



JANUARY - MARCH 2022



LIWG E-Newsletter



Stories inside:

LIWG Meeting and Activities

-  LIWG Annual General Meeting
-  The introduction of the PIASVC project
-  Second pilot activity on WLR in target villages of Paksong, Champasack

Sub-Sector Working Group

-  Update from the Sub-Legislation Focal Group under the LSSWG

Members and partners

-  World Renew Laos' Cultural Calendar Livelihood Evolution Roadmap

Readings:

-  Recommended readings, publications and news on land and natural resources

What in the news!

-  Highlight Update on Land and Natural Resource Issues in Laos

Upcoming update and events from April - June!





LIWG Meetings and activities

LIWG Annual General Meeting (AGM)

On 25th Feb 2022, LIWG secretariat organized the AGM to update key activities implemented in the year 2021 as well as the activity plan for 2022. The highlights from 2021 LIWG AGM includes:

- The LAODRHHA presented a case study with the support from FAO, about a Banana Plantation concession in Sangthong district.

At the meeting, there was an announcement of changes within LIWG. Two LIWG steering committee members, Andrea from MCC and Manivanh from GDA, decided to step down from the LIWG Steering Committee after 2 years. LIWG thanks Andrea and Manivanh for their involvement with the LIWG work.

LIWG secretariat also welcomed 2 candidates for new steering committee members: Chris HALLAM from WWF Laos as Conservation Director and Thasphorn Butsalang, the National Director of Oxfam.

LIWG Secretariat Retreat and Work in Luang Prabang Province

From 31 February to 4 March 2022, the LIWG Secretariat traveled to Luang Prabang. The secretariat took this opportunity to visit WCS, one of the LIWG members, especially the project at Nam Et-Phou Louey National Conservation Park in Pong Bor village and Na Bueng village in Phonthong district between 1st and 2nd March in coordination with WCS staff. The purpose of this visit was to study about member's project implementation to understand the situation and impacts from the project, especially to exchange experiences on Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) in these 2 villages as some parts were located in the Conservation Park, and villagers relocated to a new allocated area in order to share with other LIWG members.

During the visit in Luang Prabang, the secretariat created case studies related to these 2 villages which are affected from the extension of the conservation park area. The case studies will be available on our website soon.



The introduction of the Public Information and Awareness Services for Vulnerable Communities Project (PIASVC)

On 20 January 2022, Helvetas Laos in partnership with Land Information Working Group (LIWG) held a meeting of "The introduction of the Public Information and Awareness Services for Vulnerable Communities Project (PIASVC) and the sub-grant" for the LIWG core members at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The PIASVC project is funded by JSDF (administered by the World Bank) and SDC. It is implemented by Helvetas in partnership with LIWG.

This meeting was both face-to-face and online. Representatives from different organizations joined the meeting. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3OXD2X1>.

The PIASVC Project aims to improve access to legal information and counseling services for 30,000 poor and vulnerable persons (of which 60% are women and 85% from ethnic background) in selected rural districts to enhance protection and fulfillment of their natural resources and livelihood rights. It will improve public knowledge on natural resource rights by providing awareness raising and by enhancing legal counseling services for the poorest and most vulnerable communities with approaches tailored to their unique conditions.

Second pilot activity in Paksong district, Champasack province

Following the first awareness raising tools' pilot activity of the Community of Practice (CoP) in Women Land Rights (WLR) in Oudomxay (<https://bit.ly/3x2wJeT>), the CoP team continued with a second pilot at the Helvetas' project site in Paksong district, Champasack province, in the south of Laos. This pilot was conducted in 2 villages: Huaykong and Xe namnoy from 13 to 17 February 2022.

The facilitation guide on Women Land Rights proved to be a user-friendly guide and suitable for work at community level. Most of the activities conducted focused on participation for both men and women through the card activity which illustrate family activities between male and female, sharing story and dissemination of laws.

Along with the pilot, the CoP team has developed two animated videos on women land rights and a video on the WLR tools facilitation processes. Once the videos have been completed, they will be available on all LIWG communication platforms (website & Youtube). The update of the tools and the story of the second pilot from the field from the visit to Paksong is available at (<https://bit.ly/3O8ilkV>).



