levels.

Participatory LUP integrating agro-biodiversity conservation plans

ABP supported the TABI Project in finalizing/validating the Forest and Land Use Plans Allocation and Management in Phoukout District (Kheung Long-Hang, Tai and Long Khang clusters) and in Phonexay District (Sopjia, Donekham and Chomjieng clusters). By the end of dry season 2015/16 a total of 36 villages based FALUPAM have been approved by the district governors including the allocation of village conservation areas. ABP has completed the conservation target of 100,000 ha under the PBSAPs, however, some activities in action plans have not fully completed by PONRE, particularly those of forestry resources management. This was due to lack of fund to support the activities and due to the change of responsibilities of line departments (Department of Forest resource management MONRE has moved to MAF).

The ABP project has supported Phoukout and Phonexay districts with allocation of conservation areas. This activity was considered one key essential work for supporting to achieve ABP's overall objective. Conservation of biodiversity with natural resource management plans is a main factor of successful implementation of PBSAPs in two target provinces. Many districts under ABP adopted and implemented the action plans and land allocation for fish conservation zones, wild tea conservation areas, and medical plant conservation areas. These conservation areas help to protect and increase the agro-biodiversity for communities, however, an additional supports (technical and financial) is still required in order to maintain the zones and to ensure the sustainability of long-term use of these natural resources.

Local ABD In-situ conservation interventions

Target districts have now an in-situ agro-biodiversity conservation plans and related activities have been implemented with proactive participation of villagers including Fish Conservation (Phoukout and Phonexay districts), Oyster Mushroom domestication (Phonexay District), Wild tea Ngodphae village, Melientha conservation and domestication (Phonexay district), Medicinal plants conservation, Wild Mushrooms database, Organic Rice and Rice FFS Activities through IPM programme. The project

provided supports to develop capacities. Some sources of funding are important to ensure the continuation of implementing the activities.

Value added biodiversity products

ABP helped to promote and develop some value added agro biodiversity products such as oyster mushroom cultivation in five villages, wild tea production and processing in Ngodphae village, survey of wild mushroom “Xiengkhoung Matsutake”(Het waii mushroom), and domestication of wild Melientha vegetables (*Phak waan*). These activities have been implemented at the middle way of the project and provided some interesting results in term of production. At special events, the project has also produced labels for small tea bags and tried to develop the partnership of local traders and marketing for value added products. However, some activities such as oyster mushroom and wild tea seem to be stopped due to the damage of materials and equipment for production and to the low quality. Some activities will provide the first harvesting in 2017-2018 for Melientha. So, It is important to provide continuous supports to ensure the effectiveness and to follow up the success of the activities.

Publications analyzing economic forces

This indicator has been added into the logframe of ProDoc and related activities were designed. ABP has prepared three publications covering two biodiversity subgroups. Two studies on fungi (wild mushrooms in general and “Xieng Khouang Matsutake” in particular) and one study on Phou San Wild Tea were carried out. Some activities were implemented to promote these two products at village level such as improved processing method and packaging for wild tea in Ngodphae village (XK), and some supports could have been provided to further development of these value added agro biodiversity products.

Cross cutting incentive

ABP has pursued some agro-biodiversity cross cutting incentive including domestication of wild valuable species (wild tea and Melientha) and promoting clean organic rice by utilizing bio-insecticides (IPM/FFs programme) to replace chemical use within target villages. It is still an issue to follow up the outcomes/impact of these activities.

It is now essential to find ways to maintain the capacity developed and further expand the capacity through initiatives by the Government bodies to, stimulate other projects and donors to support follow on projects.

Impact on beneficiaries

- ABP has achieved the outcome indicators although it has been difficult to assess the adoption of knowledge and skills. More than 1,000 farmers have been trained in agro biodiversity conservation through IPM/FFS courses and workshops at central, provincial and local levels.
- ABP helped Government staff of the implementing partners to enhance knowledge through the training events arranged, through study tours to neighbor countries and through dialogue with visitors from neighbor during their visits to ABP project sites. They have also been exposed to reactions and questions from the village level.

Assessment of Outcome 2	Rating	Reasons for rating
Relevance	(R)	The Outcome is highly relevant
Effectiveness	(S)	In spite of some difficulties at the first two years of implementation, various capacity development activities were systematically planned and implemented. If time had permitted some follow up training activities had
Efficiency	(S)	Due to administrative and financial procedures, start up and implementations of tasks were slightly late
Overall Project Outcome Rating	(S)	This scoring is a result of the combination of the sub-scorings

3.3.2 Country ownership

ABP products including material and in country training events have all been designed and performed in Lao language and translated in English with ABP recruited Lao consultants/expert in cooperation with Government staff. The guides/booklets and demonstration/illustrations (in-situ agro-biodiversity conservation areas) are all from Lao villages, indigenous knowledge and environment, which makes them from a Lao user point of view reliable and convincing.

ABP has contributed to the UNDAF Outcome 7: By 2015, the government ensures sustainable natural resources management through improved governance and community participation. Output 7.3: Communities are more engaged in the management of natural resources. ABP project has contributed to local land use planning, conservation and management. ABP project has helped the local and national government in promoting protection and sustainable use of landraces/varieties and native livestock as well as farming systems/ecosystems/landscapes in the NABP-II and PBSAP for Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang Provinces.

Based on Basic Country Agreement between GoL and UNDP, the project implementation procedures at the national level followed UNDP design (NIM), including procedures for planning, reporting and use of fund. These procedures are not the same as what GoL use in ordinary management. As GEF funding

is accessed through indirect funding, the uses of UNDP procedures are obligatory. For this reason it has not been possible to institutionalize the ABP management procedures.

If the project had been set up and implemented through direct funding under Lao ownership, the institutionalization had been an achievement of the project.

3.3.3. Mainstreaming

From the UNDP perspective, ABP is mainstreamed with UNDP priorities as expressed in UNDP Country Programme for Lao PDR 2011 – 2015, UNDAF Action plan 2012 – 2015 Lao PDR, UNDP Strategic Plan 2014 - 2017¹⁵. It should however be noted that ABP links to poverty eradication and food security could have been stronger, e.g. through the selection of project target areas where poverty is more dominant.

From GoL perspective, ABP is mainstreamed within the Agriculture Development Strategy 2020, with NAPB-II, with the Strategic vision for Agriculture and Natural Resources until 2020¹⁶, with the NAFRI Research Strategy¹⁷ with MAF: Upland Development Strategy (2015-20) and the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan.

