



LIWG Newsletter

Volume 3

Land Information Working Group (LIWG)

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Welcome to the third issue of the [Land Information Working Group](#) (LIWG) Newsletter. In our newsletter, we aim to provide you with updates on activities implemented by the secretariat, its members and the network related to land advocacy, natural resource protection and the promotion of respecting of human rights related to land and natural resource tenures.

Your comments or suggestion about our newsletter will be highly appreciated in order to improve each and every issue we publish.

Highlight event...



LIWG Annual General Meeting 2018

LIWG secretariat organizes Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year to report the work of LIWG including the activities, achievements, budget and work plan.
For AGM 2018, the LIWG secretariats presented the activities implemented by LIWG secretariat and the achievement of 2017 on land right advocacy and the work plan of 2018....

Read more inside page 2...



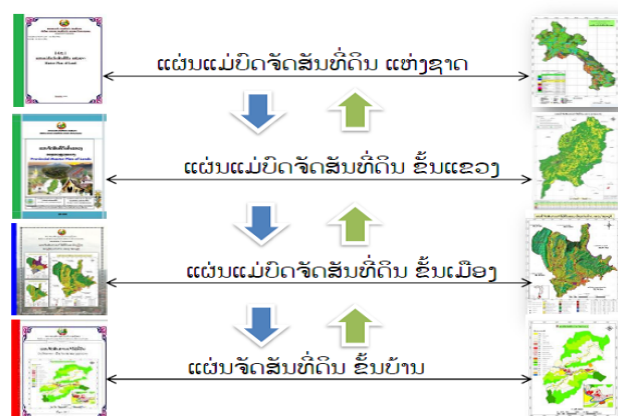
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Meeting and workshop organized by LIWG secretariat

Interactive learning and sharing session between Lao CSOs related to land issues in Laos

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Master plan on land management presentation from Monre during the sharing session

On 22 January 2018, the LIWG secretariat organized the “Interactive learning and sharing session between Lao CSOs and Lao staffs from INGOs in Laos on land, natural resource and environment.”

The government partner from Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MoNRE) and representative from the National Assembly were invited to attend the session.

Through this interactive session, participants had the chance to discuss topics such as: Land law advocacy and the LIWG network (LIWG Secretariat), National master plan on land management and land law revision process (Department of Land Administration, MoNRE), the process of land law revision approval from NA (Law Committee, NA), Land Information Learning Center (a partnership project of VFI and LIWG), Community based biodiversity management and protection (AFC, LIWG member), legal calendar 2018 and the booklet project (Legal Calendar taskforce), and community engagement and banana plantation issue (CAMKID, LIWG member).

Learn more about this interactive session: https://youtu.be/BE8t_uSkc0U

LIWG Annual General Meeting 2018 (AGM)

The LIWG secretariat organizes Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year to review the work of LIWG including the activities, achievements, budget and work plan.

For 2018, the AGM was organized on 2 February 2018. The LIWG secretariat presented the activities and achievement, expenditures and the work plan for 2018.

LIWG secretariat also updated on the land law revision process and the work with MoNRE and NA.

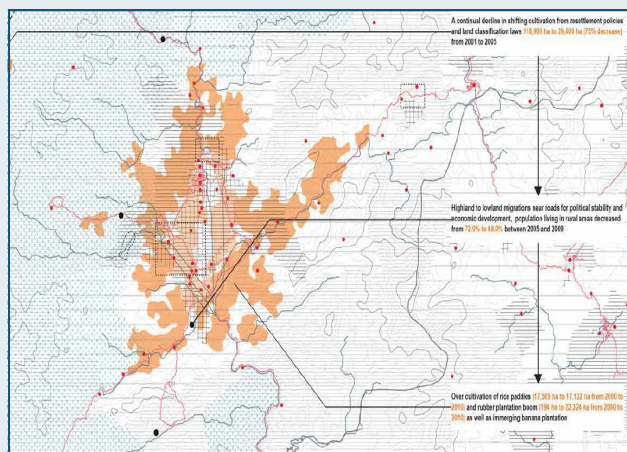
Also, the team from Land Information Learning Center (LILC) introduced the LILC as part of the partnership project between LIWG and VFI to LIWG members and also got feedback from them to improve the work of LILC during the project implementation.

