

TABI Mid-Term Review
Draft Report

Vientiane, Lao PDR
6 June 2011

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Agrobiodiversity
AEA	Agro-Ecosystems Analysis
AEDP	Agro-Enterprise Development Process
AG	Advisory Group
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CAFRI	Centre for Agriculture and Forestry Information
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CDE	Centre for Development and Environment (University of Bern)
CLT	Communal Land Title
COP	Conference Of the Parties
CTA	Chief of Technical Advisor
CU	Coordination Unit
DAAP	District Agrobiodiversity Action Plan
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DAW	District Agrobiodiversity Workgroup
DLMA	District Land Management Authority
DoA	Department of Agriculture (MAF)
DoE	Department of Environment (WREA)
DoF	Department of Forestry
DoLF	Department of Livestock and Fisheries
DoP	Department of Planning (MAF)
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
FIPD	Forestry Inventory and Planning Division
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GiZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IUCN	The International Union for Conservation and Nature
KETS	Kumban Extension and Technical Service Centres
KISS	Knowledge and Information Sharing System

MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mining
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTR	Mid Term Review (Team)
NABP	National Agricultural Biodiversity Program
NAFES	National Agriculture and Forestry Extension System
NAFRI	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
NAP	National Agrobiodiversity Program (UNDP/FAO)
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NLMA	National Land Management Authority
NPA	Non-Profit Association
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
NUOL	National University of Laos
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PAW	Provincial Agrobiodiversity Workgroup
PF	Project Facilitator
PLUP	Participatory Land Igi Tc29lita/TT4 R/FtMM01 T16-0.0002 Tw{PLUP }c-0.000try -2

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The potential for TABI to make a valuable contribution to Lao PDR is high. The project design incorporates a wide range of issues under its 6 components with clear focus on the combined objectives of ABD and poverty alleviation, gives it the flexibility to pilot innovative actions and test approaches in the field which have the potential to be fed into policy making processes supporting its goals. The MTR considers that the Project remains highly relevant for the main beneficiaries (government officials, provincial and district administrations responsible for agriculture and natural resources conservation and sustainable use, farmers and their communities in the northern uplands of Luang Prabang and Xieng Khouang Provinces).

Outcome 1 has been the least effective, despite the most notable achievement the contribution to the COP 10 reporting and support to the delegation. CBD compliance reporting and NBSAP implementation is still not achieved. The MTR recommends that a set of actions to support and boost the CBD compliance work and NBSAP preparation is built into the work plan comprising a communication plan supported by Outcome 5.

Outcome 2 has been effective in setting up the SP model of pilot project implementation, but it has not been very efficient and is underspending funds. The sub projects pilots should generate information on sustainable techniques through demonstrable examples which through learning processes should enable TABI to promote best practices within ABD management. In the short term, it is recommended to consolidate the implementation of the current Sub-Project based activities and in parallel seeking (if possible) to scale up into one or two clusters more in each district.

For Outcome 3, most field level activities were only picking up speed at the end of the year 2, thus effectiveness has been low, as well as efficiency. However, this outcome is

Outcome 2 has been successful, it is recommended to consolidate the implementation of the current Sub-Project based activities and in parallel seeking (if possible) to scale up into one or two clusters more in each district.

concerns capturing learning form

A fundamental output of TABI, as per the project document, is a better understanding of the specific threats to ABD in various agro-ecological zones, the various uses of ABD within community groups, and the consequences of ongoing social, ecological and environmental change, and support of the development of sustainable field level solutions to these threats, including promotion of supportive policies.

biodiversity conservation focus with economic development stemming from natural resource use.

This is reflected also in the quality and usefulness of the project log-frame. The design implies inherent difficulties in fitting an open-ended results framework into a traditional log-frame. This quickly became apparent after project start-up. The initial log-frame was considered inadequate and the log-frame was revised through a series of planning workshops and finalised in April 2010, to take into account lessons learned during program implementation in Year 1 and to align it with MAF's vision for a National Agrobiodiversity Program under which a range of donors can provide support according to their specific priorities and resources. It is not clear to the MTR exactly what lessons learnt were considered for the new log-frame, nor does there seem to be a SC endorsement / agreement on the final log-frame matrix (it is not mentioned in the SC minutes provided to the MTR). The log-frame now incorporat

However, a full-fledged log-frame revision will take up precious project resources, and distract TA resources from other more urgent work required for the remainder of phase I, therefore the MTR recommends that a revision of the log-frame is undertaken. Only outputs, indicators and timing should be revised to make it more realistic in terms of expected achievements, but including risk risks and assumptions. It should retain components / outcomes as far as possible (unless learning experiences from Phase 1 implementation dictate otherwise). The review should be made towards the end of Phase 1. The log-frame review must be based on a set of standard LFA principles, (an example of which are presented in Annex 3). Support should be sought for the actual LFA formulation process, e.g. by contracting a facilitator.

