



LIWG

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LIWG Meetings and activities

Launching Event of 5 Briefing Notes

On April 6, 2022, LIWG held a launching event of the 5 briefing notes on land issues in Laos developed in collaboration with the MRLG. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Santi Saypanya, Chairman of the LIWG Steering Committee and Mr. Micah Ingalls, MRLG Project Leader. Representatives from relevant government sectors, as well as from development partners and civil society organizations, were invited to participate in the discussion, answering questions related to the discussion topics. The event was aimed at stakeholders of the land sector or those with an interest in land and land policy issues.

Through a collaborative process with the Land Law Advisory Group in Laos, a series of briefing notes were developed addressing some of the most pressing issues in the country in relation to the recently passed Land Law (2019) and Forest Law (2019).

The five briefing notes in the series address:

- 1) Tenure rights in state forestlands;
- 2) Customary tenure rights;
- 3) Tenure rights to land for collective purposes;
- 4) Awareness-raising for gender and social inclusive;
- 5) Safeguards in cases of land loss or expropriation.

The Land and Forest Laws provide unprecedented opportunities to increase tenure security for local communities in Lao PDR, these briefs highlight existing questions or issues, provide brief backgrounds on the issues and importantly, give key recommendations for moving forward.

All 5 briefs can be found on the LIWG website:

<https://laolandinfo.org/category/resource/publications/> and on the MRLG website: <https://www.mrlg.org/publications/>.

You can also read the presentations here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ae9SuNz97qWrufi8hXS MXGBQiAygd6Vy?usp=sharing>.





Women Land Rights (WLR) Tools

Recently, LIWG with the Community of Practice (CoP) in Women Land Rights developed 2 animated videos as tools for community strengthening on women's land rights and gender equality. The first video presents women's experience and impacts from losing their lands. Also, it provides information and recommendations. The second video presents women's experience in joining and participating in decision-making meetings on collective land and forest land governance. Also, it promotes women to participate in village's meetings, making decisions and planning on land use and governance. In addition to this, the CoP team developed a video introducing the tools that demonstrate the use of the facilitation guide and its process for implementing activities. The videos are now available on LIWG's media platforms here:

- Community Strengthening on Women's Land Rights and Gender Equality - Part 1: <https://youtu.be/7U31ak-lrS0>
- Community Strengthening on Women's Land Rights and Gender Equality - Part 2: https://youtu.be/Hr_vTdnXf0
- Community Strengthening on Women's Land Rights and Gender Equality - Introduction to the tools: <https://youtu.be/uiPPy-tQF7Y>

Legal Calendar 2023 Taskforce

LIWG has set up a calendar taskforce (CTF) in order to work together on producing a legal disseminating tool which is the legal calendar 2023. The CTF was joined by representatives from LIWG's member organizations which are JVC, CCL, LaoDHRRRA, MCC, WWF Laos, CASE, PDDA, VFI, CDEA, LIFE project, and LIWG itself, also representatives from government partners such as DoL, NAFRI, and Faculty of Law (FoL). This year, the CTF has 2 consultants to work on picture design and layout for two versions for wall and desk.

All legal calendar 2023 stakeholders have been working hard since May to participate in meetings, selecting legal calendar 2023 topics, brainstorming and scanning most related legal content to cover the current issues, and designing pictures and layouts. According to the original plan, there will be a cross government meeting to pass the legal calendar 2023 and both wall and desk of the legal calendar 2023 is expected to be printed in October.

For more information about CTF's meetings, please follow the list below:

- The CTF meeting in Luangprabang – please visit <https://bit.ly/3r2urss>
- The CTF meeting in Vang Vieng, Vientiane province – please visit <https://bit.ly/3qY60MC>

Update on the PIASVC Project

LIWG's Inventory of Existing Materials and Tools within the Network in support to the PIASVC project

In April 2022, LIWG, in coordination with Helvetas, held PIASVC's virtual kick-off meeting on the inventory where the awareness raising and legal counselling tools and materials was presented. This meeting was joined by PIASVC stakeholders and its sub-grantees who are LIWG's members which are CASE, CDEA, GDA, MCC, VFI, LaoDHRRA and SAEDA, PDPA, PSNUA, LBA and ADWLE. This meeting aimed to provide participants an introduction of the inventory team as well as the process and methodology of the inventory which helped the sub-grantees understand and work well together.

