

Newsletter

Land Information Working Group



July - September
2021



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Highlight Note:

The goal of LIWG advocacy plan is to contribute in a meaningful way to the improvement of the legal framework on land governance in Laos, towards more equitable and secure access to land by communities...*Continued to P. 1*



LIWG Meeting and activities



LIWG advocacy plan: influencing better policy and legislation in the land sector in Laos

After a round of consultations between the Advisory Group and members, the LIWG advocacy plan has been finalized. The goal of this advocacy plan is to contribute in a meaningful way to the improvement of the legal framework on land governance in Laos, towards more equitable and secure access to land by communities.

This advocacy plan will be implemented based on three main objectives:

- Strengthening the capacities of stakeholders in land related policies among LIWG members and government institutions.
- Raising awareness on the current laws and regulations on land and the implications for tenure security
- Creating positive influence on new or revised sub-legislation

Digital Security training

As our lives and work reside increasingly online these days, online criminals, such as hackers, are also increasing, which can have serious impacts both personally and professionally. Seeing that, LIWG secretariat, together with external digital trainers, organized a series of online sessions on digital security for members which they could apply the knowledge from the training to protect themselves online and using more secure communication tools for their work..

In September, the first session was conducted in English for English speakers. And the second session will be conducted for Lao speakers in October.

Legal Calendar 2022 development taskforce

Between June and September several meetings were organized among the Legal Calendar taskforce members as part of the developing process for the new calendar.

After collecting comments from LIWG members, the taskforce members finalized seven topics for the legal calendar of the year 2022:

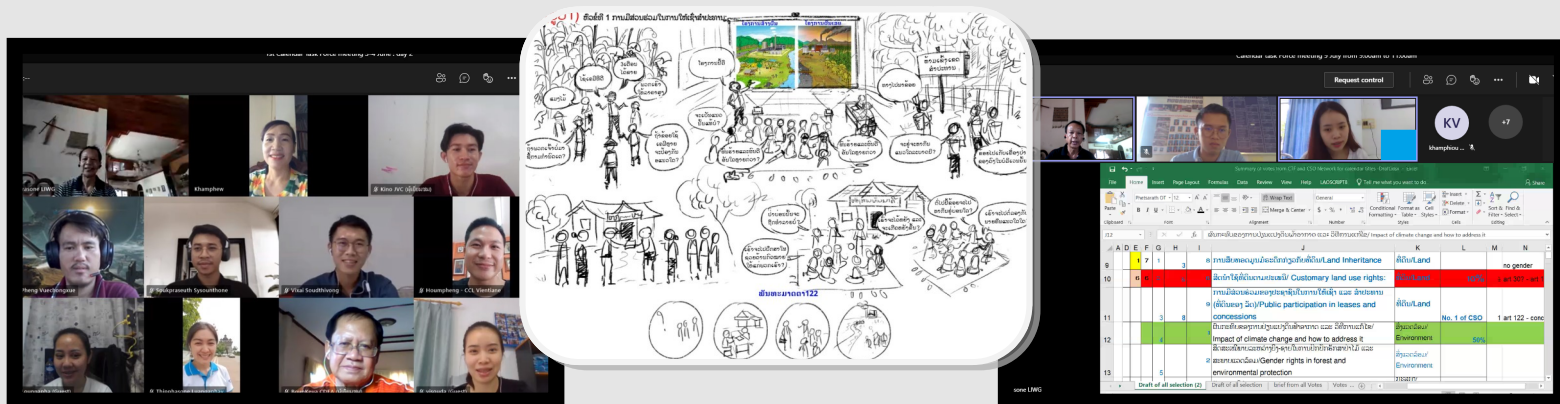
- Acquisition of customary land use rights
- Information dissemination on development project by applying Free Prior Inform Consent (FPIC) principle
- The public participation on state land lease and concession
- The impacts of climate change and risk reduction
- Gender equality in agriculture, forest and environmental protection
- Contract Farming
- Land-related inheritance

After identifying the topics, several taskforce members worked with a graphic designer to sketch drawings based on the selected topics.

On 6th September 2021, the taskforce members introduced the topics and drawings of the draft of legal calendar 2022 to representatives from the Department of Lands (DoL) and relevant government agencies in order to seek comments and get approval from them for the identified topics.

The legal calendar for 2022 will be completed soon and it's expected to be launched in December of this year.

Learn more about the Legal calendar 2021 [HERE](#).