4 PROGRAMME PROGRESS

The project has built up good reporting systems with detailed annual reporting of achievements per output presented in matri

▲ training needs assessment has been carried out and a report including suggested actions including local levels is produced according to plan, including workshop reports.

The M&E framework is developed and will be used for the annual report for the activity year 2011-12 that is now being prepared.

Support to the DoF in the establishment of a proper institutional structure has been provided by IUCN to strengthen the CBD governance.

Given the challenges it faces and its complexity, TABI is performing quite well, with some significant achievements, but also a number of constraints that must be addressed before an eventual second phase. The challenges and opportunities encountered under each component during implementation are presented in the following section.

4.1 Outcome 1: Effective governance of the CBD in Lao PDR.

This outcome is expected to emerge from TABI support to the establishment of functional institutional structures and processes for the implementation of the CBD and for reporting to the COP. It should also create a system for relaying information / know-how on CBD to involved actors at national level, and foster coordination mechanisms.

In December 2009, MAF decided on option one re. the institutional set-up, and a steering committee was then proposed established for CBD compliance management, with Focal Points in DoF. At the end of Year 2, it is however, still only partially functioning. This is also the case for the NBSAP (review and updating). The monitoring and reporting mechanism is not yet developed as it should be done under the CBD institutional set up.

The most notable achievement was the contribution to the COP 10 reporting and support to the delegation. IUCN mentions that it was a challenge for them to complete the 4th National Report before COP 10, as this had to be done with the informal network of stakeholders, as the official institutional structure had not yet been set up. This is an important achievement as it is the first report ever to the COP on CBD.

strategy, this outcome can assist the DoF (CBD officer) in strengthening the coordination and working group functioning for compliance with CBD reporting and management of NBSAP implementation, by converting the knowledge from that into concrete communication plans and actions such as working with biodiversity data providers to ensure data flow and information for NBSAP (and KISS). The CBD officer seconded through IUCN could then assume the role of coach and trainer.

This will help in operationalising the institutional set-up proposed for CBD compliance. It is suggested to contract a specialist for NBSAP development, who could provide various inputs over time (training aspect). Perhaps there will be a need to provide more disciplines, in which case more than one consultant would be needed.

Such support from outcome 5 should also enable TABI to *strengthen the lobbying power* at the higher levels of the institutions (DoF in particular) which is important for reaching the goals of policy development.

The MTR recommends that a set of actions to support and boost the CBD compliance work and NBSAP preparation is built into the work plan comprising a communication plan supported by Outcome 5 (especially relevant for MEA coordination), and TA for NBSAP preparation and specific training (during year 3 and up to COP 11).

4.2 Outcome 2 Sustainable agriculture systems, which improve livelihoods and enhance and conserve biodiversity are practiced by women and men farmers

This component was initiated with substantially different log-frame indicators before and after the log-frame revision. The actions in Year 1 concentrated on the AEA, preparation of the SP model, including guidelines & procedures, training in AEA for Province / District staff, while DAAPs, village schools and other originally programmed activities were abandoned.

The revised outputs (in AWP 2) are 1) Appropriate technologies for farming systems and agrobiodiversity management & enhancement are documented and disseminated to farmers; 2) Farming communities have greater capacity to manage and sustainably utilise agrobiodiversity farming systems and resources; 3) Strengthened capacity of staff and stakeholders to collaborate in and support the development and implementation of District level Agrobiodiversity Action Plans. ; 4) Education systems have incorporated practical, needs-based agrobiodiversity curricula and activities.

SP implementation is ongoing and expanding in numbers, showing positive achievements in terms of income generation and in conserving various native plant and animal species e.g. native pig and chicken husbandry, and crispy river weed. Many SPs show that women and ethnic people benefited e.g. the pig raising required less work for women as feed is grown nearby the household. Rice seed production is now encouraged for men,

but traditionally was women's role. Women have more experience than men in selecting and conserving rice varieties because they are the ones who pound, cook and therefore know better which variety is best for their chores.