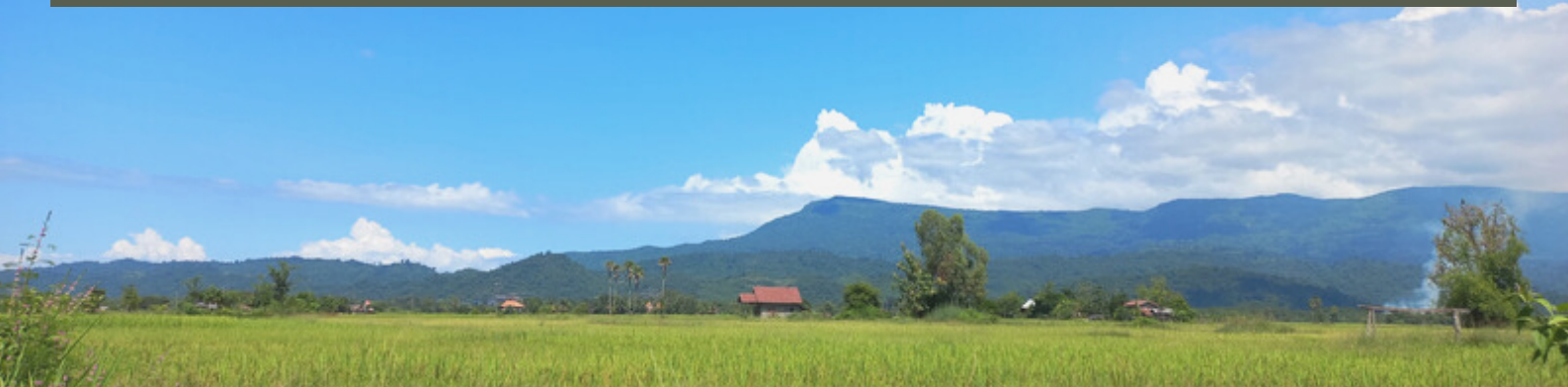
Following the meeting, there were 4 consultation workshops for identifying and finalizing tools and materials on legal counseling and awareness raising for PIASVC's sub-grantees which started in April and lasted in August 2022.

The workshops were divided into two identifying workshops and two finalizing workshops regarding Legal Counselling and Awareness Raising tools and materials. These workshops aimed at selecting materials and tools which can support the work of the sub-grantees to implement their projects.

For more information about each workshop, please visit:

- Identifying Legal Counselling Materials and Tools to be used by the PIASVC project – please visit <https://bit.ly/3Uy35Yt>
- Identifying Awareness Raising Materials and Tools to be used by the PIASVC project – please visit <https://bit.ly/3C59yDk>
- Finalizing legal counselling & access to Justice, CF and RAI for Training of Trainers, and AR materials and tools to be used by the PIASVC project – please visit <https://bit.ly/3dx1zFD>
- PIASVC's Awareness Raising Training Materials & Tools Validation Workshop – please visit <https://bit.ly/3DPfbH2>





PIASVC's Series of Training of Trainers

LIWG and Helvetas Laos scheduled several trainings of trainers (ToTs) for representatives from the sub-grantees of the PIASVC project. The ToTs covered 6 different topics including land rights and facilitation skills, gender and social inclusion, access to justice and legal counseling, responsible agricultural investment, contract farming, and customary land rights. To provide those ToTs, LIWG and Helvetas Laos have worked with several expert trainers with significant knowledge and skills, which are from the Legal and Development Partnership (LDP), LIFE project, MCC, BABSEACLE, and individuals consultants, in order to enable the participants to experience and understand those six topics.

To date, 4 out of 6 ToTs have already been delivered to the participants, beginning with the first ToT in May. The last ToT will be organized on customary land rights in October. There will be an update about this last ToT shared afterwards.

For more information about those 5 previous ToTs, please visit the list below:

- 1st ToT: Basic Knowledge on Customary Land Rights and Facilitation Skills – please visit <https://bit.ly/3R13KyV>
- 2nd ToT: Diversity and Gender Inclusion & Community Strengthening on Women's Land Rights and Gender Equality Tools – please visit <https://bit.ly/3r2tkcg>
- 3rd ToT: Paralegal Legal Client Center Counselling, Village mediation and access to Justice related to land and natural resource – please visit <https://bit.ly/3SsjJqQ>
- 4th ToT: Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) – please visit <https://bit.ly/3COiDNB>

Members and partners

Congratulations to SAEDA for the 5th ASEAN Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (RDPE) Leadership Award

Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association (SAEDA) have been selected by the government of Laos to receive the 5th ASEAN Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (RDPE) Leadership Award on May 12, 2022 via online. The event was organized by ASEAN Secretariat and Government of Philippines (host), chaired by Lao government host from the Department of Rural Development (DRD) - Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and also participants from MOFA and MOHA.