This meeting was also the chance for secretariat and members to discuss how to build strong network for land advocacy and how to sustain the network in the sustainable way such as expectations from members (i.e. dissemination of information, facilitating experience and knowledge sharing).



LIWG's members attended AGM

Exchange Session “Studio Laos: Strategy Landscape Planning”



The Composite plan of Lungnamtha province

On Friday, 9th March 2018, LIWG invited the University of Hongkong, Faculty of Architecture to share about their research's result in Laos for the exchange session. The professors from the Faculty of Architecture, University of Hongkong presented about the design-based approaches to landscape planning with examples from Thailand and Myanmar. Students presented on Laos's major land planning, industrial and agricultural activities along the China-Laos railway corridor which included politics of land planning in Lung Namtha province, Opium eradication in Muang Sing, development of Route 3 and Nam Ha National Protected Area, Hydropower development in Nam Ngem Basin, Artisanal and corporate mining at Phu Bia Concession, and Vientiane production forests and the Laos Timber Trade.

Learn more about their work at: <http://www.designforconservation.org/>

Working Group/Taskforce

Land Law Advisory Group

The Land Law Advisory Group (AG) frequently meets to get updates and to discuss the process of the Land Law revision. During January – March 2018, the members of the group met twice to discuss about the advocacy strategy and update the process of the Land Law revision.

The group will also present about its [recommendations on the Land Law](#) at a Development Partners' meeting that will be organized by LIWG secretariat in April, 2018.

For information: the land law revision is expected to be tabled at the National Assembly seemly by the end of 2018.

Key Recommendations on land Issues in the Lao PDR

These key recommendations on land issues in the Lao PDR have been developed through comprehensive analysis, consultation with stakeholders and based on international best practices, aiming to enhance utilization of land for the economic, social, cultural and moral advancement of Lao people.

The present key recommendations cover 4 topics being: recognition of customary land tenure rights, expropriation of land for public purposes (right to choose), land lease and concession, and gender equality on land tenure rights. Such recommendations are based on international standards especially the principles of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The guidelines are international standard to promote security of land tenure rights and equitable access to natural resources which are factors for eradicating hunger and poverty. The Guidelines also were endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2012 by 125 member states including the Lao PDR. They were subsequently endorsed by different organizations including G8, G20, Rio+20 and the UN General Assembly. In addition, references are made to laws of various countries as examples.

LIWG's members/Initiative/Partners/Networks

LIFE project

The Land learning Initiative for Food security Enhancement (LIFE) under the LIWG continued organizing coaching workshops to Laos Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) and government partner.

From 22-26 January 2018, LIFE organized the coaching for Ministry Of Justice. The coaching was held in Paksong, Champasak province and officials from different divisions from provincial and district levels attended the coaching. This was the first time for LIFE team to organize training for Ministry of Justice, and the topic for this coaching was "Access to Justice". In the training, the LIFE team used different methodologies during the lesson so the atmosphere of the training was interactive, especially using tools to analyze the problem and connect them to laws. Beside this, participants also gained new skill on Training of Trainer (ToT) which they have never been trained on before.



Participants doing "Spider-web" activity during training



Participants presented some games they learned from training

From 21-23 February 2018 LIFE team organized the training to LIWG members who are Non Profit Associations (NPAs) at Vientiane. The purpose of this coaching workshop was to provide NPAs with the ToT on new land toolkit developed by the LIFE project. During the training, participants had the chance to learn about the interactive methodologies which they can apply into their work with communities. After the coaching, participants shared that this was the first time for them to have a raining like this. The trainers used new methodologies, using interactive games into activities which could explain the lesson well and effectively. The training not only provided them new skills but, it helped to develop their understanding on how to effectively work as a team and listen to others with different thoughts.