The SP model is based on making agreements with the implementers for a certain project. This requires the preparation

However, the project's achievement is an excellent case if focusing only on income

Mr. Sivone a project beneficiary of Ban Donxai, Phonxai district, Luang Prabang has started to borrow money from the bank and receive Sivo lchnallyssoctriancerom th7carcs, ther3 Tn 2 n sable0w[morc003 Tw(al of m)8.2(tder use -)Tj11.6002 Tc-fa.1(o8(llyssc

generation and poverty eradication aspects. Most implementers are positive and have increased incomes. On the other hand, most projects are designed and implemented in isolation with little integration, although designed with objectives linked to ABD and sustainable resource use in mind. There is a risk that their implementation does not contribute to ABD or has unintended effects on other parts of the agroecosystem. An example is the native pig project in Phonxai district which has the primary objective to conserve native pig genes and create increased income as an integral part of the farmer's system. However the increased incomes earned by the pig-farmer was used to expand unsustainable shifting cultivation areas in the uplands.

There is always also the risk of only a some villagers benefiting, likely the most powerful and entrepreneurial while others are left out.

There seems to be much more focus on poverty reduction in some projects, but not enough on ABD conservation or it evades the goal of some of the SPs, even though the SPs are based on AEA and PLUP. The AEA documents themselves have been revised in order to increase village participation, but the present AEA documents are very academic and would need to be "translated" in order to be of broader use at district and village level in an extension context. An AEA manual development is a great idea. PLUP is also undergoing changes in this direction.

With respect to scaling up of activities, there are limits to growth determined by the low staff number, small project size, high workload associated with the approval process and monitoring, the skill of the district staff, and the absorption capacity of the villages, in the short term. The MTR concurs with the decision made by SC to postpone the AEA in 2 new districts. Logically it is good to plan for carrying out the AEA in 2 new districts and scaling up the project activities as proposed in the current district in Y2, but it is too risky to split scarce TABI resources thinly.

Overall, the MTR observes that SPs, depending on their type, may be insufficient to achieve TABI's goal – at least 44deast

influential people of the villages benefited at least one or two project activities as seen in Mien village.

- Trading systems are monopolised, solutions are linked to legal aspects
- Depletion of NTFPs related to inappropriate quota systems and/or incomplete

There are many government institutions working with LUP and most operate in an uncoordinated manner and have specific targets related to their priorities and mandates. These are MAF, NLMA, Forestry Inventory and Planning Division (FIPD), NAFRI, NAFES, DOF, WREA, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM), Ministry of Transport and Public Works and Ministry of Planning and Investment. Only MAF/NAFRI and NLMA have a nationwide coverage of LUP. TABI is coordinating work with the above mentioned institutions, however TABI would be able to strengthen its PLUP methodology by supporting the establishment of provincial and perhaps district level support offices in the field of GIS and mapping. It is suggested that TABI investigate and propose plans with budgets for such support offices.

Many other organizations are working on land issues (LIWG) including TABI. All are seeking ways to concretise the legal status of the CLT, because they believe that community ownership of land will promote better and more sustainable land use, greater level of investment, and fewer disputes with neighbouring villages or outside investors over land resources. It is recommended that TABI should play a more active role in the existing network, because TABI is in a better position to promote the CLT one step forward, particularly in Phonxai and Phoukoud districts.

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The outcome 4 interrelates with other outcomes, in particular Outcomes 2 and 3, and is central to the entire TABI program design and program goal. It is recommended to seek clarification and consensus with NLMA about the validity of communal land titles as a matter of urgency, as delays in the PLUP w

4.5 Outcome 5: Knowledge and information is systematically shared and translated into evidence-based policies and approaches

This outcome focuses on the establishment of a system to better analyze, share and disseminate ABD and livelihoods issues, top support and strengthen cooperation across partner agencies and establish a platform for policy level discussions on ABD. The (revised) outputs are: *1) Information is captured and knowledge is generated on opportunities for securing livelihoods while conserving biodiversity; 2) Impact monitoring systems on ABD and livelihoods are evidence based; 3) TABI partners have access to and share data, information, and knowledge.*

The KISS as it is now known was established by a team at NAFRI research centres (PRC, CAFRI and ALRC) assisted by CDE through a contract signed in august 2009.