In terms of links between ABP and other projects ongoing in Lao PDR in the agro biodiversity sector with funding from donors and NGOs, the connections are made. Close collaboration with the FAO IPM Programme helps to provide consultancies to improve capacity development, TABI and DARWIN projects has continued and regular informal meetings are done with LURAS and the ICBF projects, where also lessons learned are discussed.

However, the two times change of focal point of CBD including the responsibilities of NBSAP/PBSAP from MAF to MoNRE and now (2016) back to MAF has led to delays and change of staff, thus making a lasting collaboration, ownership and impact more difficult

In reality most projects implemented through donor support have limited cooperation with “across project boundaries”. The energy and focus are spent on completing own targets.

3.3.4. Sustainability

During interviews, all Government partners stated that lack of fund will prevent them from on their own continue to develop, use and extend use of knowledge and products developed.

¹⁵ UNDP strategic Plan for 2014 - 2017

¹⁶ Strategic Vision of Agriculture and Natural Resources until 2020 (2010)

¹⁷ NAFRI Research Strategy (2015)

Two reorganizations of MAF and MoNRE created delays related to preparations of the second NBSAP. It also meant frequent change of staff and that the expected backstopping at central level did not take place with regard to preparation of the two PBSAPs.

For NABP-II, the commitments to fund parts of the implementation plan have been expressed by development partners including Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and FAO. Currently, the FAO is taking steps to prepare a Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) on underutilized crops and livestock related agro-biodiversity. Both NAFRI and FAO are firmly committed to the work of the sSWG on Agro-biodiversity, without secretarial assistance from ABP. Agro biodiversity coordination will be sustained for the sector.

The Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (PBSAPs) for Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang provinces until 2025 contain more than 200 plans, actions and targets that are in the process of or will be implemented and contributing to sustainable use and conservation of Agro-biodiversity. All line departments of MAF and MONRE will follow up the implementation in order to ensure the outcomes of the PBSAPS, which require important supporting funds.

On village levels successful interventions (oyster mushroom, wild tea...) will however spread in the villages and to surrounding areas as farmers will observe and evaluate on their own, including thereafter making investments with their own saving funds. For oyster mushroom in Phonexay district, farmers will continue to produce it with their own budget, however, a laboratory at TSC in Nambor has been already stopped providing the service of sprawns due to damage of equipment and contamination of materials (problems of sprawns purification). The activities of agro biodiversity conservation (Melienta, wild tea, fish conservation areas, protection of plants and wild mushroom...) will continue to provide outcomes for next couple years. Lack of appropriate funding from banks and through micro funding sometimes would be obstacles for the use of some of the ABP developed techniques and for follow-up.

The government's institutional framework and governance is still weak. One reason being still ongoing discussions on distribution of responsibilities between the partners in the sector and still reorganization may continue. This means a wait and see situation, where officers in charge and with knowledge could expect to be transferred to other positions. Delays and changes of staffs between two key ministries (MAF and MoNRE) will be challenging for the continuing of activities.

The TSCs are generally weak and lack resources for being the intended outreach from District levels to villagers. Even if knowledge and skills have been provided to the staff, practices and field works within target farmers are still weak due to lack of technician and funding resources. Only 2-3 DAFO staff are based on the TSCs.

Sustainability	Rating	Reasons for scoring
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Financial resources:	(ML)	Financial resources are missing to allow the continuation of ABP initiated activities and use of material produced. Maybe follow on funding/projects will be developed or mechanisms developed for cooperation with other ongoing projects
Socio-political:	(ML)	Top down instructions are the basis for development, where local opportunities and constraints are less used as basis for development.
Institutional framework and governance:	(ML)	The institutional framework is still weak and is still under development or adjustments where coordination in between subsectors is weak or difficult
Environmental :	(ML)	Short term gains are dominating over long term damages. Even if a reasonable legal frame work is in place.
Overall likelihood of sustainability:	(ML)	Above reasons in combination lead to this scoring

3.3.5. Impact

The efforts of ABP should be seen as first steps in a very long process for agro biodiversity conservation and integrating in natural resource management plans. The project interventions have raised awareness on all levels i.e. national, province, district and village levels through training, study tours, seminars, production and use of material. Regular and continuing supports and follow-up from local partners are the key actions to be taken.

The application of ABP products is however not in place, where availability of fund is one reason both for the continued use within project target areas but even more so for expansion into other areas (districts, villages). Material produced may now be kept in drawers and forgotten, not least when officers and Village Heads are replaced by others, who have not been exposed to ABP training and material. NAFRI will have key responsibilities for keeping the knowledge and linked material alive.

Impact	Rating	Reasons for rating
Scoring:	(M)	On local level and based on initiatives by dedicated farmers or government staff impact may be substantial, but in general much more work in terms of awareness raising, education and extension is

4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons

4.1. Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

The main weak aspects of ABP were;

1. It was known that the project only would have a maximum five years for implementation (which in reality became four and a half year period – in spite of the 8 months no cost extension to extend the project through one more agriculture cycle). The progress in implementation was from the beginning very slow but steady partly due to small overall budget, the Government has not been able to allocate full-time staff which particularly in the beginning of the project contributed to confusion on directions and priorities at local level.
2. Some agro-biodiversity activities implemented by ABP were not paid much attention by the local partners due to the heavy engagement of TABI in two targeted districts and the initial focus on few priority villages could not be done.
3. To create stronger links between UNDP goals to eradicate poverty through improved food security, sustainable agro-biodiversity use and conservation, and value added biodiversity products, the selection of target districts especially in Luangprabang could have been different. Problems of limited natural resources, markets and lack of water in the upland areas are key constraints for poverty eradication and food security, and it had been a useful learning process for ABP and GoL to be exposed to these conditions.
4. For the M&E framework, the evaluation part was weak including at the end of the project to linking back to the baseline studies. More time should have been allocated for monitoring, assessing, documenting and adjusting tools developed based on findings. An important element in this process would also have been to take the first steps of interaction among the relevant partners in agro biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. It is important to allocate sufficient time for in-depth discussions with villages and their conservation and development priorities with help of independents consultants rather than using a top-down wish-list approach
5. Assessment process of progress towards sustainability and impact should be built into the M&E system through an internal evaluation process outlined in the M&E manual.

4.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

ABP has completed the objectives and has come to an end with both Government staff and villagers have knowledge to build on and tools to use but it needs continuing supports for local partners to enhance their capability building to apply the knowledge and experiences gained from the ABP project. The time is ripe for scaling up of selected ABP products such as PBSAPs, guides, booklets and technical manuals of agro biodiversity conservation and development. As there are frequent transfers of staff in

GoL system and even on village levels as Heads of villages are rotated, the knowledge will not necessarily be passed on and the tools developed may be forgotten.