For information: there are two notices from the project: 1).The funding of LIFE project Phase 1 ended in March 2018. However, LIFE has just received confirmation about an extension phase from MRLG for six additional months, from April to October 2018; 2). The LIFE Project Manager has just resigned, so the position is in the process of recruitment for a new project manager.

Land Information Learning Center (LILC)

The [Land Information Learning Center](#) (LILC) is a new partnership activity between LIWG and Village Focus International (VFI). The center is hosted by VFI.

From January to March 2018, the team of LILC organized series of events at the center and outside of the center as part of introducing the LILC to different audiences. Participants from VFI's partners and LIWG members participated in the events.

- In January, LILC invited participants to learn about the LIFE's land toolkit. Many participants including LIWG's members attended in the event to learn about the new land toolkit which they can apply to their work in the grassroots level to engage with communities.

- In February, LILC invited the volunteer group Green Lao Community and villagers from Ngoi district, where this group works, to share the experience of working with grassroots community and to learn about community livelihood along Ou River. This event was organized as a “photo exhibition” and had villagers as story tellers to tell the stories in each photo. This event was organized beside to the river, outside of the center.
- In March, LILC started their outreach events for the Faculty of Politics and Laws, National University of Laos and Laos Polytechnic College to introduce LILC as land information center to students and teachers from those two colleges.



Villager was telling story of their livelihood and Ou river



LILC team organized event for university students

Note: In the [previous quarterly](#), the name of this learning center was not finalized, so we used LLRC as a reference. Now it is officially named Land Information Learning Center (LILC)

Others

• Study Session on Forest Certification Improve Land Tenure Security

On 6 February 2018, LIWG attended the “Study Session on Forest Certification Improve Land Tenure Security” organized by [MRLG](#). The study session included various presentations: 1). Introduction to certification schemes, 2). How can forest certification improve the land tenure security of the smallholder farmers?, 3). Vietnam Rubber Industry: Current Situation and Prospect for Sustainable Development, 4). Luang Prabang Teak program and their experience with forest certification (case study), and 5). Synergies between FLEGT, forest certification and civil society.

The main question for discussion in the study session was "Does forest certification improve land tenure security of smallholder farmers?. There is no clear answer yet. Further research and discussion is needed to determine if the forest certification contributes to ensure land tenure security, especially to smallholder farmers.

Find more information from this session here: [study session on forest certification and land tenure](#)



• Exchange session for the US public Health students from Khon Khaen Public Health University, Thailand



Villager's vegetable gardens before Donchanh development

On the 14th March 2018, Helvetas organized an exchange session for the US public health students from Khon Khaen Public Health University, Thailand. This exchange session covering different topics such as land issue and food security, nutrition, pesticide etc... related to the health of people.

During this exchange session, Helvetas shared about their work related to the factors affecting the health of people, especially farmers in the rural communities on :1) Experiences on improving nutrition in the uplands and measuring dietary intake; and 2) Toxic landscape, the health effects of the use of harmful chemicals in agriculture.

Helvetas also invited LIWG secretariat to give the presentation followed by a discussion on land issues in the fast changing context of Laos and how it affects vulnerable people such as ethnic groups, the poor and women.

• The 3rd National Conference on the Review of the Cooperation between the Government of Laos

To be part of this meeting, the INGOs Laos Network was requested by the Ministry Of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to display materials of the network members on booth during the conference on 28th February 2018 at the National Convention Center.

The booths included 4 sectors: Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture, and UXO and disabilities. Many organizations presented their project products and materials to demonstrate their contribution to effective development in Laos.

The [LIWG secretariat presented at the agricultural sector booth](#) to show its materials and also presented some members' materials.

INGOs in Laos and MOFA participated in this meeting to review cooperation since 2015, and assess the successes and challenges encountered, as well as future cooperation between the government and INGOs.

From [the meeting](#), Mr Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs said "INGOs and civil society organizations are important for the development of our country and the work they do to reduce poverty by partnering with the government to carry out development plans and fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals."



