

Newsletter

April - June 2020

Meeting and activities Update

A number of meetings and activities organized by secretariat during this quarter both online and physically meeting

LIFE project

Series of coaching on land rights and new curriculum development

Blog stories

some interesting readings on our website including inspiring stories and updates regarding land and natural resources

Online discussion on land issues

Due to COVID-19 pandemic around the world, many activities are shifted to online. this issue will bring readers to explore some interesting online discussions on land matters

In the news!

Some highlights in the news to catch up on land and environmental issues



Important note:

The draft of Land Law revision that was presented at the National Assembly session in 2019 by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is now pending for National Assembly president to sign off.

Meeting and activities organized by LIWG secretariat

Update on land Law revision

Advisory Group on policy composed of 19 members from 12 organizations who are INGOs, projects and development partner in Laos, had meeting on June 15, 2020 to discuss for the first draft of the comparison report done by consultant. The comparative analysis looked at the improvements and gaps between the previous Land Law 2003 and the latest draft version of Land Law 2019 and the previous Forestry Law 2007 with a focus on the recognition of customary rights of people. The group will base on the analysis to produce communication tools e.g. briefing notes recommendations for future decrees and implementing procedures for the recognition of customary tenure rights.

Important note: the draft of Land Law revision is now pending for National Assembly president to sign off.



Kick off first meeting of Legal calendar 2021 development

The legal calendar development starts in June every year. For this year, the first meeting of the Legal calendar 2021 development held from 8-10 June 2020 in Vientiane. This first meeting was very important as taskforce members, who are LIWG members, shared about the reflection of the use previous legal calendar especially from using it in the community. In the meeting, all taskforce members discussed and together developed for the work plan for the yearlong development plan.

Series of meeting for legal calendar development will be organized monthly and the taskforce will work together to develop the content with different topics in the areas of natural resources and environment. For the next meeting in early July, the taskforce will meet and discuss for topics to put in the legal calendar 2021.

See our current legal calendar at: <https://bit.ly/3bMYvuh>



LIWG-LIFE Meeting

LIWG secretariats and LIFE project (Land Learning Initiative for Food security Enhancement Project) have been closely engaged and worked together for many years. So to strengthen the working relationship and to reflect on the coordination and cooperation mechanisms, the secretariat hosted the meeting between secretariat and LIFE team in May. This meeting was a good chance for both LIWG secretariat and LIFE project team to get common understanding especially for the joint projects.



LIWG committee meeting

During working from home, LIWG secretariat organized online meetings with committees to update the works and discuss about important matters, especially the upcoming activities this year.

LIFE Project's activities and coaching



Curriculum development on land rights, agriculture and environment

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit Laos during April - May, LIFE team then turned into working from home and some of the coaching plans had been postponed. The team focused more on developing new curricula with partners through online working.

Some of those curricula topics are:

- Use of collective land curricula (developed with GIZ Laos) including advanced Training on Contract Farming and Conflict Resolution, and advanced Training on Customary Land and Conflict Resolution
- Responsible Agricultural Investment , developed with LURAS, Helvetas Laos
- Village Forest Use, Garbage Management and Chemical Use and Environmental Protection (for VOICE project)

During this quarter, most of LIFE coachings that was planned in April and May were shifted to be organized in June when government announced easing of lockdown restrictions. Some of LIFE coachings in June are: Coaching on Customary Land Rights and Conflict Resolution, and development of new LIFE Training Materials and Promotion Materials.



Coaching on Customary Land Rights

In June, LIFE held a coaching on customary land rights for a new partner, ADRA Laos, a global human organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, who is also LIWG member.

This coaching focused on building capacity for district staffs to disseminate knowledge on customary land rights and conflict resolution.

After coaching from LIFE, participants delivered what they learned from the coaching to community members in target villages. This is an important part of the coaching because the result from this can give a reflection if participants can apply from their learning into the actual implementing in the community level.