Sub-Sector Working Group

Update from the Sub-Legislation Focal Group under the LSSWG

Important news related to the sub-legislation revision/development is that the revised MI # 6035 on Surveying and Cadastral Mapping was endorsed on the 31 December 2021 and has become the MI # 6377 on Surveying and Cadastral Mapping (see attached).

In this new MI, in Chapter 3 on Land Surveying, there's a subheading 1.3 which is dedicated to surveying for the purpose of issuing Land Use Certificate (with elaboration on connection to the 44 of the Land Law). This can be considered a step towards formal recognition of tenure in forestland! This MI might be translated soon.

Revision of the MI 6036 has accepted recommendations from the DPs and has become MI#500.

Revision of other sub-legislations, i.e. MI # 035 on Land and Building Valuation, is also in good progress. Development of some new sub-legislations, such as MI on Land Conversion, MD on Land related business, has started. Read all at <https://bit.ly/3nWvrwH>.

Members and partners

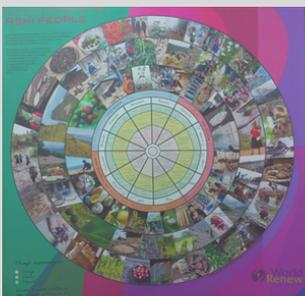
World Renew Laos' Cultural Calendar of the RSHI People and Lao People Livelihood Evolution Roadmap

World Renew Laos has presented 2 interesting tools: the Cultural Calendar of the RSHI People and Lao People Livelihood Evolution Roadmap.

Approximately 2000 Rshi people live in Muang Mai district, Phongsali province, Laos. Rshi is a dialect of the Louma language. Louma is an Akoid subgroup of the Southern Loloish languages in the Tibero Burman Family. The cultural calendar was created during 2011-2015 to help the Ethnic Community School Readiness project to prepare culturally relevant curriculum content for pre-school and to help World Renew staff to understand more about Rshi way of life.

Additionally, World Renew Laos also introduced a roadmap of Lao people livelihood evolution which outlines the development process in artistic form.

Please access to <https://bit.ly/3ANmLQR>.



Cultural Calendar of the RSHI People



Lao People Livelihood Evolution Roadmap



LIFE Project Case Study Sharing Event

On 10 March 2022, LIFE implemented the case study sharing event with more than 40 participants from 20 partner organizations. The 5 case studies that were implemented by LIFE and partners were introduced in the morning, while a panel of five experts and the audience discussed in the afternoon on issues in the land sector in Lao PDR, ways to solve them and open needs for the future. Detailed Minutes can be requested from LIFE directly, contact lena.vilayphet@villagefocus.org. Two case studies are online already available: <https://laolandinfo.org/en/category/life/>

Read more case studies at:

- Case Study with GIZ in Houaphan on Communal Land Rights: <https://bit.ly/3RxzHjS>
- Case Study with CCL in Oudomxay on Contract Farming: <https://bit.ly/3ANVwpa>
- Case Study with RRDPA in Sayaboury on Responsible Agricultural Investment: <https://bit.ly/3O6aN7K>

Blog stories

Impacts of chemical use in agriculture and mitigation methods

The topic of Legal Calendar for the month of January – February 2022 on "Dissemination of Community Development Information to the Community in the Form of Prior and Informed Consent" related to customary land rights. Dissemination of information on development projects must provide information on the objectives, development plans of investment projects, the benefits that will be obtained and the environmental and social impacts of investment projects to ensure the well-being of the people.

Awareness of people's information on community development projects is important to ensure that people are involved in considering and deciding on the benefits that people and communities will receive and the impact on the environment, customs and livelihoods. Therefore, the media plays an important role in disseminating information and raising public awareness.

Read more <https://bit.ly/3uJb2Py>.



Recommended publication

MRLG: Making contract farming more inclusive for smallholder farmers in Cambodia

Based on the experiences of four companies that have used contract farming to work with farmers in Cambodia, this policy brief offers suggestions for making contract farming more inclusive for smallholder farmers in view of the current drafting of a contract farming law by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The lessons from these cases about what worked and what did not work for the farmers involved have important policy implications, in terms of ensuring fair contractual arrangements, strengthening the role of cooperatives, promoting gender equal participation, offering access to a local dispute resolution mechanism, protecting land rights and sharing risks.

Read the report <https://bit.ly/3yHRAUa>.