Follow SAEDA through <https://www.facebook.com/saeda.lao>



Thematic workshop on sharing event by CDE

On the afternoon of 6 April 2022, LIWG, in collaboration with the Center for Development and Environment (CDE), held a hybrid workshop to share information on the results of land investment analysis in Lao PDR with civil society. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Santi Saypanya, Chairman of the LIWG Steering Committee. The meeting was attended by representatives from the government as well as development partners and civil society organizations. During the event, two key research topics were presented: Insights of integrated analysis of national land concession inventory and assessment of quality of investments in Lao PDR, and Review method of agricultural production by Contract Farming in Lao PDR.

You can read the conference proceedings here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_DxFqX1VnkwWj-5AHk1MElgBTOZ4Pj9Q?usp=sharing

See publications here: <https://www.k4d.la/>

Land Sub-sector Working Group

1st LSSWG Meeting of 2022

DoL, Helvetas and GIZ hosted a meeting to report on the implementation of the work and lay out the plan for the implementation of the Land Sub-sector Working Group's (LSSWG) work of 2022. The meeting was a hybrid event, organized at the Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel on the 29th of April of 2022, and joined by related stakeholders from CSOs and government partners about 40 people. The meeting presented updates from the LSSWG Focal Groups on Sub-legislation, Customary Tenure Rights in Forest, and Land Information System and Data Sharing. LIWG informed that SAEDA is interested to take over the Focal Group on Sustainable Land Investment which has not been active for a long time. Also, there was an exchange discussion of the work plans and proposals for upcoming activities as well as updates from the Land Sector and the Donor Community.

Please see the meeting details as linked:

-Lao: https://drive.google.com/file/d/17_i7HAO0KKzWzabbapZmLOM9TgYxFyzq/view?usp=sharing

-English: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19VJivvxqkQERXjDVCora9O1YUyolrGK/view?usp=sharing>



Blog stories

Public participation in leasing or concession of state land: Legal calendar for March - April 2022



The legal calendar for the month of March-April 2022 presents the topic "Public participation in the leasing or concession of state land" with the aim of showing the participation of a variety of people in the leasing or concession of land to promote and ensure the participation of the people in the process of leasing or leasing land, because they are the ones in the local area who will benefit and have a direct impact, so people should be aware of various information and participate in decision-making to protect their own rights and interests and the community. In addition, the various obligations of the lessee or concessionaire must comply with those stipulated in the law and the terms of the contract.

For more information of legal calendar for the month of March-April 2022, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3Sktqr1>

Impacts of Climate Change and Risk Reduction: Legal Calendar of May - June 2022

The legal calendar for the month of May-June 2022 presents the topic "Impacts of Climate change and risk reduction" with the aim of showing the effects of climate change in many forms such as floods, droughts, forest fires, severe storms, unseasonal rains and other forms caused by environmental destruction such as forest destruction, littering, emissions into the atmosphere such as exhaust from factories, forest burning...

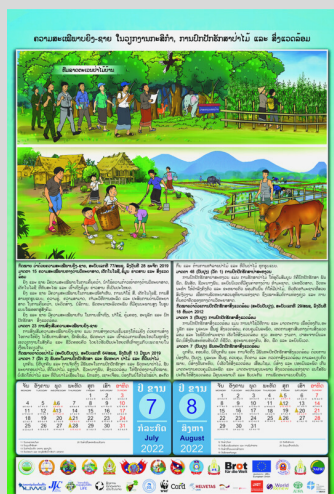
Also, the media shows how to reduce the risk from the effects of climate change by increasing the absorption of carbon dioxide by increasing green areas, reforestation, land use allocation, waste management, water resource conservation... which shows the principle of 3 Rs (3Rs): It is a symbol of the main way to reduce waste, it is the most effective way to eliminate waste, with the following implementation methods: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycling.

For more information of legal calendar for the month of May-June 2022, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3BvMTyd>





Gender Equality in Agriculture, Forest Protection and Environment: Legal Calendar for July - August 2022.



The legal calendar for the month of July - August 2022 presents the topic "Gender Equality in Agriculture, Forest Protection and Environment" with the aim of showing gender equality in forest protection, which shows the participation of women in participating in patrolling the village's forest reserves. Also able to use knowledge and skills to contribute to various tasks, especially research on forestry science, water resources, forest products, ecology, biodiversity and other tasks;

In addition, this also shows the equality between men and women in environmental protection and agricultural production, cultivation and animal husbandry. This is also a message to cultivate awareness among children in proper waste management and home hygiene.