4.3. Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

ABP was a first strategically important project dealing with integrating the biodiversity conservation in land use policies. Accordingly ABP initiated a number of steps to concretize actions for mainstreaming agro biodiversity conservation in land use policies and plans. These included;

- Mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations into agricultural and land management plans, laws, strategies and guidelines.
- Capacity building at the Provincial, District and community levels (government staff and farmers) through workshops, trainings and study tours
- Development of links between different actors within Government to jointly and in complementary ways cooperate as well as
- Creation of valued added biodiversity products for farmers' income activities
- Dissemination of results through materials describing techniques, posters, booklets, videos
- IPM/FFS programme, Study tours and seminars to inform, share experiences and network both within Lao PDR but also in the region for south to south cooperation

All these actions are important steps for finding and implementing solutions for mainstreaming agro biodiversity conservation in land use policies and plans.

But the actions are only first steps. Awareness and knowledge about biodiversity conservation is still low, not least on village levels. Techniques tried and described need to be evaluated and modified based on feedback from the field. Material produced including manuals need to be upgraded and improved based on practical experiences and networking need to be further developed and strengthened.

If the project now is closed without further actions, there are risks that the platform created will erode. It is evident that Government on its own, has too limited resources to make active use of the ABP results. Therefore the following follow up actions are proposed not to lose the momentum;

1. It is very important to ensure the continuation of ABD Sub Sector Working Group (ABP Project instrumental in starting SSWG and ensuring FAO chairmanship, role of SSWG).
2. Continue and scale out capacity development to further develop awareness and knowledge among concerned parties with expansion to new vulnerable geographic areas
3. Continue to support further strengthen cooperation and networking between partners
4. Evaluate technical trials made to be able to modify and improve with expansions into market and rural financing issues
5. Institutionalization of ABP Project Outputs and Expertise (how will DOP continue ABP work, role of TABI)
6. Resource Mobilization for ABP initiative (discussions with UNDP CO and GEF SGP)

4.4. Lessons learnt

ABP was set up and agreed upon as a 5 year project. It should have been recognized that the project period is too short. It is time consuming to set up a project following all formalities required from both donor and government sides and to be able to draw conclusions as this kind of project is very much linked to agriculture practices, with considerable variations in preconditions between areas and years.

From the outset of the project it is important to allocate committed full-time counterparts with strong team building skills and technical expertise. In case of failures, effective systems should be in place to quickly and smoothly react without creating tensions.

It is important to allocate sufficient time for in-depth discussions with villages and their conservation and development priorities with help of independents consultants rather than using a top-down wish-list approach.

The project has completed all activities as stipulated in the log frame, but obviously these achievements were late during the project period leading to lack of time to evaluate and modify techniques, procedures introduced and to repeat training events. If it was realized that an extension was not possible, the exit strategy should have included identifying other ongoing projects, which could have taken over ABP developed procedures and tools to secure a more sustainable use and impact of ABP initiatives.

In term of local implementation and reporting, It is crucial to agree on and pursue a bottom-up approach with both agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use elements having high priority with agreed overall targets. At the outset, it is important that mechanisms are firmly in place for honoring/making incentives for technical capacity development rather than concentrating on disbursements.

Whereas delegated implementation is important for local ownership to interventions, reporting against indicators is uncommon practice and need to have more emphasis in day-to-day management including in-built incentives for quality reporting.

One year after project closure, reflection on lessons learnt were prepared and these are presented below:

PROJECT LESSONS-LEARNED REPORT

Project Title:	Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes (ABP Project)
Country:	Lao PDR
Related CPAP Outcome	The project will contribute to UNDAF Outcome 7: By 2015, the government ensures sustainable natural resources management through improved governance and community participation. The project will also contribute to UNDAF Output 7.3: Communities are more engaged in the management of natural resources.
Project Description and Key Lessons-Learned	
Brief description of context	The people of Lao PDR depend on the biodiversity of their natural environment on a daily basis, particularly in rural areas, where agro-biodiversity is critical to food security and nutrition. The natural wealth of Lao PDR's natural resources, and therefore people's livelihoods, is being threatened by unsustainable development. Challenges to sustainability include: changing of agricultural practices, land use changes and over-exploitation. To address these issues, the Department of Planning and Cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has been working with the Global Environment Fund (GEF)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to increase capacity of the central and local authorities to integrate biodiversity conservation into agricultural and land management policies, planning and programmes.
Brief description of project	<p>The main objective of the Agro-biodiversity Project is to provide Lao PDR's farmers with the necessary incentives and capabilities to conserve agro-biodiversity within the farming systems of Lao PDR, as well as supporting institutional frameworks. Therefore, the project has two broad but inter-related outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1: Supporting national policy institutions to create policies that protect biodiversity in agriculture, land use and related sectors and promote its use within production systems. The key expected outputs are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrating agro-biodiversity into policies. ○ Promoting coordination on agro-biodiversity. ○ Enhancing institutional capacity for agro-biodiversity ○ Increased understanding among key stakeholders of agro-biodiversity and its significance. • Outcome 2: Collaborating with government at provincial, district and community levels to strengthen capacity of government staff to conserve agrobiodiversity. This is done using the 'Farmer Field Schools' educational method, enhancing their productivity and promoting agro-biodiversity friendly products at local and international markets.

	<p>A programmatic approach to agro-biodiversity conservation and utilisation under this project is promoted through working closely with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's 'The Agro-biodiversity Initiative' (TABI), which operates under the same Steering Committee as the Agrobiodiversity Project and other partners.</p>
Key project successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area under improved management for conservation of agro-biodiversity directly and indirectly influenced by the ABP project cover 102,300 ha, which over the project target by the end of the project. • Two Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (Xieng Khouang and Luang Prabang Provinces). • Oyster mushrooms, wild tea and melientha agriculture systems have been introduced and implemented in line with prioritization of the local government and local people in Phoukout in Sieng Khouane Province and Phonexay district in Luang Prabang Province. • Promotion of agro-biodiversity crops such as Khao Kai Noi (sticky rice) and facilitate verification and obtaining certification for the organic agricultural product. • Wild tea, mushrooms and the medicinal plants survey report. These new species and the other species used in the project were included in the preparation of technical guidelines for planting and cultivating these agro-biodiversity products. • Aquatic resources (fishery zone conservation) in rivers and paddy rice fields on sustainable use and conservation of fish species. 4 fished conservation zones was identified and implemented and included in the land used planning developed by the project. • 36 villages-based Forest and Land Use Plans Allocation and Management (FALUPAM) was approved by the district governors including the allocation of village conservation areas. • A total of 740 rice farmers (37% females) and 361 vegetable farmers (81% females) graduated from the season long (typically 1 time per week) Rice Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in a total of 53 villages (Phoukout: 26 and Phonexay: 27) facilitated by most of the trained trainers in the two target provinces. • FFS included the identification of more than 200 animal and plant species used for various purposes. For example, in one village, rice straw was used to produce oyster mushrooms and bio-insecticides were made from various extracts of local plants. • FFS has also trained for 350 students from four local schools by most of the 11 graduated teacher trainers (7 females). On cost sharing basis with the FAO IPM programme 14 extension staff (4 females) graduated from TOTs on rice and vegetables. • In and Phonexay and Phoukout districts the total number of graduated FFS farmers were 398 (43% females) and 613 (48% females) from Phonexay and Phoukout districts, respectively. • Several publications and communication materials such as successful story, posters, technical reports. • Support coordination and establishment of the Agro-biodiversity Sub-Sector Working.