Community of Practice on Women Land Rights

To better support its members working on land and gender, LIWG has started a Community of Practice (CoP) composed of LIWG members including: CARE International Laos, Oxfam Laos, Helvetas Laos, MCC, GDA, ADWLE and supported by an external gender expert to work on the specific topic of Women Land Rights. The CoP focuses on the following activities:

- Develop awareness raising tools on Women Land Rights along with guidelines and methodology (visual cards and animated videos).
- Pilot the awareness raising tools in 1 to 2 villages where the CoP members have projects.

The CoP will meet regularly between August and December 2021. After that, the pilot will also be expected to take place in CoP's member's project site areas (in community).

The CoP met twice to brainstorm on the existing awareness raising tools related to women land rights and started the work on the development of the visual cards. The next meeting will be to finalize the visual cards and work on the animated videos as well as planning for the pilot.

An update about this CoP will be shared in the next issue of newsletter.

Sub-Sector Working Group



Land Sub-Sector Working Group

The Second Land Sub-Sector Working Group (LSSWG) was held on 2nd September 2021 as a hybrid meeting in Vientiane and online via Zoom.

At the meeting, there was a sharing of the past work of three focal groups under the LSSWG: (i) Focal group of the sub-legislation; (ii) Focal group of customary recognition of rights in the three forest types; and (iii) Focal group for data collection and sharing/Land Information systems.

In the meeting, participants discussed and shared the views on three 3 topics: (1) Customary tenure right; (2) Land use planning; and (3) Land conversion. After this meeting, there will be another discussion in detail of each topic to find a partner to involve in these areas of work.

At the meeting, there was also a discussion and exchanging views via video call with World Bank & KFW representatives on the systematic [land title registration program](#) in Lao PDR.

All the key points/actions will be included in the minutes of the meeting which will be shared soon to LIWG members.

Read our previous issue to learn more about focal groups [HERE](#).

LIWG's initiative, members and partners



WCS: Protected Area Decree 2021 strives toward the goal of safeguarding nature and nurturing people

From June 23 – July 2, the Department of Forestry convened a consultation meeting to revise the Protected Area (PA) Decree following previous technical consultations with national and international PA practitioners in Lao PDR. The consultation was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Justice and the Prime Minister's Office, with The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) acting as technical partner.

Based on the promulgation of the Forestry Law in 2019 and the country's renewed sustainable and green growth priorities and international commitments, the draft Decree proposes changes for effective and modern protected area management. The changes will better define protected areas in terms of government jurisdiction, categories, zones and regional/international listings, and will lead to improved guidance around protected area management planning and alignment with international standards.

The updated Decree will promote a landscape management approach for better planning and coordination with other sectors, local communities, and the private sector to achieve long-term sustainable development and management of biodiversity.

Read more here: <https://bit.ly/3yJ2yHE>

LIFE Project



Coaching to partners both at in-person and online trainings

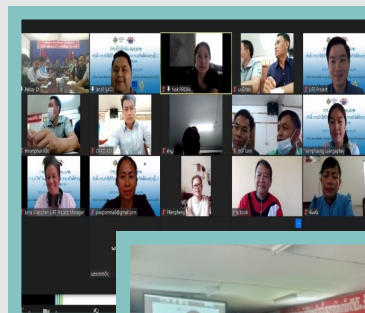
Coaching to DALaM and PSNUA in Khammuane Province

In July, the LIFE team trained its MoU Counterpart [DALaM](#) and the respective line offices at provincial and district level in Mahaxay and Yommalath and [PSNUA](#) on natural resources protection and sustainable use of forest resources. In the course of the coaching, law dissemination in two villages in Yommalath district took place. This activity was co-funded by Bread for the World.



Coaching to RRDPA and its counterparts in Sayaboury province

Under the 2021 Co-Funding with CARE, LIFE and RRPDA have implemented a coaching series on contract farming and customary land rights in Phiang and Paklay Districts of Sayaboury Province. 12 villages of these two districts are expected to be reached. The topic of this coaching is essential as the main problems found in these two districts are about forest encroachment through contract farming, issues with new hydropower development and unsustainable use of forest resources. The first training in July had to be shortened due to a Covid-19 outbreak and also the upcoming coachings will be implemented online. The team hopes for lifted restrictions in the next few months so that the team can implement activities in villages as originally planned.