For more information of legal calendar for the month of August-September 2022, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3UkCbmW>

Recommended publications and knowledge websites

Briefing Note: Women's Access and Land Security in Customary Forest Tenure Systems in Lao P.D.R.



Land, forests, and water are the most valuable assets for ethnic groups that live in the forested mountain areas of Lao P.D.R. Sustaining and ensuring continued access to these resources is central to their livelihoods and food security. For generations, men and women's access to these resources have been regulated by village level customary systems.

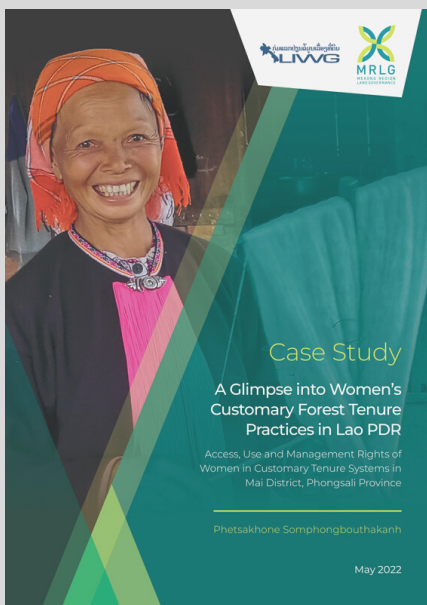
There has been little research on the customary rights of women in relation to forest land and resources. This briefing note is based on a case study (Figure 1) that looked at women's access to land and forest tenure rights in traditional systems in Khmou Ou and White Tai villages of Mai district in Phongsaly province.

Read more about this brief at <https://bit.ly/3DU9yr9>



Case Study: A Glimpse into Women's Customary Forest Tenure Practices in Lao PDR

This case study was commissioned by the Land Information Working Group (LIWG) in partnership with the Faculty of Law at the National University of Laos and financially supported by the Mekong Region Land Governance (MRLG) Project.



The case study explores the intersect between customary tenure systems and gender roles in two villages in Phongsali district in the north of Laos. The country has a diverse population of ethnic communities who depend on forests and other natural resources for their livelihoods. These communities play an important role for conserving complex landscapes. However, their traditional land tenure practices are insufficiently documented and therefore poorly understood, and even more so the gender relations in customary systems. Based on field research, the study compares two distinctly different ethnic groups, Khmou Ou and White Tai. Despite being geographically close, the study shows how these ethnic groups differ in terms of traditional forest management and gender roles. It found that women have intimate relationships with their forests yet have less rights to forests than men (such as rights to inheritance and access to forest income).

Read more about this report at <https://bit.ly/3DHfQdI>

FAO & UN-OHCHR - Gender and Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Asia

Recently, the Food and Agriculture Organization has published the policy brief "COVID-19, Land, Natural Resources, Gender Issues and Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Asia" has been jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN-FAO) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN-OHCHR).

In this context, this brief asks specifically what impact COVID-19 is having on Indigenous Peoples' rights, especially women, elaborating on how challenges could be overcome leaving no one behind.

The document can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb9121en/>



What's in the news!

The Lao villagers resettled for the construction of the China-Laos Railway are moving into new houses, by Xinhua

Recently, The Star Website has published an article titled the Lao villagers resettled for the construction of the China-Laos Railway are moving into new houses built with China's aid released by Xinhua on 24 April 2022.

A ceremony on the resettlement and a calligraphy and drawing competition themed "For Shared Future" was held on Friday in Buam Aor village, Xiang Ngeun district of Luang Prabang province, some 220 km north of the Lao capital Vientiane, where a Chinese firm, NORINCO International Cooperation Ltd., has built a resettlement village for the construction of the China-Laos Railway.

Read original article at <https://bit.ly/3xT6d8n>

Decree on the Criteria for Poverty Graduation and Development, No. 348/GOL, Vientiane Capital, date 16.11.2017

This decree defines the criteria for poverty graduation and development. It provides the basis for defining goals for poverty reduction. It focuses on building families, developing villages, making large villages into towns in rural areas and strengthening districts according to the Party Congress and the National Socio-Economic Development Plan for each period.

Read all details of this decree per linked <https://bit.ly/3Dyie6e>

Causes of the delay of land registration

The Head of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment commented on the delay of land registration during the 2nd National Assembly Session on 22 July.