Project shortcomings and solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project RRF was revised to improve the description of the indicators, baseline and target for better reporting.
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time counterpart allocation. From the outset of the project it is important to allocate committed full-time counterparts with strong team building skills. In case of failures effective systems should be put in place to quickly and smoothly react without creating unnecessary tensions. • Common steering committee with TABI. Seeking highest possible complementarity and mutual benefits in similar project interventions, it is important that all stakeholders up-front formally agree on key steps and modus operandi to be taken into account to ensure constant and forceful follow-up with related projects. • Local implementation, reporting and incentives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is crucial to agree on and pursue a bottom-up approach in agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, by constantly paying attention to overall “objectives” and targets. ○ At the outset, it is important that mechanisms are firmly in place for honouring/making incentives for technical capacity development targets, rather than concentrating on disbursements of funds. This could include special prices for best performing officers and farmers. ○ Whereas delegated implementation is important for local ownership, it is important to regularly report against agreed indicators and time frames in the day-to-day management and to couple this with in-built incentives for quality reporting. ○ Well-meaning top down wish list approach for the preparation and implementation of local initiatives has the risk of failing unless independents facilitators are given sufficient time to discuss the issues with the villagers. ○ When allocating staff in larger interventions, such as TOT it is important to announce a screening process up-front and followed with the view that most committed staff are trained and constantly monitored and assisted.
Follow-up Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalization of the project terminal report and its management response. • Closing the project operational and financial.
Project Information	
Award ID:	Award 00060069/ID:0005435
CO Focal Points:	Dr. Margaret Jones Williams, Head, Natural Resources Management and Climate Change; margaret.jones.williams@undp.org
Partners:	Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry FAO
Project resources:	TRAC, GEF
Report prepared by:	Chitlatda Keomuonchanh, Programme Analyst, UNDP Lao PDR chitlatda.keomuonchanh@undp.org ;
Date:	30 June 2018

Annexes

Annex 1 ToR

TERMS OF REFERENCE **FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS**

POST TITLE:	National Consultant to conduct Terminal Evaluation for the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes (ABP Project) – Additional Tasks
AGENCY/PROJECT NAME:	Department of Planning and Cooperation of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry/ Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes (ABP) Project, ID: 00075435, PIMS: 2903
COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT:	Vientiane, Lao PDR
PLACE OF ASSIGNMENT:	Vientiane, Lao PDR
DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT:	February 01 – March 31, 2017 (ten days)
STARTING DATE:	February 01, 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and land management Policies, Plans and Programmes (ABP Project), (PIMS #2903)

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) lies in the center of the Indochinese peninsula surrounded by Thailand, Vietnam, China, Myanmar and Cambodia. Lao PDR has a population of 6.67 million people, and the overall population density is low at 24 people per Km². As a result of its relatively wide ranges of latitude and altitude, its rich water resources and tropical climate, Lao hosts globally significant tropical ecosystems. Within these ecosystems are diverse agro-ecosystems ranging from the slash and burn agriculture of the uplands, through long standing agro-forests in the middle lands, to paddy fields, household or community managed wetlands in the lower-lying lands of the Mekong Plain. These ecosystems contain a huge number of globally and locally significant species of plants, animals, fungi and other organisms.

The richness and as such global significance of Lao PDR's agro-biodiversity is attributable to several factors: location between two major bio-geographical zones –the temperate north and the tropical south –high ethnic diversity, and different climatic and altitudinal zones. Lao PDR is thought to be at the center of domestication for Asian rice and the center of origin for job's tears. Other potentially globally significant agro-biodiversity include cultivated local and indigenous varieties of maize, sugar cane varieties such as oy hok and oy pa used in confectionaries; bushy peas including indigenous varieties currently being studied at NAFRI; Livestock; and crop associated biodiversity such as wild crop relatives and pollinators and other insects.

The Government of Lao PDR has developed and implemented a wide-range of policies that directly or indirectly impact the use, development and conservation of biodiversity. The main overall development goals reflect international commitments

and focus on poverty reduction, economic growth and social development, advancement of infrastructure and investment in hydropower and mining, but also protecting the environment. They also acknowledge that future economic growth continues to rely on the sustainable use of the natural resource base and the conservation of forests and biodiversity. At the national level, main responsibility for the management and conservation of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes rests with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

The project aims to contribute to a long term solution whereby “Lao PDR’s biodiversity, including agro-biodiversity, is maintained, protected and sustainably used as a key to poverty alleviation and adaptation to climate change impact”. With this solution the overall goal is conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources in agro-ecosystems in Lao PDR for the attainment of food security sustainable economic development, however several barriers exist. To achieve productivity and food security at the household level, the multiple values of conserving Lao PDR’s biodiversity endowment has to be mainstreamed into government policies. There are inadequate incentives and capacities to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at community, district, province and national level.

Loss of crop and domestic animal diversity, crop-associated biodiversity and other biodiversity within agro-ecosystems and degradation of ecosystems are being caused through a number of direct and indirect threats. Land use practices are placing greater pressures on biodiversity and agro-biodiversity, and significant impacts: reduced resilience, a loss of ecosystem services and reduced adaptive capacity for agriculture.