The major activities started in Year 1 were:

TABI Knowledge and Communications Strategy (KCS) completed; Knowledge and Information Database initiated, Server installed at CAFRI to host TABI ICT services, TABI website and intranet, Wikipedia for the Lao NTFP handbook; Inventory of provincial and district level data compiled; First version of a national agrobiodiversity metadatabase compiled; KISS data sets and maps produced in support of other TABI Outcomes (PLUP and AEA). District spatial and attribute data generated by AEA captured by the KISS.

The MTR encourages the KISS Team to expand this strategy and recommends to use communication strategy tools more actively in the institutional development and coordination process in the linkage particularly with Outcome 1.

There has been significant demand for particularly maps for PLUP and AEA processes, in part spurred by the KISS Teams own demand driven approach, a testimony of its popularity. All outcomes are now using KISS one way or the other, and it seems to be strongly anchored in CAFRI, ensuring good ownership and high commitment from staff.

Some challenges noted are: difficulties in actually drawing learning experiences from activities and capitalizing on these, slower than anticipated inputs from some components (Outcome 1), some information products may not be adapted sufficiently to the target groups, language barriers, IT technology not available for use at district level and below, the component is inherently expensive, requires specialist inputs, posing risks for sustainability – again, as focus now is on visualising and demonstration, this fact may not be of great importance.

4.6 Outcome 6: Effective Program Management, and GoL structures, processes and capacity are established and effectively main-streaming ABD across all relevant sectors and programs.

This outcome was added during the revision of the original log-frame. The outputs under this outcome are; 1) TABI project management systems are in place and functioning effectively. 2) Awareness and understanding on the role of agrobiodiversity in livelihood security is developed in stakeholders at all levels. 3) Upgraded capacity in agrobiodiversity management, and ethnic, gender, poverty mainstreamed across the program

The division of tasks between project management, HQ backstopping and QA is specified in TOR prepared with the initial consultancy contract. Programme management is guided by the Program Management Manual, prepared on the basis of the government agreement, consultancy contracts and project document, and as such is the reference document for all management issues, covering all management related aspects and procedures of the program, such as reporting, steering management, coordination, programme M&E, financial management. It is a living document updated periodically (latest in April 2011).

Follow-up on project activities are reported in the annual and semi-annual reports submitted by CU to the steering committee.

The QA system implemented by Ramböll is commendable. It relates closely to the Program Management Manual addressing quality of consultancy services provided to TABI. QA reports are prepared once a year and focus on the quality of the TA support and the general quality of programme implementation, the latest report being QA report #3 of April 2011. The QA report addresses three types of issues, strategic, management

been addressed through a number of activities to establish understanding for the National SC, Provincial and District AB

5 SPECIFIC ISSUES

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation

The Project document states that the main purpose of monitoring in TABI is to provide evidence that it is possible to reduce poverty through economic

The above elements have been further refined by TABI in terms of actors, timing and

play a crucial role in the implementation of TABI and that neither can be disregarded, or omitted, each have an important role to play. Seen from the TABI management team, the linkages are obvious, and self explanatory – the interaction between the different

Participatory Land Use Planning	24,902	99,620	70,000	29,620	84,357	113,977	208,878
Knowledge & Information Sharing System	223,039	282,424	412,506		259,898	259,898	765,404
Program Management	56,616	106,244	90,000	16,244	89,982	106,226	252,842
-	407,138	1,284,768			1,060,476		2,752,381

There is no doubt from the indicative operational funds overview that there is considerable under-spending in all but Outcome 5, which seems to be over-spending. The under-spending in outcomes 1-4 is likely to continue to the end of Phase 1. The under-spending in Outcome 2 and 3 is of particular concern as it indicates that the sub-projects do not yet have a volume or size to absorb the allocated funds, the reason of which have been dealt with under the Outcome progress sections above. However, it also indicates a lack of realism in the expectation that the SP outputs could actually be delivered according to the log-frame. The complexity of setting up intervention models in the field through provincial facilitators and partnerships is not an easy task – it has required much work to define the SP project models and procedures.