What's in the news!

Oudomxay Residents Affected by Laos-China Railway Receive Compensation

Acting Head of the Oudomxay Provincial Department of Public Works and Transport, Mr. Khamsouk Srithilat, says that authorities in Oudomxay have compensated those who have been affected by the railway project, Lao Youth Radio reports <https://bit.ly/3P51wy8>.

Some 72 percent of residents in Oudomxay Province affected by the Laos-China Railway have received full compensation. The Laos-China Railway runs through three districts in Oudomxay Province, namely Xay, Nga, and Namor, linking the border with China at Boten. Residents in these three districts of Oudomxay make up 1,164 households across 38 villages. 72.4 percent of households have now received full compensation totaling LAK 183.43 billion, says Mr. Khamsouk.

The Laos-China Railway was officially launched in early December last year, with the government pledging to continue compensating residents who have been affected.

Read all at <https://bit.ly/3KEG9BQ>.



Major changes set for Laos' Siphandone area

Now it is undergoing rapid modernisation under a massive development project being carried out by Sithandone Joint Development Co Ltd (STD). The development is known as the Sithandone Special Economic Zone or new Siphandone area. It has also been referred to as the Khone Phapheng Special Economic Zone, so named for the Khone Phapheng Falls (the largest waterfall in Southeast Asia).

The company's main goal is to turn the Four Thousand Islands area and the waterfall, which are part of the Mekong River, into a leading destination for foreign visitors.

Read all at: <https://bit.ly/3uxJls2>.

Laos finalizes LDC Smooth Graduation Strategy

The Lao PDR is currently in the process of finalizing its LDC Smooth Graduation Strategy, making poverty alleviation a top priority in its national agenda in line with its national socio-economic development plans and the international Sustainable Development Goals. At the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations, Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, reaffirmed the Lao PDR's commitment to graduate from LDC status in the near future.

Read all at: <https://bit.ly/36EtE9U>.

The National State of Environment Report 5 Years (2016-2020) of Lao PDR

The report explained the situation and challenges to protect and manage environment at the national level of Laos, integration and international plans implemented at the national level to cope with the effects of the environment in accordance with the strategy. Also, this report described about the location and landscape, climate, population and information of economy-society, overall resources and natural environment, such as Land resources, forest resources, water and water resources, geology and minerals and biodiversity, as well as past environmental challenges such as litter, water quality, air quality, soil contaminants, forest cover and adaptation to climate change.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/3c1HOVm>.



Feasibility Study Underway for Vientiane to Houaphanh Expressway

A signing ceremony was held in Vientiane Capital for a feasibility study between the Government of Laos, Nana Chin Sole Co. Ltd, and Big Brother 456 Company. An expressway linking Vientiane Capital with Houaphanh Province is closer to reality after a feasibility study for the project was announced yesterday.

The study will research the feasibility of the survey, design, and construction of a new expressway linking the two provinces. The Vientiane-Houaphanh Expressway will be conducted in three phases, with Phase One linking Vientiane's Xaythany District to Anouvong District in Xaysomboun Province. Phase Two will stretch from Xaysomboun to Pek District in Xieng Khouang, while Phase Three will connect Xieng Khouang to Houaphanh Province.

The project was submitted to the government for approval in August last year.

Read all at: <https://bit.ly/38X0kg5>

Laos Issues New Legislation Authorizing Natural Timber Product Exports



The Lao government has issued new legislation authorizing the export of natural wood products. The new regulation is aimed at boosting production and wood processing, as well as providing favorable conditions for natural timber export to foreign countries. According to the new legislation issued yesterday

by the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Dr. Khampheng Xaysompheng, natural raw materials are used in the export of natural wood products, which are then processed into products in accordance with the approved list of wooden items for export.

The government says that the new legislation is expected to assist in monitoring and tracing sources of timber to ensure they are legally sourced.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/3PnaHK8>.



Upcoming activities (April – June 2022)

- Update on PIASVC project: Inventory, Consultation workshops and ToTs
- Update on CoP Women Land Rights
- Legal Calendar 2023 Task Force
- Launching event of 5 Briefing Notes on Land Issues
- Case study publication: Women's access and Land Security in Customary Forest Tenure Systems in Lao P.D.R

Thank you for reading our newsletter!