The objective of the project is to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capacities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agricultural biodiversity within farming systems of the Lao PDR. Three outcomes will contribute to this objective. The progress toward the objective and outcomes is measured through the following indicators:

Objective / Outcomes	Indicators	Target by end of project
Objective: To provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capacities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agricultural biodiversity with in farming systems of Lao PDR	Area of provincial agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use total 100,000 ha	100,000 ha
Outcome 1: National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use, and in-situ conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems	Number of new national plans, policies, laws, strategies, and guidelines with agro-biodiversity concerns	6
Outcome 2: Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the provincial, district and community levels	Number of farmers adopting skills and techniques promoted through Farmer Filed Scholl and farmer field days	1,000 farmers.
Outcome 3: Effective Project management	Number of strategic recommendations from the Agro-biodiversity from agro-biodiversity steering committee.	6

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

The National Consultant will be closely working with the International Consultant to support data collection, consultation, interviewing key performance, reviewing documents, preparing summary note, translating of documents from Lao-English-Lao, facilitating the meetings, and contributing to the terminal evaluation report writing.

3. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

An overall approach and method¹⁸ for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the [UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects](#). A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR ([Annex C](#)). The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to ([location](#)), including the following project sites ([list](#)). Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: ([list key stakeholders](#)).

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND RATING

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental:	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

¹⁸ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

5. IMPACT	rating	6. OVERALL PROJECT RESULTS	rating
Environmental Status Improvement			
Environmental Stress Reduction			
Progress towards stress/status change			

5. PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

6. MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

7. IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.¹⁹

8. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons**.

9. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

¹⁹ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Lao PDR. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

10. EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation Of Workplan for Additional Days	1 day	February 03, 2017
Interviews with Key Stakeholders	2 days	February 17, 2017
Site visits to Luang Prabang and Xiengkhouane Provinces	4 days	February 24, 2017
Participation in Annual Review Meeting / Stakeholder Presentation	1 day	February 21, 2017
Inputs to Final Report	2 days	February 28, 2017

11. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Workplan	Workplan and schedule for interviews and site visits	February 03, 2017	UNDP CO Environment Unit to Review along with Government of Lao PDR
Summary of Site Visits	Sites visited, interviews with community beneficiaries, analysis of findings of implementation	Luang Prabang by February 12, 2107 Xiengkhouane by February 24, 2017	CO Environment Unit to Review along with Government of Lao PDR
Presentation at Annual Review Meeting	Presentation of key findings of the Annual Review Meeting	February 21, 2017	Feedback from Stakeholders
Inputs to Final Draft	Incorporation of findings of interviews, site visits and stakeholder feedback into Final Terminal Evaluation Report		UNDP CO Environment Unit and UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub.

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

12. TEAM COMPOSITION

This evaluation team is for one (1) National Consultant. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The National Consultant must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience in evaluations of biodiversity or agricultural development initiatives, or related disciplines
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF supported projects

- Previous 7 experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s) of biodiversity, agro-biodiversity, agriculture, food and nutrition security or related fields
- Knowledge of Lao Government Institutional arrangement and procedures
- Experience working in multi-culture and diverse environmental settings

13. EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

14. PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

(this payment schedule is indicative, to be filled in by the CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on their standard procurement procedures)

%	Milestone
30%	Submission and Approval of Workplan
40%	Completion of interviews, site visits and reporting
30%	Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the inputs to the Final Terminal Evaluation report

15. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to submit a technical and financial proposal (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs) by (September 16, 2016. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact.

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

Annex 2 Itinerary

Date	Activities	Location
01/12/2016	Document review and preparing TE Inception Report	Vientiane
8-9/12/2016	TE mission in Luangprabang province: Meeting with Pha Ta ke, TSC, village visits	Luangprabang
10/12/2016	Finalization and Validation of TE Inception Report	Vientiane
15-18/12/2017	TE mission in Xiengkhouang: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	Xiengkhouang
6-7/2/2017	TE mission in Vientiane: Meeting with key partners- MAF-DoPC, NAFRI, PSC, Institute of traditional medicine, ABP consultant, Plant protection center, LARReC	Vientiane
8-9/2/2017	Additional TE mission in Luangprabang: Meeting with PAFO, MONRE, District offices in Phonexay district	Luangprabang
10-12/2-/2017	Summary of finding	Vientiane
13-14/2/2017	Additional TE mission in Xiengkhouang: Meeting with PAFO, MONRE, District offices in Phoukoud district	Xiengkhouang
15-20/2/2017	Mission wrap-up, summary of findings, presentation preparation	Vientiane
21/2/2017	ABP Annual Review meeting and stakeholder presentation	Vientiane
1-27/4/2017	TE draft report writing	
28/4/2017	Submitting draft report, comments by UNDP CO, UNDP RTA and Stakeholder.	
30/5/2017	Integrating of first TE comments, and submission of final TE report	

Annex 3 List of persons interviewed

No	Name	Position and Organization	Place	Remark
A	Central			
1	Dr. Kongmany Sudara	Institute of traditional medicine kmnkong@gmail.com Tel 22201836	Vientiane	Interviewed
2	Mrs. Bounpanh Chanthavong	ABP Consultant NPSABII, freelance	Vientiane	interviewed
3	Mrs. Viengkham	DG Plant protection center ABP consultant	Vientiane	interviewed
4	Dr. Boun Aiy	ABP PC MAF	Vientiane	interviewed
5	Dr. Pheng Souvanthong	ABP project manager	Vientiane	Interviewed questionnaire
6	Mr. Ole Pedersen	CTA ABP	Vientiane	Interviewed
7	Mr. Bounkong Soukvimone	ABP Project coordinator	Vientiane	Interviewed
8	Dr. Bounthong Chitmany	DG NAFRI MAF	Vientiane	Interviewed
9	Mr. Khamphanh Nunthavong	DG Department of Forest resource management, MONRE	Vientiane	Interviewed
10	Mr. Somephane	Cpsultant on fisf taxonomy and Fish conservation zone LARReC Somephanh2002@hotmail.com Tel 22001366	Vientiane	interviewed
11	Ms. Kongchay Beechanh	DDG MOST kongchaybeechan@yahoo.com Tel: 23042746	Vientiane	Interviewed
12	Dr. Stephen Rudgard	FAO Stephen.rudgard@fao.org		Interviewed
13	Mr. Adam Starr	IUCN Adamstarr.ffi@gmail.com	Vientiane	By Skype call by Guido
14	Ms. Ratsamay Silavong	IUCN Laos	Vientiane	interviewed
B	International partners			
15	Mr. Andy Taylor	Fungal ecologist, Principal scientist The James Hutton Institute, UK	England	By Skype call by Guido
C	LuangPrabang Province			
16	Mr. Bounpheng Souksithi	DDG PAFEO Cabinet	Luangprabang	interviewed
17	Mr. Thongsavanh Suthamma	Heads of Forest resource management sections	Luangprabang	interviewed
18	Mr. Mixay Pheangsy	Forest resource section PONRE	Luangprabang	interviewed
19	Mrs. Bouavanh	Head of Technical Service center PAFO	Phonxay district, LPB	interviewed
20	Mr. Sone	Garden manager Pha Ta Ke Botanic garden	LuangPrabang	interviewed
25	Mr. Khamphan Phaythoun	DONRE	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed

21	Mr. Vilyaphone Manivong	DAFEO	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed
22	Mr. Bounkhong Sivilai	IPM TSC	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed
	Beneficiaries			
23	Milientha plantation group (2 farmers)	Houayno village	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed
24	Fish conservation zone (7 famers)	Nambo village	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed
25	Oyster mushroom group (2 farmers)	Houaymanh village	Phonexay district, LPB	interviewed
D	Xiengkhouang province			
26	Mr. Khamchanh Chanthavongsy	DG PAFO	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
27	Mr. Vanthong Duangdy	Heads of Forest resource management sections PAFO	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
28	Mr. Phetsamay khammakvilay	Head of administrative division PAFO	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
29	Mr. Khamphou Chanthavong	DG PONRE	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
30	Mr. Vongsinh Silavong	Head of water section PAFO	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
31	Mr. Thongsavanh	TABI Xiengkhouang	Xiengkhouang	interviewed
32	Mr. Phonesy Sombathphoumy	Vice Governor District offices	Phoukoud district, XKG	interviewed
33	Mr. Viengkham Chanthala	Head of DAFO Phoukoud	Phoukoud	interviewed
	Beneficiaries			
34	Tea farmers group (6 group heads, 5 farmers)	Yotphae Village	Phoukoud, Xiengkhouang	interviewed
35	Fish conservation zone group, 8 villagers	Paen village	Phoukoud district	interviewed
36	Mr. Khamtsy Saysethamouak	Village head of Paen village	Phoukoud district	interviewed
37	FFS farmer groups (3 representative)	Sauy village	Phoukoud district	interviewed
38	Mr. Seng Aloun	FFS IPM technical Vice head of TSC, DAFO	Phoukoud district	interviewed
	UNDP			
39	Mr. Doley Tshering	UNDP Regional Technical Adviser, Thailand	Bangkok	By Skype call by Guido
40	Dr. Margaret Jones Williams	Environment Unit Manager UNDP	Vientiane	interviewed
41	Ms. Chitlatda Keomoungchanh	Programme Analyst, UNDP	Vientiane	interviewed

Annex 4 Summary of field visits

Luang Prabang province

Meeting with the gardener of Pha TaD Khe Botanic Garden where ABP supported to the opening of their 4 ethno-medical herb plots by funding the purchase of signs for their scientific names for each plant. The project helped to do the lists of scientific names. That was all for this partner. It was impossible to meet with the owner of the botanic garden. This garden is private and we have to pay to visit their garden, I do not know they supported this partner but CTA said it was the idea of central level decision. There is only one activity and no follow-up.

PAFO

Meeting with the ABP provincial coordinator (Vice head of PAFO cabinet office), he joined the project since 2014 when the project started to implement their activity. his role is to coordinate and approve the sub project proposal proposed by the beneficiaries. And he said in general, the project was doing good job and relevant to the provincial strategy of sock-economic development. He mentioned that the project was similar to the TABI project but more in agricultural extension work.

TSC, DAFO

Meeting with Technical service centre under DAFO, the head of the centre was the main coordinator with the project

Head of centre explain that they received supports for oyster mushroom culture and multiplication and extension to the target villages. The Plant protection centre, Mrs. Viengkham was the consultant of the project who provided technical training for the TSC on mushroom culture and incubation since 2014, and the TSc provide supports for the 4 target villages on oyster mushroom production. For the first two productions under the supervision of Mrs. Viengkham (PPC), farmers in 4 villages got high year in 2014 and 2015, and then, the TSC continued to produce their own mushroom spawns and sell to farmers but the yields decreased up to zero production in 2015. Then, farmers decided to buy the swans in the town but the yields are very low, lower compared to the first production in 2014. Up to now, many farmers resigned from the groups the target villages (only 1-2 farmers per group). The main reason was that they did not have time to contribute to the mushroom production for the group and no labor for common work. Farmers still have problem and question on mushroom production and they have told to the TSC about the problems and they reported to the project but until there was any response from the project. Many of them are not now interested in this activity due to problem of decline of production and economic issue

Oyster farmer in Houayman , Houayno villages

Oyster mushroom culture was very appreciated and accepted by project beneficiaries, and they received technical training and study tours on oyster production, group setting up and management and financial supports for setting up the production in 2014. PPC (Mrs. Viengkham) and TSC were the

key technical service providers. First productions were obtained in 2014. Economically with total gross product were 40 million LAK in Houayman village and 35 million LAK in Houayno. In 2015, there was a huge decrease of oyster productions in both village visited due to very low yields of oyster mushrooms and damage of oyster production culture houses. In Houaymanh village, there was no production in 2016, and only few kilograms in Houayno village. After discussion with villagers in two villages, spawns were brought from Luangprabang downtown because the TSc could not provide spawns. Now, only two farmers for each village will continue the production but they still need support because oyster culture houses were damaged and technical trainings are needed.

Milientha plantation farmers in Houaymo village

For wild melientha domestication, it is just now for them and no leave collection yet. the seedling multiplication had started in 2015, until aged of 1 year old. Then, the TSC distributed to the farmers and started the plantation. Farmers still have question on the production. They keep taking care of their planation areas.

District administration cabinet

Meeting with head of District Authority cabinet, he was not directly involved in the ABP project implementation but received information about the project's results. He mentioned that the project was a very good and pilot project, particularly dealing with agro-biodiversity conservation, agricultural extension such as oyster mushroom production, milientha plantation because all these products are the income generating activities and can contribute to the poverty reduction in the district. District authority supports the implementation of ABP and recommended to continue for future phase because agro-biodiversity conservation related to poverty reduction is one of the socio-economic development priorities of the district.

Xiengkhouang province

ABP Project coordinator, Head of Land allocation and development section, PAFO

He was the PC from the beginning of the project start-up of implementation in Xiengkhouang province. His role was to coordinate between the district and the project. The specific tasks is to revise, approve the proposed sub-projects (activities funded by ABP) and then sign the proposals to be submitted to the ABP, to attend the meetings and following up the activities (if necessary).

He mentioned that the project started at 2011 with the inception workshop, and then there were some meetings organized in the provinces in order to approve the sub-projects proposed by the local beneficiaries (farmers). He attended the firsts workshops of formulating the PBSAP 2013, and then, he did not follow up the implementation of PBSAP but only received some reports from the project team. The project helped to finalize the proposals (key concept notes for proposed activities), and sent them all to ABP central in 2012. Then, they could start the activities in the beginning of 2014. Only some proposed activities were approved and financed, he did know why?. However, he coordinated with the project in order to implement the approved sub-projects.