The indicated over-spending in Outcome 5, if the figures are valid, is of concern – however, given the ambition level of IT development in this component, it would be expected that funds may be depleted faster than in other areas. The concern lies perhaps more in the sustainability perspective in the medium and longer term. With 100% over-spending it seems important to take this issue up in a steering committee meeting to agree on accepted cost levels.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential for TABI to make a valuable contribution to Lao PDR is high. The project design incorporates a wide range of issues under its 6 components with clear focus on the combined objectives of ABD and poverty alleviation, and its open-ended approach and strategy to work through GoL and partners - not being a traditional implementer – gives it the flexibility to pilot innovative actions and test approaches in the field which have the potential to be fed into policy making processes supporting its goals. However, this design requires both a strong vertical cooperation between levels and cooperation among different departments agencies and sectors, in reconciling a biodiversity conservation focus with economic development stemming from natural resource use and this hampers efficiency, as many actions have to be tested in learning by doing processes.

The MTR recommends that a revision of the log-frame is undertaken, retaining components / Outcomes as far as possible (unless learning experiences from Phase 1 implementation dictate otherwise), and focuses on making it more realistic in terms of expected achievements and timing, and including risks and assumptions.

The MTR considers that the Project remains highly relevant for the main beneficiaries (government officials, provincial and district administrations)

It is recommended that TABI should play a more active role in the existing Land Issues Working Group network, because TABI is in a better position to promote the communal land titling particularly in Phonxai and Phoukoud districts. It is recommended to seek clarification and consensus with NLMA about the validity of communal land titles as a matter of urgency, as delays in the PLUP will affect strongly the program efficiency and sustainability.

Outcome 5 has been quite effective and has produced the TABI Knowledge and Communications Strategy (KCS); Knowledge and Information Database initiated, Server installed at CAFRI to host TABI ICT services, TABI website and intranet, Wikipedia for the Lao NTFP handbook; Inventory of provincial and district level data compiled; First version of a national agrobiodiversity metadatabase compiled; KISS data sets and maps produced in support of other TABI Outcomes (PLUP and AEA). District spatial and attribute data generated by AEA captured by the KISS. Part of the mandate of CDE concerns capturing learning from TABI activities and from other actors in the field of ABD – this part has proven difficult.

The project has built up good reporting systems with detailed annual reporting of achievements per output presented in matrices with progress indicators, the latest presented in the Year 2 annual report. There have only been produced 2 minutes from Management meetings, and 1 minute of SC meetings (2 held). The content of the minutes of the national SC from September 2010 reveals that many members still had difficulties understanding TABI's facilitative role. The QA system implemented by Ramböll is commendable. It relates closely to the Program Management Manual addressing quality of consultancy services provided to TABI. The MTR recommends to include a risk assessment in the Year 3 annual work plan, with assessment of risks affecting the project including their expected impact levels, and mitigation measures / interventions of the project which are addressing the identified risks. The MTR recommends that QA focuses more on programme management while the technical backstopping mandate of SO focuses more on assisting the CTA in finding entry points and operational opportunities to boost the actual demonstration and implementation effectiveness.

Capacity building under TABI is a major challenge, because TABI has a complex set-up, and the main implementers are not solely TABI staff by themselves, the implementers are spread out geographically and operating at different levels in different organisations.

Monitoring procedures and methods have emerged during the initial revision of the log-frame and are being further developed in the work planning workshops and supported through the QA. It is expected that the KISS team shall contribute to the definition of indicators – it is likely to expect this task

analysis of the indicator type, the means of verification, the source of data (owner of objectives) and the associated risk

TABI would benefit from an overall strategic vision or expected end goal of its intervention – expressed as levels of operation, institutionalisation and sustainability. This would make it easier to monitor and evaluate the programme. For example, stages could be defined for its achievement, defined as e.g.

- A minimum level expressing fulfilment of outputs related to operational structures (e.g. CBD structures + NBSAP prepared; SHT piloted and documented, SP model mainstreamed)
- An operational level, where interventions are institutionalised (assimilated into partner institutions and operational routines)
- Fully integrated and well functioning, contributing to outcomes (and impacts), without donor support (sustainability)

Relating performance to such a set of indicators would make it simpler to also devise monitoring and evaluation indicators, and it is recommended to link the M&E development proposed above to such a strategic vision of 3 stages. At the end of Year 3 this would also make it possible to come up with more realistic outcome indicators. It is recommended to link the M&E development to a strategic vision of levels of achievement (3 stages)

TABI is coordinating with many important stakeholders, which is evolving in an ongoing process as needs arise. There needs to be stronger focus on identifying partners to assist with consolidating the implementation of the current project activities and for scaling up, and in the longer term to take on some of the participatory work associated with a change in SP model strategy to strengthen participation in the kumban planning process and thus improve the sustainability aspect.

