

“ According to government vision, conditions must be enhanced in such a way as to enable people to organize themselves and to improve their livelihoods according to their own initiatives and visions of the future ”
(NGPES)



QUICK FACTS

Location:
Phongsaly Province, Northern Lao PDR

Project Start:
Phase I in 20012

Current Phase:
Phase 1 2012-2016

Budget for Current Phase:
Approx. 1.3 M Swiss Francs

Main partners:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
- Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry (MAF)
- Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperatives (DAEC)
- HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
- Select Tea Producers, Processors and Traders
- Development projects & local organizations.

Major Donor:
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
McKnight
HAPPEL
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THE PERSPECTIVES

The World Bank recently ranked the Lao PDR as a developing lower Middle Income Country (MIC), indicating that progress has been made to graduate the country off the Least Developed Countries (LDC) list by 2020. To reach this objective, the Lao PDR is implementing the Brussels LDC plan and adopted an ambitious National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) and National Growth & Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) which are integral to a 'Growth with Equity' framework. With increase of foreign direct investment (FDI), commercialization of agriculture, transportation and infrastructure development much has been achieved in National Growth, however significant gaps remain. Opportunities and risks are apparent with significant reliance on the country's bio-diverse natural resources serving as collateral to boost GDP capital. Added to this is Laos' increasing interaction in regional and global trade with it's ascension to WTO and the impending 2015 ASEAN Economic Community. Building skills, entrepreneurship, smart and responsible business and fair trade are critical to Laos achieving both its economic goals but also social and political aims sustainably. COPE seeks to strengthen Laos' small holder producers and private sector to better equip and position itself in this regard.



COPE



“Community Organization, Participation & Empowerment ”

“ COPE aims to contribute to sustainable and equitable socio-economic development of the Lao PDR by supporting community based organization initiatives that support livelihoods through better access to markets, valuing the diverse contributions of women, ethnic groups and other traditionally disadvantaged groups. ”

WORKING AREA

Overall objective

Rural men and women smallholder producers are empowered to improve their productivity and livelihoods and benefit from fairer trade practices

Outcome 1

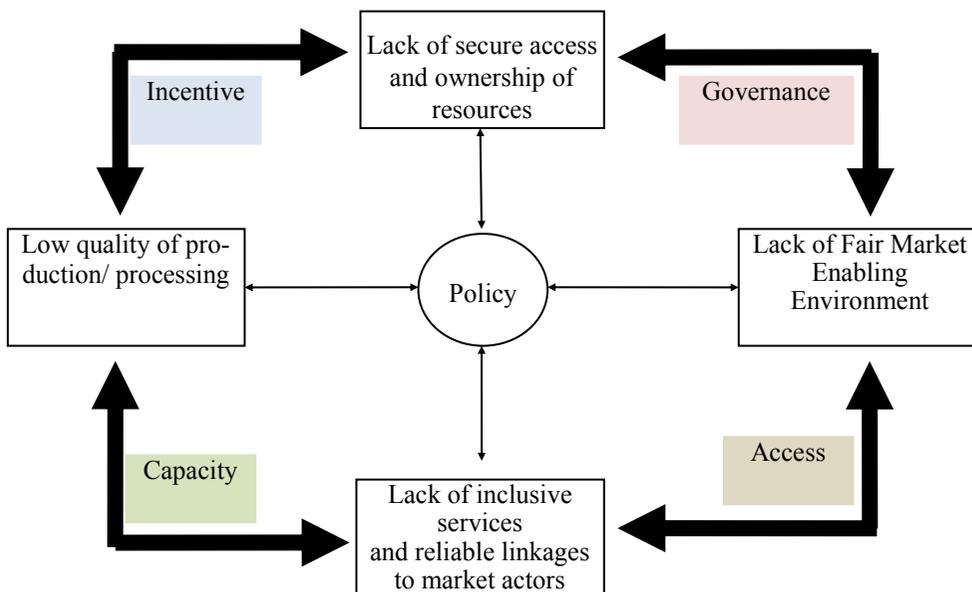
Men and women smallholder producers and processors make informed decisions through improved access to information and organisation for collective actions

Outcome 2

Men and women smallholder producers and processors have access to financial and technical services to improve productivity, processing and quality of tea and other agricultural products

Outcome 3

The enabling environment for men and women smallholder producers and processors by facilitating development and implementation of pro-poor policies is improved to foster efficiency of the tea value chain and other agricultural products



THE CONTEXT

The core problem COPE aims to address is community's right to equitable development, whereby small holder farmers, with special attention given to vulnerable rural groups, actively and meaningfully participate in their own community's development. Considering the trend towards commercialized market driven agriculture and increased pressure on natural resources, alternative models of sustainable agriculture for upland smallholders are needed. As EMRIP and PROFIL have demonstrated, such alternatives exist and are viable provided that:

Farmers have access to a more diverse service delivery system bringing together civil society organizations and private sector actors;

Poor farmers can engage in production agreements with linkages to inputs, production trainings and markets;

Farmers have access to information and are aware about policies and their related rights to mitigate conflicts over community resources and assets.

If farmers, in particular women and ethnic members, can defend their collective interests, have access to reliable information, then they would be able to participate in decision making on issues with effect on their day to day life. By strengthening their ability to make informed choices, and so to self-determine, self-organize, self-help and self-advocate, rural groups can optimize their potential to develop economic activities while securing their access and ownership over natural resources and services provision they rely on for their food and livelihood security

THE PROJECT

Laos is a developing country in transition, aiming to graduate off the Least Developed Countries list (LDC) by 2020 and reach its Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) by 2015. Recently the World Bank (WB) ranked Laos a lower middle income country. While Laos has made significant progress in 'National Growth', gaps remain and in some cases are widening in 'Poverty Eradication', despite a National Socio-Economic Development Plan and National Growth & Poverty Eradication Strategy aiming for 'Growth with Equity'. The COPE project is an amalgamation of lessons learnt and good practices of several HELVETAS Laos projects, in particular LEAP, PROFIL and EMRIP. It aims to build capacities of farmers to organise, improve their production and links to markets. COPE will work focus agricultural products that form the basis of the livelihood of small holder producers in the North of Laos. As entry point, COPE will start to work on the tea value chain, with special focus on gender equity.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- At least 5000 farmers, of which at least 50% are women, have increased their income
- At least 10 farmers' groups have been established that act collectively to access inputs and sell outputs
- At least 2 tea processors have increased the quality of their products
- At least 1 international export market linkage has been established
- There is 80% satisfaction about the services provided by men and women farmers and processors
- At least 5 multi-stakeholder roundtables have been held to discuss improvement of policies and enabling environment for agricultural production, processing and marketing