Coaching to GIZ LMDP on Mediation Techniques and balancing conflicts in Houaphan Province

The LIFE team, together with the GIZ LMDP project, developed a new curriculum on mediation techniques and balancing conflicts. This curriculum helps to understand the mediation and conflict resolution process by law in Laos and explains some methodologies of mediation and mediation tools which participants can consider to use in different conflict situations.

In September, the LIFE team trained 31 participants from GIZ LMDP and their government partners at provincial and district level in Houaphan province.



Forum Theatre Training with partners

In August, the LIFE team, together with its partners from CCL, PSNUA and SAEDA were trained on Forum Theatre Methodologies by an external trainer. Forum Theatre is one methodology that can enable villagers to speak out and explain well about issues happening in their areas and provides a bundle of tools to trainers to enable them to teach and talk about issues in a constructive and participative way.



A Case Study on the Awareness Raising Approach to support Customary Tenure Recognition in the three Forest Categories of Khammuane Province

An Awareness Raising Approach to support Customary Tenure Recognition in the three Forest Categories of Khammuane Province, Lao PDR



A Case Study by the LIFE Project and The Mekong Region Land Governance Project

The case study is available to download at: <https://bit.ly/3lQOd8O>

In 2020, LIFE partnered with MRLG and the Department of Land to support the capacity building component in their pilot project on customary land rights in the three forest categories. LIFE implemented 4 coachings to central, provincial and district level staff of Hinboun, Nakai and Xebangfai districts. The team supported the participants to prepare their own trainings at village level and coached them at village level. After the coachings by LIFE, the participants are expected to implement awareness raising activities at village level by themselves. All target villages lie in one of the three forest categories.

To capture the lessons learnt from the awareness raising activities, the LIFE project and MRLG together conducted a case study which illustrates some problems in the target villages, explains the awareness raising work and gives recommendations for potential upcoming projects.

Due to Covid-19 pandemic and on-going travel and meeting restrictions, the LIFE team has developed online curricula for online coaching on the topics of Customary Land Rights, Responsible Agricultural Investment and Contract Farming.

The LIFE project welcomes any organization to request coachings with the LIFE team leader to the following email: tingkoh@gmail.com.

Blog's stories



Protection of conservation forests and participatory allocation of village production forests

This is the legal calendar topic for July & August 2021 which aims to inform about the implementation of the principles and procedures for planning, protection and management of conservation forests and sustainable use of village resources. The implementation of such activities must be in a way that people in the village can be aware of their roles and responsibilities, which must be clear and well-adopted to ensure effective implementation.

This topic is connected to articles from the Forestry Law (Amendment) No. 64/NA, dated 13 June 2019.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3jWihhr>

Protection and sustainable use of forest products

This is the legal calendar topic from September & October 2021 which aims to build awareness on the importance of community participation in the decision-making for land use allocation, forestland use planning and forest products management.

This topic is connected to articles from the Forestry Law (Amendment) No. 64/NA, dated 13 June 2019; and Regulation on the Management of Wood and Forest Products, No. 0221/MAF, dated 13 October 2000.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/2ZHFAEE>

Community's participatory on Fishery Management in Mekong River

World Wide Fund for Nature in Laos (WWF Laos) is currently implementing the project "Fishery Community Co-Management in the Mekong River in Savannakhet province" which focuses on community's participation for establishment of fish conservation zones in 10 target villages of Xaybuli and Xayphouthong districts. The project intends to reduce ongoing extinction threats to aquatic species and continue habitat protection in order to increase fish population. This would ensure villagers in the 10 targeted communities have sustainable food security as well as to increase the richness of biodiversity.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3vSqBUk>

Communal Land Tenure, Where state's interventions meet farmer's agency

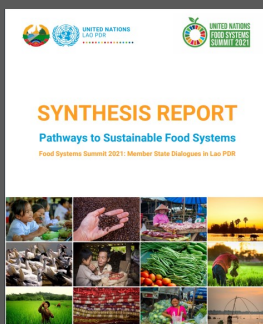
The [recent study](#) linking land tenure security with state transformation processes in Laos shows how communal land tenure rules and practices are coproduced between communities, state, and other actors (e.g., donors). It examines the complex and diverse ways the state shapes communal land tenure arrangements, and how local communities respond to interventions through various forms of farmers' agency.

Better understanding of how local communities (re)shape communal land tenure arrangements is key to not only improve food security in Laos in general, but also to promote farmers' agency to achieve food sovereignty".