There are many external factors which might influence TABI implementation, such as hydro power schemes, land concessions e.g. for cassava plantation, pine resin harvesting concessions (by Chinese companies), mining and monopoly of NTFP (e.g. to Chinese merchants in Phonxai district), interventions of higher level etc.

It is important that TABI follows up on risks & assumptions based on the revised log-frame, or rather takes on the risk analysis as outlined above (the original Project document does not contain a proper risk assessment), in order to better plan for a Phase 2. The identified risks and assumptions should enable TABI to improve the log-frame and make it more realistic. Focus should be on activities largely within the control of TABI, which will greatly reduce dependency on overall legislative reforms (such as in the land sector or related to NTFPs). On the other hand, overall risks can be reduced by the reduction of TABI scope – if need be.

TABI has produced tangible results and major achievements under difficult circumstances, with major challengers related to coordination and facilitation of complex issues through many different stakeholders. It is not possible at this stage to determine

impacts in terms of poverty reduction, or sustainable production systems, baselines need to be further developed and methods designed to monitor them, particularly indicators for sustainable ABD management and production are elusive.

However, the KISS has achieved some remarkable success in its focus on evidence based results as presented on the website, and there is increasing understanding of the importance of developing such tools, which in turn contributes to the understanding of ABD as a pillar for livelihood improvement and long term sustainability. It must be recognised that TABI is indeed a long term endeavour, and as such it merits more time to operationalise its strategy. For this reason, we believe a second phase is important and necessary.

Some other important aspects which merit attention and discussion in relation to a Phase 2 are:

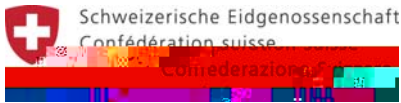
- The PSCs in second phase could be completely integrated in the national administrative system

- Outcome 3+4 could be merged into one outcome

- There is a need to focus more also on forest product market analysis

- Laws, regulations and concessions – focus has not been sufficient on the legal aspects of e.g. taxation of NTFPs, perverse incentives in connection with concessions to big operators and foreign companies, overlapping and/or contradictory laws guiding actions within and between outcome areas

- Land use planning must be significantly scaled up



Terms of Reference
for
Mid Term Review (MTR) of the
The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative (TABI)
(April 25th to 13th May 2011)

1. BACKGROUND

A land-locked country, Lao PDR is an historical, culturally and environmentally rich country with diverse landscapes and ethnic populations. It is located at the heart of the Indo- Chinese Peninsula and is surrounded by CHINA, VIENTNAM, CAMBODIA, THAILAND and MYANMAR, providing a potential for a strategic base and land-link in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS).

The Lao PDR is well endowed with productive and ecologically unique forests and farming landscapes, rich in biodiversity. These resources are not only vital for providing essential ecological services, but they also play a key role in adapting to global economic or climate changes. Agrobiodiversity is crucial to the national economy, with some 66 percent of GDP depending directly on natural resources. Over 80 percent of the Lao people live in rural areas and are highly dependent on the local environment for subsistence farming, family nutrition and

The project has been implemented since May 2009 and the 1st phase is expected to complete by April 2012. The budget for this phase is CHF 4,950,000. The object project is aligned on the National Biodiversity Strategy and therefore shares its overall goal: maintain and protect Lao PDR's biodiversity as one key to poverty alleviation. *More project information can be found via the link www.tabi.la.*

3. The project's expected outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Effective governance of the International Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Laos.
- Outcome 2: Sustainable agriculture systems, which improve livelihoods and enhance and conserve biodiversity are practiced by women and men farmers
- Outcome 3: Sustainable supply and increased benefits from processing and marketing NTFPs and agriculture products based on the principles of economic viability, social equity and biodiversity conservation.
- Outcome 4: Community access to land and agrobiodiversity resource are secured
- Outcome 5: Knowledge and information is systematically shared and translated into evidence-based policies and approaches
- Outcome 6: GoL structures, processes and capacity are established and effectively mainstreaming ABD across all relevant sectors and programs.

4. Purpose of the Midterm Review (MTR).

The purpose of the MTR is to i) assess the relevance, feasibility, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project to date, and ii) provide recommendations for the remaining time of the current phase.

