

LIWG Newsletter

31 OCTOBER 2017

The Land Information Working Group (LIWG) is a civil society network that has existed in Lao PDR since 2007. Membership of LIWG is two-fold, consisting of core members and supporter members. The group was established so members could inform one another about land matters, as well as to develop common initiatives to address some of those issues. Learn more about LIWG [here](#).

Workshops/meetings organized by LIWG

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Highlight story:



The land knowledge sharing session to NA and PPAs. October 2017

NA Workshop on Land issue

To strengthen the capacities of the National Assembly (NA) members and Provincial People Assembly (PPA) members on land related issues with a focus on the Land Law in order to make them able to influence on policy making and implementation. **Read more detail inside.**

Climate Change Study Session

LIWG is part of the global movement Land Rights Now! This year (2017) the topic selected to celebrate Earth Day is Climate Change and Land Tenure Rights. As a part of this movement, in April, LIWG organized a study session for interested members on two topics presented by researchers in Laos: *Securing Access to Paddies: a Key to Climate Smart Agriculture in the Northern Uplands*; and *Community Tenure in Forest Landscapes: Choices and Trade-offs for REDD+ in Laos*.

Learn more what is Land Rights Now movement [here](#).



A local farmer is planting rice shoots in his paddy field. Phongsaly Province, Laos.

Photo by Anthony

Land Use Planning Workshop

To present the finding of the CIDSE, LIWG AND TABI recent case studies on Land Use Planning, LIWG, in partnership with TABI and MRLG, organized a workshop on 'Toward a Community of Practice on Land Use Planning in the Lao PDR'. Development partners, civil society, private sector and academia participated. This workshop came up with a number of suggestions related to the different initiatives on LUP towards strengthening village land tenure in Laos.

Steering committee meeting

A steering committee meeting is held monthly to update the situation related to the LIWG secretariat performance including the finance and fundraising situation, land law advocacy, the work of various taskforces, recent case studies and the communication strategy.

Core member meeting

A core member meeting is held once per quarter to update members on the work of the LIWG secretariat.

During the meeting in May, the LIWG secretariat shared feed-back on the 1st quarter 2017 and presented the 2nd quarter work plan; updated the land law revision process from the Land Sub Sector Working Group (LSSWG); informed and called for participation for the next CSO's regional exchange that will be organized in 2018.

The meeting included presentations from guests and LIWG members to share their work related to village forest conservation management in Laos; reporting back on the highlights of the World Bank conference on Land and Poverty and sharing the result of the LIFE initiative. Also, the Forest Trend organization from Vietnam shared their experiences with the allocation of forest land to the community.

Legal Calendar* 2018 Development Meeting



The team brainstormed for the first draft of sketching of each topic. Thalath, Vientiane province, July 2017.

The calendar meeting was organized for 3 times during this quarterly. The first meeting was organized in June 2017 and included the LIWG secretariat and LIWG members to brainstorm the topics that will be in the 2018 legal calendar and identified the taskforce members.

The second meeting was organized in July, 2017. The taskforce worked together to identify the laws, regulations, decrees and orders that relate to key topics that the members suggested to be covered in the 2018 calendar. Also, the taskforce and graphic designer worked together to develop the first draft of pictures to be included. The third meeting was held in September. This time, the graphic designer presented the pictures and discussed how to make those best fit with the contents of each topic. The calendar will be launched by the end of this year.

See full version of legal calendar 2017 [here](#).

Land Sub Sector Working Group (LSSWG)

To update the process of land law revision, the Land Sub sector Working Group (LSSWG) meeting was held in June 2017. The LIWG committee chair was co-chair of this meeting. The purpose of the LSSWG meeting was to present the report on the results of works performed by LIWG; to consult and draw lessons in regard to the drafting of land law revision; and to summarize topics for preparation at the sectorial meeting of MoNRE. In the meeting, the co-chair, Mr. Vongdeuan, from MoNRE, presented about the party resolution on enhancing land management and development.

Learn more about what is this Politburo Resolution: in [Lao](#) and [English](#).

Sharing Case study Finding Workshop

To present and validate (preliminary) results of the case studies, a workshop was organized in July 2017. The workshop was co-organized by the LIWG and the Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos. Students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, lecturers from NUOL, LIWG members and representatives from government counterpart participated in this workshop.

Learn more about this workshop [here](#).



All participants in the workshop. FSS, July 2017.

Knowledge sharing session on land and natural resource management with NA

After trying for several years, LIWG was successful to organize a Knowledge and Experience Sharing Session with the members of the National Assembly (NA) and Provincial People's Assembly (PPA) on Land and Natural Resource Management. This workshop was supported by various donors: MRLG, Oxfam, FAO, GIZ, SDC and EU. The workshop was co-organized by LIWG and Legislative Research Institute of NA. Participants included members of the National Assembly and Provincial People's Assembly from all provinces; Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who are LIWG members.

Learn more what was in the discussion of the workshop [here](#).

"This workshop contributed to build understanding among NA and PPA members and to discuss the issues of land management in Laos. It is also an opportunity to enhance the awareness of NA and PPA members in each province to monitor the land management system to be more transparent and effectively",

Dr. Khampheuy Panmalaythong, a chair of the workshop



Dr. Khampheuy Panmalaythong, president of Legislative Research Institute, NA. The chair of the workshop on 28-29 September, 2017

* The Legal Calendar has been produced yearly since 2009. The goal of the legal calendar is to develop an effective communication tool for dissemination of legal knowledge on land and natural resource management to the public and to the target groups.