Coaching on Customary Land Rights and Conflict Resolution

This coaching was in cooperation with Mekong Regional Land Governance (MRLG) project and the Department of Land (DoL) from Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) under their new pilot project on Rights and Customary Tenure Recognition in the 3 forest types (production, conservation and protection forests) of Lao PDR. This project is being implemented in three districts of Khammuane province, they are Nakai, Hinboun and Xebangfai districts.

Within this project, LIFE supports the capacity-building component for community awareness raising and participation. Recently, LIFE provided coaching aiming at improving the capacity in community awareness raising for DoL, the Lao Front for National Development (LFNC) and the Lao Women's Union (LWU) who are part of this component for the project.



The coaching included Training Methodologies for Trainers (ToT) and Customary Land Rights and Conflict Resolution. The content of this coaching was mainly based on the new forestry law and regulations towards the use of the three forest categories by villagers and their rights in forest use.

After the ToT in Vientiane, LIFE trainers joined the core trainers who are from LWU, LFNC and DoL to the project target areas to do coaching for district offices.

In the next step, DoL, LFNC and LWU will deliver trainings to the pilot areas and villages and LIFE will do the follow-up and consultation visits after some months of implementation.

Learn more about this coaching on: <https://bit.ly/37DM6fC>

Development of new LIFE Training Materials and Promotion Materials

LIFE is currently developing 2 training videos and a promotion video. Those videos will be used as complimentary support training material for the ToT curriculum.

One of the training video will be used to support the curriculum on Access to Justice and contents of other curricula that include Access to Justice. This video is in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and The Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE) for the production.

Those videos are expected to finish by end of July this year.



LIWG Blog stories

Women rights in land titling and prevention of duplicate land titling



To promote women rights in land management, we present this topic on our legal calendar of month May-June 2020. The topic is ‘Guarantee of women rights in land titling and prevention of duplicate land titling’. Related to the topic of land title and what happening in the society, we also include the legal information on prevention of duplicate land titling.

This topic based on the Guidelines on land registration and titling, No.6036/ MoNRE, dated 27 August 2014.

Read more about this:

<https://bit.ly/2XmIA4a>

The land of the sky



The Land of the Sky is a collection of short stories by young writers who are students at Paksong Secondary school, Champasak province. All stories in this book are about land, water and forest.

The publication of this book supported by Global Association for People and the Environment (GAPE) and the book (in English) can be downloaded [here](#).

Land is Life



Land is Life is a collection of short stories written by secondary-high school students in Southern province of Laos. These stories are shown as case studies and aiming at educating about the actions causing negative impacts to nature and environment. This book also supported by GAPE and can be download from [here](#).

Recommended Readings and Listening

Recoftc Special Report: Overcoming threats to the Mekong's forests and people *By Recoftc*

Big changes are underway in forests of the Mekong region in Southeast Asia. Countries are cracking down on illegal logging, increasing community control over forests, and opening up decision-making processes, making them more inclusive. These changes could have profound effects both in the Mekong countries and globally. But there are also many challenges, and some are deeply entrenched.

Read the full report at: <https://www.recoftc.org/special-report/forest-governance-mekong>



The world forest loss *By Mongabay/Global Forest Watch*

The world has lost 178 million hectares (439 million acres) of forest cover over the past 20 years, which the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) equated to as "about the size of Libya".

The assessment can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2LqVIFo>



For 2019 alone, the tropics lost 11.9 million hectares of tree cover. Nearly a third of that loss, 3.8 million hectares, occurred within humid tropical primary forests, areas of mature rainforest that are especially important for biodiversity and carbon storage. That's the equivalent of losing a football pitch of primary forest every 6 seconds for the entire year.

Read full report on GFW: <https://bit.ly/2ZY7Lvc>

Belt and Road Podcast *Host by Erik Myxter-iino and Juliet Lu*



The Belt and Road Podcast is a podcast that covers the latest news, research and analysis of China's growing presence in the developing world.

All episodes are available to listen at: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/196316>

LandVoc-Linked land governance thesaurus *Facilitated by the Land Portal*

LandVoc, a new online platform introduced by Land portal. It is a thesaurus covering concepts related to land governance. It is currently consisting of 310 concepts organized hierarchically and is available in a multitude of languages.

