Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Strengthening agroclimatic monitoring and information systems to improve adaptation to climate change and food security in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

BACKGROUND

The project was implemented from 26 May 2017 to 30 June 2022. It aimed to: i) enhance the monitoring, analysis, communication and use of agrometeorological data and information at national and provincial levels for decision-making in agriculture and food security; and ii) improve the monitoring and analysis of agricultural production systems by strengthening the Land Resources Information Management System (LRIMS) and agroecological zoning (AEZ) for agricultural policies and climate change adaptation. The evaluation covered the project's full five-years and aimed to provide evidence of the most productive agroclimatic approaches for the country.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The evaluation asked:

- To what extent as the project achieved its objectives and outcomes?
- To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and in a timely manner?
- What is the likelihood that the project results and positive impacts will be sustained after its completion?

EVALUATION METHODS

The team used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches to triangulate the results. Qualitative information was gained from focus group discussions (FGDs) with community level beneficiaries, and semi-structured interviews using core questions, complemented wherever possible by quantitative data.

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT CODE
GCP/LAO/021/LDF

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE
Lao People's Democratic Republic

START/END DATE
May 2017/ June 2022

FUNDED BY
Global Environment Facility (GEF)

PRIORITY AREAS
Better prduction, better environment

PARTNERS
Lao PDR's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

WHAT DID THE PROJECT ACHIEVE?

The project exceeded expectations by generating a Python agroecological zoning (PyAEZ) tool of global relevance. It achieved many of its outputs, surpassing several indicators and targets. It was highly successful in securing co-financing and engaging other actors in complementary efforts.
In addition, the project established or rehabilitated manual weather stations and set up a laboratory to calibrate the sensors of automatic weather station (AWS). It also supported the Lao Climate Service for Agriculture (LaCSA), a decision-making tool for agrometeorological advisories and early warnings.
Furthermore, it strengthened agroclimatic monitoring and information systems to improve climate change adaptation and food security and improved institutional capacity through training initiatives.

LESSONS LEARNED

Stakeholder consultation and quality control during project formulation are crucial for a consistent design with clear, logical results pathways, offering practical guidance for teams. An integrated approach enhances outcomes by tackling key climate challenges like droughts and floods.
The project serves as a model for community agri-information, promoting broader adoption. It's essential to verify the project document, results framework, theory of change, and KPIs during inception, especially after delays. Sustainability is strengthened through visible benefits to farmers, staff training, and integrating knowledge platforms into Ministry systems.

Click **here** to find out more in the full report.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

While the project's overall efficiency was satisfactory, the project required a no-cost extension to make up for lost time with some outputs, such as those relating to hardware issues which were delayed. Establishing a functional M&E system and a theory of change took time with some planned M&E activities delayed for more than two years and others not implemented at all.
The project aimed to address the needs of local communities, including vulnerable populations but did not identify them initially. Possible shortcomings from the lack of a gender analysis led to risks including the exclusion of women, due to limited access to agrometeorological information and inequitable division of labour among men and women during farming activities.

NEXT STEPS

- Scaling up climate-responsive planning and decision-making for resilient agriculture and livelihoods and institutionalizing the successful tools that were developed under this project.
- Enhancing sustainability through an integrated approach to project components, partner collaboration on climate challenges, and focusing on government continuity, environmental safeguards, social, and gender expertise.
- Strengthening learning and M&E by ensuring that a theory of change is developed at design stage and building an M&E plan into the design with baselines and SMART indicators.

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