Booth presentation from INGOs network at MOFA Conference

Highlight news on land issue in Laos

The LIWG Secretariat regularly updates news related to land and natural resources to members via the LIWG Google group and the LIWG website. LIWG News update is shared weekly which summarizes news of the week both in Lao and English languages. You can find all highlight news updates summarized by LIWG secretariat at:

<http://www.laolandinfo.org/blog/monthly-news-summary/>



LIWG Communication; and Introduction for knowledge-sharing platform

LIWG Communication

Communication Channels



Google Group:

LIWG secretariat regularly shares news and information both in English and Lao via the LIWG Google Group to ensure that members are well informed for the situation of land issue in Laos.

Website:

LIWG website is regularly updated with news, documents and publications related to land issue in Laos. The materials including publications commissioned by LIWG, its members, partners and networks.

The number of visitor to our website is increasing continuously. As the end of March 2018, there have been 13,473 visitors.

Visit our website for news and updates: www.laolandinfo.org

Facebook:

LIWG Facebook page is used for sharing news, events and information related to land issues and relevant LIWG's activities regularly.

The number of followers and page like continue increasing. Until March, there are **4,538 likes** and **4,553 follows** on our page.

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/laolandinfo/>

Knowledge-sharing platform on land and natural resources

Recently, there are many websites providing information related to land, natural resources and social issues in the regional and global levels. Those websites can be good sources of information for reference. See the list below:

- **LaoFAB** is a forum for sharing information about Farmers and AgriBusiness in Laos. To get access to this repository, you first have to sign up as member of LaoFAB at: <http://www.laofab.org/>
- **LaoLink** is an online forum on agriculture in Lao language. To join this online forum, please sign up as member of LaoLink at: <http://www.laolink.org/laolink.htm>
- **TABI (The Agro-biodiversity Initiative)** has its mission to contribute to poverty alleviation and improved livelihoods of upland communities through the sustainable management and use of agro-biodiversity in multi-functional landscapes. Find more information at: <http://www.tabi.la/>
- **Open Development Mekong (ODM)**, an open source data, is a platform that offers one-stop shopping for data on country or regional development for civil society, the private and public sector. Visit the website at: <https://opendevdevelopmentmekong.net/>. From the ODM website, you can also find data related to Laos at: Open development Laos (ODL) by visiting ODL at: <https://laos.opendevdevelopmentmekong.net/>
- **Mekong Land Research Forum (MLRF)** is the online site that pulls together research on key themes around land governance in the Mekong region. Learn more at: <http://rcsd.soc.cmu.ac.th/mlrf/>
- **Mekong Land Information Knowledge and Engagement Platform (MLIKE)** is focusing on land issues in the Mekong region and connecting all kinds of people and organizations for learning and collaboration. Learn more at: <https://mlike.org/>
- **The Land Portal** works to help partners to create, curate and disseminate land governance data and information to become part of a more inclusive, friendly and accessible information landscape. Learn more at: <https://landportal.org/>
- **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)** is the policy and action research organization. IIED promotes sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. IIED publishes a wide variety of resources which available to download on their website at: <http://pubs.iied.org/>
- **OpenLandContracts.org** is a repository of publicly available investment contracts for land, agriculture, and forestry projects. It features plain language summaries of key provisions and provides tools for searching and comparing contracts. Learn more at: <http://www.openlandcontracts.org/>
- **The Research Consortium**, by Resource Equity, is a power hub for the collection, sharing, and exchange of knowledge on how to effectively advance women's land rights. Learn more at: <https://consortium.resourceequity.org/>

LIWG next quarterly topics (April – June 2018)

- ◆ Development Partners Meeting on Land Law revision and customary rights on forestland in April
- ◆ Workshop on Preparing Communities to Engage with Investors, and Negotiating Community- Investor Agreement in May
- ◆ Mekong Regional CSOs Exposure Visit on Land Governance in Laos in May
- ◆ Participation at MRLG Regional Conference in May
- ◆ LIWG Core members meeting in June
- ◆ The presentation research finding on the Politics of LUP and the Logic of Land Governance in Laos by IWMI and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University in June
- ◆ Legal Calendar 2019 development meeting
- ◆ Land Information Learning Center (LI LC) Launching event

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