Mr. Bounsom Songvilai, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, said that the transition from analog to modern systems has been difficult. While the department has so far issued 34,487 land titles, technical difficulties have caused the registration of land titles to be delayed.

Mr. Bounsom accepted that the falsification of documents and land title registrations by corrupt officials and brokers also slows down the process. Of the massive monetary losses to corruption since 2016, authorities have only been able to recover LAK 1.82 trillion (approximately USD 152 million) from corrupt officials who embezzled it. Read all article at <https://bit.ly/3ASqtIJ>



Agreement on Land Business, No. 4392/MONRE. VTE, dated 25 August 2022

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) has published the agreement on Land Business No. 4392/MONRE. VTE, dated 25 August 2022. The objectives of this agreement is to determine the regulations, conditions, procedures and standards related to the management and monitoring of business operations related to land in a unified way throughout the country to ensure that such business activities are carried out properly in accordance with laws and regulations aimed at favoring the development of the real estate market including the land market, to promote land development strongly according to the market economy mechanism that is adjusted according to law and to ensure the effective collection of land revenue, to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism to contribute to the national socio-economic development.

Read the agreement here: <https://bit.ly/3CB9DiM>

Feasibility Study Completed for Vientiane to Pakse Expressway

A new expressway linking Vientiane Capital with Champasack Province is closer to reality after a feasibility study for the project has been completed. The study and design of the expressway from Vientiane to Pakse was undertaken by Duangchalern Development Construction Group.

When complete, the expressway will link the nation's capital with Pakse City in Champasack Province, with a one-way trip expected to take around five hours. The expressway will begin in Vientiane Capital off 450 Years Road, closely following Route 13 South some 617 kilometers.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/3P8EKpq>

Thousands of Party members disciplined over corruption

Since 2016, a total of 3,690 Party members (including 440 women) have been disciplined over incidences of corruption and other forms of misconduct, according to an official report unveiled last week. Of these, 2,019 people were expelled from the Party, 150 officials were demoted, and 742 members were banned from taking part in Party meetings and activities.

In addition, 753 other Party members and nine Party cadres were given warnings instructing them not to repeat their transgressions, according to the report, which was presented at a nationwide state inspection meeting held in Oudomxay province on April 8-9. Investigations into more than 4,180 targets since 2016 revealed that more than 8.97 trillion kip (including 8.37 trillion kip, US\$50.22 million and 36.89 million baht) had been lost to corruption.

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



Lao dam disaster: UN experts decry lack of progress for survivors four years on

GENEVA (22 July 2022) – Four years since a dam failure in the Lao People's Democratic Republic left at least 71 dead and thousands displaced and homeless, UN experts* have called on the Government and companies involved to explain why survivors continue to face hardship and neglect.

The UN experts wrote to the Lao Government to convey their concerns and demand immediate action to address the new allegations. Letters were also sent to 22 companies, including banks, construction and insurance companies, and, in the case of foreign companies, their host States.

Read more about the call for justice at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/04/lao-dam-disaster-un-rights-experts-call-justice-two-years>

China and Laos Inaugurate Saysettha Low-Carbon Demonstration Zone

The low-carbon area is located inside the Saysettha Development Zone in Vientiane Capital, which is jointly operated by the Vientiane Administration Office, representing the Lao government, and the Yunnan Construction and Investment Holding Group, representing the Government of China.

It was believed that the low-carbon demonstration project in the Vientiane Saysettha Development Zone serves as an important step toward implementing the action plan on building the China-Laos community with a shared future, and highlights the joint efforts addressing climate change made by the two countries.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/3P11Gap>

Laos to Restrict Development on Agricultural Land

Mr. Phet Phomphiphak, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, said during the ongoing National Assembly Session that the ministry will ensure the country can retain 70% forest coverage, including riverside lands.

Laos currently has 4.5 million hectares of agricultural land, with 2 million hectares dedicated to rice farming and the rest to crop and animal farming. The ministry is implementing land allocation and demarcation projects for protected areas in response to small, medium, and large investments in order to prioritize the production of marketable crops.

The Ministry will also improve soil quality by applying organic, bio-organic, green manure and chemical fertilizers across ten target provinces as part of a food security initiative. Despite vast agricultural lands, farmers in Laos are suffering from fuel shortages and rising fertilizer prices.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/3Rdy0I7>



Upcoming activities (September – December 2022)

- Update on PIASVC project: ToTs
- Core Members' meeting
- Legal Calendar 2023 Task Force cross government meeting
- ToT of Legal Calendar 2023
- CSO event and calendar launching

Thank you for reading our E-newsletter!