These languages include English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Burmese, Thai, Swahili and Arabic.

Learn more about LandVoc at: <https://landvoc.org/>



Online discussion about land issues



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic around the world, many activities such as events, meetings, workshops, trainings from many organizations are shifted to online.

LANDac Online Encounter 2020

LANDac-the Netherlands Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development-brings together researchers, policy makers, development practitioners and business professionals in the field of land governance and development. For this Online Encounter 2020, LANDac reflected on the current COVID-19 crisis and its impacts to livelihood and land rights. The online encounter also focuses on the discussion of the question *“how might the COVID-19 pandemic change the future work and priorities of the land governance in the community?”*



Re-watch all sessions at:
<https://bit.ly/2BVZJLx>

Land Rights Implications of COVID-19

Land Portal organized a series of webinars from 26 - 28 May 2020 on COVID-19 and how this is impacting on land issues. Topics of the webinars include: Women's housing and land rights and Covid-19; Eviction response during and after COVID-19; and Migration, displacement, and de-urbanization in the context of Covid-19.



Re-watch these webinar series at:
<https://bit.ly/2ZdQKOW>

The COVID-19, measure to mitigate impact to different actors in agri-value chains

The webinar highlighted the impact of the crises on service delivery to farmers and other value chain actors and on potential mechanisms to cope with restrictions and challenges posed to supplying service in times of the crisis.

Re-watch VCB-Webinar 3 at:
<https://youtu.be/1An6pmAFcOU>



What in the news!

The 9th Ordinary session of National Assembly

The ninth ordinary session of the National Assembly (NA)'s Eight Legislature convened from June 24 to July 2 to assess numerous matters of domestic importance.

During 7-day session, there were some highlights on natural resources and access to justice that NA members made during the debate, especially on the result of NA investigation report on mining and quarry exploration. Read what they said about those issues at: <https://bit.ly/3gKk4SG>

New decree on Ethnic Affairs to promote unity among the nation's diverse ethnic groups

The government has promulgated a prime ministerial decree designed to promote unity among the nation's diverse ethnic groups. This decree has 12 specific policies for ethnic affairs. With that, there is one policy is specifically on Natural Resource and Environment Protection (article 15). Read more about what policies are in the article 15 at: <https://bit.ly/38HtP1g>

Forest fires in northern provinces of Laos

Since early March - April 2020, forest fires occurred largely in northern provinces of Laos, especially in Oudomxay, Lung Namtha, Lungprabang, and Phongsali (watch video [here](#)). Specifically, in Lungnamtha province, the bushfire occurred in many places causing the damage of large forest areas and the plantations of local people. Meanwhile, in Oudamxay province, the bushfires destroyed forest more than 42,832 hectares in the whole province. Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3epkTyH>

Singapore firm to build 1,000 MW coal power plant in Sekong province, Laos

Laos has approved a Singapore energy firm's plan to build a 1,000 MW coal-fired power plant in the southern province of Sekong. The plant is slated to export power to Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam and would be the country's second coal power plant. Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3dDVC4p>

Farmer voices: COVID-19 and its impacts to farmers

To assess farmer voices of how COVID-19 pandemic affecting on agriculture and its productivity, Lao Farmer Network (LFN), a network of farmer in Laos, produced series of videos to reflect how Lao farmers were affected from the COVID-19 outbreak, especially regarding on their productivity. See all videos on their [LFN's Facebook page](#) or as the links here at: <https://bit.ly/2VDxhoQ>



Upcoming activities (July – September 2020)

- LIWG core members meeting
- Legal Calendar 2021 development meeting
- Voice project: youth groups implement activities in the communities
- LIFE coaching for partners on land rights
- Women land rights study

Announcement: After a year of commitment and support to LIWG as committee member and Chair, Thibaut Hanquet from Oxfam Laos has stepped down and is preparing to leave the country. Our new Chair is Santi Saypanya from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Laos. There is one seat in the committee meeting which can be filled in at the election at the next core members meeting tentatively scheduled in August. A big thanks to Thibaut for his commitment and support! Much welcome to Santi!



Thank you for reading
Please stay safe and be well!

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