Specifically, the review team will assess the following aspects:

- i. assess the relevance of the project in the context of its position in the sector sector (including the viability of the planned intervention logic and programme logic);
- ii. the relevance of the project goal and strategy in light of current and future need of projects related to agrobiodiversity , and the evolving policy and institutional framework.
- iii. review of the overall progress of project implementation and the feasibility of the project implementation schedule
- iv. review the suitability of the project strategy and approaches in light with the challenges and opportunities that have been faced to date and likely to exist in the future;
- v. review of institutional, administrative, organizational, technical, environmental, social, economic, and financial aspects of the project based on the assumptions and risks included in the design and monitoring frameworks.
- vi. undertake detailed analysis of the original targets, progress achievement of the project including the effectiveness of the project implementation arrangements in producing the outputs and outcomes stated in the project document and the efficiency with which the project partners have produced the desired outputs
- vii. Make an appreciation of the sustainability of project of outcomes (Outcomes 1-6)

In relation to the above-mention aspects, the review team will pay particular attention to the following project issue:

A. Technical assistance is provided to support the MAF-DoP in both technical and management aspects at regional , provincial and district level. The MTR will :

Assess to what extent the project has effectively made use of the TA ; and identify the main challenges, difficulties and constraints and assess how these could be addressed in the future.

Assess the quality of gender mainstreaming in the programme. Does it fulfil the respective expectations of the project , of the GoL, of SDC, of Ramboll?.

Assess how ethnicity issue (including local knowledge) is addressed by the project

B. The goal of the project is to maintain agrobiodiversity in a sustainable manner. It is consisting of two parts: 1)mainstreaming agrobiodiversity into GoL's programs, projects and local initiatives dealing with agriculture, forestry and livestock production, and 2) supporting the GoL to implement the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD) and NBSAP. Thus the MTR will bring answers to the following questions:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of mainstreaming agrobiodiversity into GoL's programs, projects and local initiatives ?

Will the current CBD institutional set-up be able to implementation of the CBD at national level ? If not, MTR will provide a outlook for the future implementation of CBD in Laos

To what extent TABI can support the Government to implement CBD in Laos ?.

What role and added value is TABI currently delivering to GoL services and institutes, international stakeholders and projects dealing with agriculture, forestry and livestock production towards mainstreaming agrobiodiversity ?.

C. Improve rural livelihoods through enhanced use of agrobiodiversity . The MTR will

Assess the appropriateness of agrobiodiversity enhancement, introduction of market system and agrobiodiversity management technologies (including land use planning) to local conditions, taking into account the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the beneficiaries(disaggregated beneficiary categories.)

Review the effectiveness of the extension activities (training, coaching, advising, information providing, etc....) in reaching targeted beneficiaries, in particular women and disadvantaged groups ?

Assess how the service delivered by the various project implementation partners at district and province level are driven by an effective and coordinated effort to address local communities needs

Review the condition necessary to sustain best practices in agrobiodiversity enhancement and conservation and to transfer to other villages not covered by the project

Review the relevance, planning, implementation and management for the sub-projects and assess how they are affectively articulated with the main TABI's aim (mainstreaming agrobiodiversity..)..

D. Organizational/managerial quality of implementation(steering, coordination, communication and financial requirements).

Does the steering and decision-making process function appropriately ? Are problem identified in time and are practical, feasible solutions proposed and applied effectively by implementing partners, by Coordination Unit (CU/SO).

Absorption capacity: are local capacities and competencies sufficient for effective programme implementation ? Have sufficient human resources been allocated to carry out and complete the tasks ? What are critical bottlenecks in implementing the logframe ?

What are the weaknesses and strengths in communication among TABI implementing partners at national, provincial and district levels taking into account the cross-level set-up of TABI ?,

Are cost schedules (allocate resources, annual budgets) and financial reports appropriate to drive implementation and fulfil monitoring, reporting and planning requirements ?.

Are the assumptions regarding the existing reporting structure in the implementing partners fulfilled, and do regular official reports meet the reporting requirement of the project partners and the donor?

Is the Monitoring & Evaluation (including the results and outcome indicators) appropriate in terms of capacity of implementing partners to periodically collect

collected baseline data, attempt to build a meaningful picture of the results of the project intervention, relative of the situation at start of the project.

The MTR team will interview and meet with key project stakeholders, project beneficiaries and key actors to get their views on project implementation.

The review team will be expected to operate clearly the review objectives (issue), particularly the accountability and sustainability criteria. The project design document and baseline data and other will be used in this regard.

Reference documents are:

Current Project Document.

Progress reports and Annual reports and annual work plans (2010-2011)(2011-2012)

Latest version of MAF plans and strategic vision,

SDC Mekong strategy,

Checklists for gender and sustainability

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2006-2020

Fourth National Report to the Convention Biological Diversity.