Documentation and Case studies

Land Use Planning (LUP) study

To review Land Use Planning (LUP) initiatives, a LUP study was commissioned by LIWG and conducted by Stuart Ling, Independent Consultant,. A key finding of this study was that while development agencies have been able to deliver participation (over which they have full control), they have been less successful at delivering tenure and livelihood security. This partially reflects the way in which LUP is regarded by government as a tool for land management and regulation, rather than as a tool for community ownership and tenure.

The full report can be found: in [Lao](#) and [English](#).

Case study 1 'Participatory on Land Use Planning in Lao PDR' ;

Case study 2 'Come-in and go-out cash Crops: local connections and state response'

Case study 1

A study on 'Participatory on Land Use Planning in Laos was conducted by Dr. Damdouane Khouangvichit and a lecturer, Mrs. Khamphu Inthavone from Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Laos. The study was conducted in different villages in Bokeo and Borlikhamxay provinces, Laos and studied different community based approaches to governance.

Case study 2

To study on land governance for cash crops and the impact on livelihoods of villagers, the study 'Come-in and Go-out Cash Crops: local connections and state

response' was conducted by Dr. Thouthone Vongvisouk, Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos. The study was focuses on several key questions: Why cash crops are changing all the time and who makes the decision to control which cash crops should be produced? How cash crop affects to land tenure rights? How different stakeholders respond to the negative impacts of planting cash crops?

These two studies will be finalized and published soon.

Analyses of Decree 84 and draft amendment of the Investment Promotion Law

Decree 84 analysis

To compare between the new decree 84 and the previous decree 192 on Resettlement and Compensation, LIWG commissioned an analysis of this decree to identify the positive and negatives aspects and the main concerns related to this new decree 84. This analysis was conducted by a Lao independent lawyer.

Draft amendment of Investment Promotion Law analysis

A plan is in place for the analysis of the draft amendment of the Investment Promotion Law and its link to the decree the Resettlement and Compensation of People affected by Development

Project. The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses in this law especially related to risks and persons facing such risks, transparency in the investment process (in the land sector) under this law and also the level of strictness of measures and requirements applied by the State towards investors in the implementation of the law and their coherence with the development strategy.

These two analyses will be shared to the members after it is finalized.

China-Laos railway project

LIWG commissioned a study to collect information related to the impacts of the China-Laos railway project. During June and July 2017 a master student from Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand worked with the LIWG secretariat to collect information related to this railway project with LIWG members whose project/activities/target communities might be affected. The data collected will be analyzed by different sources as part of a desk review.

The study is on the process and will be presented to core members in order to seek how network can work on this case for further collaboration among members.

Working Group/taskforce

Advisory Working Group

To advocate on the Land Law revision, the LIWG secretariat coordinates an advisory group on the land law revision. Participants include MRLG, FAO, GIZ, Helvetas, VFI and Mekong Watch.

Private Sector Engagement

This taskforce has developed Voluntary Commitments for Responsible Agribusiness (VCRA); the group is now working on a monitoring framework and looking for endorsement. Members involved include CARE, SNV, Helvetas, Oxfam, VFI, and Fair Trade Laos.

Learn more what is VCRA: in [Lao](#) and [English](#).

2018 Legal Calendar development

The taskforce is working to finalize the 2018 calendar. Members involved: LIFE project, VFI, JVC, PSNUA, LBA*, ADWLE, SODA, and GCA.

* Lao Biodiversity Association

LIWG Communication platform

LIWG Communication platform

LIWG Website

LIWG has been regularly updating its website with news and uploaded documents related to land and natural resources. New publications and recommended reading can be found [here](#).

Please visit our website learn more: www.laolandinfo.org

LIWG Google Group

To connect and engage with LIWG members, LIWG secretariat regularly share information in both in English and Lao to ensure that LIWG members are well informed of happenings related to land issues and foreign investment in Laos as well as sending the notice for upcoming events where LIWG members can attend. Members are welcome to use this forum as part of connecting, sharing knowledge and informing one another related to land issues in Laos. If you have any interesting information to share, please share directly through the group or send to: co@laolandinfo.org.

LIWG Facebook

Recently, the LIWG facebook page is actively being updated with news, events and information related to land issues and relevant LIWG's activities. This is becoming a popular communication channel where people from different parts of Laos can easily access to the information related to land and natural resources and see our daily updates regularly.

Please follow us on facebook [here](#).

Activity update from LIWG's members/ LIWG's initiatives

The Land learning Initiative for Food security Enhancement (LIFE) Project

The LIFE project is a unique project under LIWG which is hosted by Village Focus International and implemented by the consortium partners. LIFE is steered by some LIWG committee members (CCL, World Renew, VFI, LIWG secretariat) + FAO. LIFE's training focus on is land rights such customary land rights and contract farming in Laos. From May to August 2017, LIFE successfully organized 16 coaching workshops with partners in different provinces in Laos. LIFE has provided this training based on requests and the needs of partners making the project's training efforts highly effective and targeted.

Learn more about LIFE project [here](#).

LIWG next quarterly activities (October- December, 2017)

- ◆ Turning Land to Capital (TLCT)+10 years workshop
- ◆ Final meeting of 2018 Legal Calendar development and launching in December, 2017
- ◆ Land law Advocacy: follow up from the Land Sector Working Group (LSSWG) and the Advisory Working Group on Land law revision
- ◆ Private Sector Engagement: Designing the monitoring framework and planning for a pilot-test
- ◆ Connecting LIWG communication platform to MLIKE platform : online discussion and library.

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