He mentioned that some time he did know much about the project implementation because all went

through the ABP provincial facilitator and district authority. He observed that the project was relevant to the provincial development plan and all activities were just started last years and still need some following-up and technical advices from the project. If possible to continue the project for next phase, he recommended to provide supports for the target beneficiaries in order to sustain the activities.

PONRE

Meeting with a delegated person from PONRE (The guy who was working with the project was busy), surely I did not get much information regarding the project. But in general, he provided some information on PBSAP (provincial biodiversity Strategy and Action plan 2012-2020). Many challenges on implementation of this PBSAP due to lack of funds and low capacity building of government staff. And the key issue is the understanding on the importance of this PBSAP for the provincial authorities and local communities. He said We need to have some activities on awareness raising on PBSAP at every stage or level. This will lead to the achievement of the implementation of this PBSAP.

District Governance office. Vice Governor

Meeting with the vice governor of Phoukout district (but not the one who cooperated and involved in the project). He is in charge of supervising the affairs of education, health and culture and society. He did not know much about the project. But he mentioned that the project was relevant to the socio-economic development plan of the district particularly the work on poverty reduction by promoting activities to generate income and agrobiodiversity conservation such as fish conservation zones. He said that it is the real impact of the project. However, the project have to continue to support the district to develop these activities because the district staff has limited capacity on agro-biodiversity to sustain the activities in his region. Awareness raising activities are the most important to raise the understanding of the local communities.

Fish conservation zone in Pean village, Phoukoud district

Field visit went to the fish conservation zones (FCS) in Paen village and meeting with the head of village and 11 villagers (4 females). They reported that these activities are relevant to their need because the FCZ have been set up for many years for the purpose of fish conservation but there was not action on drafting regulation and rules to protect these FCZ from 2014-2015. The project help to draft the regulation, provided signs for demarcation of FCS in 2015. The village authorities went for study tour in other districts to learn about the FCZ (2 times in 2015 and 2016). After 1-2 years observations, they said that there are more big fishes coming in the deep pools and they are very happy for that. However, the understanding on FCZ and protection for some villagers and neighboring villages are still an issue because they heard from the villagers that there are still some illegal catches in the FCZ. The management committee has organised some meetings (2 this year) to warn the villages on this issue but it is very difficult they said. So, they said to sustain these activities, they requires to have more FCZ signs to put around these areas, some fund for organising the official events to release fishes and declaration of intention for all villagers on the FCZ and protection. In conclusion, they are happy for this activity but need more close attention to help and lead them to succeed this activity.

They recommended to continue supporting them because they need some trainings or awareness campaign for the FCZ. They have already has management committee and regulations.

Wild tea producer in Yordphae village, Village authority

Tea production and plantation were started in 2008 and expanded in 2011 with support from TABI project. Now they are more than 80 households growing wild tea. The organic tea producer group was set up since 2011 and they are divided in 6 units (6 units for the group)

ABP started to support the village in 2012, they come to do survey on wild tea production and baseline survey. Then, they provided supports for study tour to visit tea producers in Phongsaly province (15 people including 7 farmers) in 2014. After that, ABP provided some materials and inputs for 63 wild tea producers in the villages, some plastic bags for seedling multiplication, and cutter for tillage. Recently, ABP provided 6 drying pans for drying tea for each unit.

They did not receive any training on tea production and processing.

They ensured that the activities will continue because they have already produced tea before and they will give their tea plantation because tea can generate some additional income for them. So they recommended having technical supports on tea production and processing. They faced problem on tea disease, pests and market but the project did not help them yet for this issue.

Discussed with the village authority. They congratulated and appreciated the ABP's supports for the villages particularly the wild tea tree conservation areas. The project helped to set up the regulations and sign boards for demarcations of 4 zones. This is very relevant for the village development strategy, and very helpful to protect their secondary forest zones. These forests provide a wide range of wild mushrooms for home consumption and income generation. Villagers harvest wild mushrooms and sales to market each year (approx.. 50 millions KIP per year). So, they are very happy for these activities and they recommended having continuing supports for awareness raising campaigns for other villages and villages in order to help to protect the conservation zones. The village authority and the management committee are ready to provide supports and ensuring the sustainability of the activities.

DAFO, technical service center (TSC)

Mr. Sengaloun is the vice head of the TSC, the responsible for the ABP implementation, particular for the IPM trainings and activities. IPM trainings was conducted from 24 July and 23 October 2015 (14 weeks). They were 10 villages participating in the trainings, around 350 farmers (250 females). They were 2 trainers per village. The training was designed to do 1 day per week (by the ABP project team) during the weekend.

He said that the activities were relevant to the village needs because farmers did not know and have knowledge on IPM. The training course provided techniques on ecological survey, biodiversity in rice and vegetable, pest identification, chemical uses, study about plants.....

Problems: fund flow providing for organizing the trainings meant that money come after the training started, delay and not enough budget for inputs and per diem for participants and trainers. Farmers are less educated and have limited understanding about the trainings. They did not want to test the

new techniques learnt from the trainings because there was no pilot farmer model in each village. They are not sure if the IPM works in their village.

So, to sustain the activities, it needs to have fund to follow-up and providing regular advises to farmers and setting up the farmer model.

IPM farmer in Souay village.

Met with 6 farmers who participate in the IPM training during 14 weeks. They learnt new techniques of rice production and organic compost making but up to now they did not remember what they had learnt from the training because they have not started to apply their knowledge learnt from the training. IPM is very new for them and they did not know how to start to apply and if it is possible they recommended having supports from the projects.

Annex 5 List of documents reviewed

1. Project documents
2. Project Identification Form
3. APR/PIR for four years
4. Project brief
5. Tracking Tools
6. Mid-term Review
7. Mid-term Review Management response
8. ABP Final report
9. Annual Work Plans and Budgets
10. Minutes Project Steering Committee Meetings
11. Minutes of Annual Review Meetings
12. Minutes of Monthly Meetings
13. Annual Audit
14. Combined Delivery Reports
15. Training and Workshop Reports
16. Deliverables and Knowledge Products, including, but not limited to the following:
 - a. National Biodiversity Programme
 - b. Farmer Field School Manuals and Training Material
 - c. Brochures, Flyers and Pamphlets

Annex 6 Evaluation Question Matrix with Questionnaire used

- A. Relevance
 - i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
 - ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?
- B. *Country-drivenness / Participation*
 - i. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
 - ii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
 - iii. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
 - iv. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?
- C. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design (*M&E*)
 - i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
 - ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

- A. Project management
 - i. What were the implementation arrangements?
 - ii. Was the management effective?
 - iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
 - iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
 - v. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?
- B. *Flexibility*
 - i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
 - ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
 - iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?
- C. Monitoring and Evaluation (*M&E*)
 - i. Project implementation M&E
 - a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
 - b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
 - c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
 - d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?

I. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

- A. **Effectiveness**
 - i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
 - ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
 - iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
 - iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?
- B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness (*participation*)
 - i. What were the achievements in this area?
 - ii. What were the challenges in this area?

- iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

II. RESULTS

- i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
- ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?
- A. Impacts
 - i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
 - ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
 - iii. Why or why not?
- B. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up (*catalytic role*)
 - i. Did the project have a replication plan?
 - ii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
 - iii. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?

III. LESSONS LEARNED

- A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
- B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

IV. SUSTAINABILITY

- A. Financial
 - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on continued financial support?
 - ii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?
 - iii. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?
- B. Socio-Political
 - i. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project results to be sustained?
 - ii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- C. Institutions and Governance
 - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
 - ii. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?
- D. Ecological
 - i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?

Annex 7 Project Log frame – what was accomplished

Table 1. Achievement of project objective

Objective	Indicator	Target	Achieved
To provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity within the farming systems of Lao PDR	1. Area under improved management for conservation of agro-biodiversity directly and indirectly influenced by the ABP project [Revised]	100,000 ha	102,300 ha
	2. Number of agro-biodiversity taxonomic groups with improved status in the two pilot districts [New]	4	4
	3. GEF SP-2 Tracking Tool Score for policy and regulatory frameworks [New]*)	5	5

*) **1:** Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies and programs. **2:** Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs **3:** Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders. **4:** Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge. **5: Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn.**

Table 2. Achievement of target of indicator for Outcome 1 (UNDP: outcome equals output)

Outcome 1	Indicator	Target	Achieved
National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use, and <i>in-situ</i> conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems.	Number of new national plans, policies, laws, strategies, and guidelines with agro-biodiversity concerns.	<i>End Target: 6</i>	<i>Achieved: 6</i>

Table 3. Achievement of output targets under Outcome 1

Output	Baseline	Indicator (updated)	Target	Achieved
1.1 Integrating agro-biodiversity into policies.	Land use policies and legal instruments do not include focus on biodiversity (especially agro biodiversity), b) Emphasis on agro-biodiversity in BD strategy and action plan (N/BSAP) is weak, c) Agriculture Law does not incorporate emphasis on biodiversity, including ABD, and d) Integration of biodiversity related criteria into ESIA guidelines are poor	Number of National policies with Agro-biodiversity content [DELETED] (See outcome 1 indicator)	NA	NA
1.2 Establishing coordination mechanism for focussed agro-	Currently, there is no formal coordination mechanism for agro biodiversity conservation	Number of yearly agro-biodiversity inter-sectoral coordination meetings [DELETED]	NA	NA

biodiversity discussions		Number of strategic inputs to the policy and legislative process produced by the inter-sectoral working group, as demonstrated through policy papers or other forms of strategic inputs to the development of policies such as the NABP II [NEW]	1	1
		Establishing forum for discussion of Agro-biodiversity issues [NEW]	Done	Done
1.3 Enhancing institutional capacity for agro-biodiversity	Institutional and staff capacities of MAF to mainstream biodiversity into agriculture and land use policies are low.	Number GOL officers actively participating in meetings and training on agro-biodiversity [Revised]	500 officers	995 officers
1.4 Increased understanding and awareness of agro-biodiversity and its significance among key stakeholders	a) Land use policies and legal instruments do not include focus on biodiversity (especially agro biodiversity); b) Emphasis on agro-biodiversity in BD strategy and action plan (N/BSAP) is weak); c). Agriculture Law does not incorporate emphasis on biodiversity, including ABD, and d) Integration of biodiversity related criteria into ESIA guidelines are poor	Number of tools (FFS, info & awareness materials) developed to support and enhance incorporation of agro-biodiversity into national and institutional frameworks issues are discussed [Revised]	6 tools	8 tools

Table 4. Achievement of target of indicator for Outcome 2

Outcome 2	Indicator	Target	Achieved
Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels	Number of farmers adopting skills and techniques promoted through FFS and farmer field days	1,000 farmers	1,111 farmers

Table 5. Achievement of output targets under Outcome 2

Output	Baseline	Indicator (updated)	Target	Achieved
2.1 Capacity and accountability of provincial and district governments mainstream biodiversity into agriculture increased.	Existing tools such as training, extension, communication and mapping do not incorporate (agro) biodiversity conservation issues.	Number of Technical Service Centers with ABD conservation and sustainable use activities.	4	6
2.2 Participatory land use plans integrating agro-biodiversity developed.	Existing area with participatory land use plans and participatory NRM plans are low and do not include agro-biodiversity conservation.	Number of cluster villages with pFLUP plans.	4	5
2.3 In situ conservation for important agro-biodiversity.	Currently, there are no existing allocations of land for in-situ conservation of ABD	Number of districts with in-situ agro-biodiversity conservation plans.	8	8
2.4 Farmer skills, knowledge, and incentives necessary to undertake biodiversity friendly farming enhanced.	Capacity of farmer to undertaken biodiversity-friendly farming limited and existing tools such as training, extension, communication and mapping do not incorporate biodiversity conservation issues.	Cancelled	NA	NA
2.5 Agro-biodiversity friendly community products promoted.	Number of value added agro-biodiversity products marketed for local or international markets.	Number of value added agro-biodiversity products promoted and marketed for local or international markets [REVISED].	8	5
		Number of publications disseminated analyzing economic forces and incentives influencing the status of at least one sub-group of Agro-biodiversity in NABP-II [New].	1	2
2.6 Private and public sector agreements to mainstreamed agro-biodiversity into their plans.	Private and public sector's involvement and incentives for biodiversity conservation are extremely limited.	Number of agro-biodiversity cross cutting incentives identified [New].	3	3

Annex 8 Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Evaluators:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form²⁰

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: Dr. KHOSADA VONGSANA

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at *VIENTIANE, LAO PDR* on *July 6th, 2017*



ສົມ: ດຳ ວົງສະນາ

Signature: _____

²⁰www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct


Annex 9 Evaluation Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by:

UNDP Country Office

Name: MARGARET JONES WILLIAMS, O.T.C.

Signature:  Date: September 27, 2018

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: Doley Tshering

Signature:  Date: 01 October 2018