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3DZnqxB>

Publications and video

Synthesis Report - Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems Food Systems Summit 2021



For the near future, agriculture will continue to be the primary source of income and livelihood for most of the population. Large agribusinesses are key players in the agricultural sector and while they can contribute to greater income and create more employment opportunities, they also present several disadvantages including: (i) granting land use rights to cultivate large areas of land in mono-crops; (ii) loss of flexibility in the agriculture sector; and (iii) loss of control of land management.

This paper explores the food systems as a whole, identifying country-specific opportunities and challenges, discusses synergies and trade-offs between different thematic areas and elements of food systems and aims to delineate a pathway toward more sustainable food systems in Lao PDR.

The report is a collaborative effort, involving the Government of Laos, the UN country team in Laos and stakeholders found at every level of the food systems in the country.

The report is available to download at: <https://bit.ly/3pQcbTE>

What is the forest area of Lao People's Democratic Republic?

This publication from FAO is to clarify the understanding of forest area figures from the FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2020) and the Department of Forestry's Forest Assessments.

To achieve the forest cover target of 70 percent, a useful first question to ask would be, "70 percent forest cover according to which definition of forest cover, and including which forest categories?"

The publication is available to download at: <https://bit.ly/3vUzMUj>



Video & Report: BftW's sharing Good Practices in Land Rights Work in Southeast Asia and Pacific

To share experiences and to document examples of how challenging of land rights advocacy's work can achieve impact, 12 partner organisations of Bread for the World (BftW) from Southeast Asia and the Pacific have produced good practice studies in the form of reports and short documentary films and discussed them with each other. Key insights from the partner studies and the exchange have been summarized in a synthesis film and report, now available to the public.

● Watch the film at: <https://vimeo.com/568386364>

● Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/3ilitjK>

Learn more about BftW's land rights work [HERE](#)

What in the news!

World Bank to Support Land Administration, Titling in Lao PDR

The \$31 million Enhancing Systematic Land Registration Project will be run by the government's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment over the next five years. Its objective is to modernize land administration and scale up land registration to support the country's aim of extending the benefits of recognized land rights to more of the Lao population.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3yOIGDI>

UN Food Systems Summit makes strides towards goals

A Lao delegation led by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry last week took part in the UN Global Food Systems Summit by video link. "The dialogue provided important policy recommendations and contributed to a renewed national commitment towards transforming our food systems," Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr Phet Phomphiphak said.

The conclusions were summarised in a report titled "Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems in the Lao PDR".

Read more: <https://bit.ly/39KeC0J>

Vientiane-Hanoi expressway under study

The Lao and Vietnamese governments are considering the feasibility of building an expressway linking Vientiane to Hanoi, with assistance from the government of Japan. This road will consist of five sections and will run parallel to Road No. 13 South.

Currently, two routes have been being considered: the first route would run through Vientiane-Pakxan-Viengthong-Thanh Thuy-Hanoi, and the second route would follow a path through Vientiane-Naphaeng-Xaysomboun-Xieng Khuang-Tha Lao (Huaphan province)-Hanoi.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3m5VkbW>

Government, partners plan future forest Strategy 2030, aiming to increase forest cover to 70%

The forest strategy 2030 would incorporate forest management policies and government forest resources with the aim of addressing forest land and forest land management issues.

The previous strategy was acknowledged to be a good tool for forest protection. However, the implementation was not without its drawbacks and difficulties, and deforestation continued to occur.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3xvzuDk>

Chinese Investors Propose Laos-China-Vietnam Triangle Development

Authorities in Phongsaly Province have approved a feasibility study for the development and construction of a new Special Economic Zone at the borders of Laos, China, and Vietnam.

The Chinese firm will survey a total of 250 square kilometers of land, including 100 square kilometers of service and tourism sites and 150 square kilometers of agriculture and industry sites.

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3gBbWqf>

Upcoming activities (October – December 2021)

- LIWG core members' meeting
- Publication of the study on Women's Access and Tenure Security in Customary Forest Tenure Systems in Laos
- Presentation of the findings of the Women Land Rights studies in a regional dialogue on women land rights organized by Bread for the World
- Community of Practice in Women Land Right Workshops and pilot the awareness raising activities in village level
- Revision of the briefing notes related to legislation on land rights.
- Launching event of the Legal calendar 2022
- LIFE coaching, new curricula development, LIFE- RRDPA Case Study Sharing Event and announcement of the new project's activity



Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Stay tuned for our next issue!

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