AEA report

6. Composition of the review team

The Review Team will be made up of **an international and a national consultant with experience** in the field of Agrobiodiversity, Biodiversity and a good knowledge of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Knowledge about NTFP, Land use planning and Agriculture Market is an advantage. The following qualifications are required:

40 years of evaluation experience

Proven experiences in evaluating biodiversity projects

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8. Coordination

The team leader will be responsible for coordinating the work of the review team and liaising with SDC, Ramboll, MAF and the Coordination Unit (TABI CU). He/She will submit a provisional budget as part of their proposal (consultant's accommodation, per diem and transportation cost incurred during the mission, etc).

He/She is also responsible for the expected results of the MTR mission and for presenting the final report to SDC according to the agreed schedule.

9. Logistics

TABI will be responsible for preparing a draft of the mission programme and for managing all preparations and arrangements once the programme will be approved by SDC and the MTR team leader. These arrangements include accommodation, domestic transport and interpretation. TABI will also be responsible for confirming all meetings and visits. A draft programme will be submitted to SDC and the Team Leader at least two weeks in advance of the start of the mission. SDC will cover all the cost of the MTR. TABI will cover some contingencies related to organizing the feedback meeting and other items.

10. Debriefing and presentation

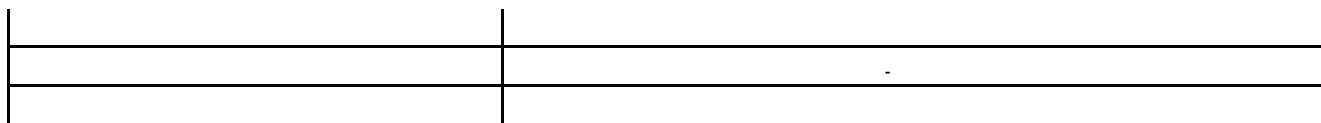
The team will start its work on 25 April 2011. A **briefing** between the members of the MTR team, SDC, Ramboll, IUCN and CDE and the project management will take place on 26th April at SDC office. After the MTR mission will be completed, there will be a **debriefing based on the draft report**.

A presentation of the findings and recommendations of the MTR will be made to the TABI

People met

Name	Position

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Checklist for a LFA project formulation exercise

The formulation process

1. The actual or future owners of the project participated in the formulation process and are fully committed to the project
2. The project reflects strong priorities of core stakeholders rather than being a compromise that nobody is committed to
3. Viewpoints of groups that may be positively or negatively affected by the project were collected and considered
4. All sensitive issues and potential conflicts were dealt with during the formulation process

The context

5. Important stakeholders and their positive and negative influence on the project are identified
6. Assumptions, risks and preconditions are thoroughly addressed at the various logical levels of the project design

The problems

7. The project addresses specific problems, not imagined ones
8. There is a proper relation between the magnitude of the problems and the size of the project
9. Barriers to project success, in so far as they can be strongly influenced by the project, are being addressed by specific interventions of the project

The objectives

10. Objectives represent a vision of a future situation, and not the activities leading to an undefined situation
11. Objectives have owners to whom the objectives are important
12. Objectives are expressed with a level of specificity appropriate to the decision point

Choice

13. Several alternatives were explicitly considered and weighed before a conclusion was reached

The actions

14. The if/then relationship between development and immediate objectives is logical and doesn't skip important steps
15. The development objective level indicators are objectively verifiable in terms of quantity, quality time and source of information
16. The project has only one immediate objective or if more, the objectives are compatible, complementary and at the same level

Annex 3

17. The immediate objective is not a reformulation of the output but a higher level objective
18. The immediate objective is to some extent outside the management responsibility of the project
19. The immediate objective or the verifiable indicators are SMART
20. The immediate objective and the attached assumptions describe the critical conditions for contributing to the development objective
21. The indicators at the immediate objective level are independent form the outputs. they are not a summary of outputs but a measure of the immediate objective.
22. All the outputs are necessary for accomplishing the immediate objective
23. The outputs are tangible and SMART
24. The relation between the outputs and the immediate objective is realistic
25. The outputs define the management responsibility of the project and they can under reasonable assumptions, be achieved with means under the control of the project management
26. The activities indicate the methodology for producing each output
27. The inputs are necessary and sufficient to perform the activities and they are under the authority of the project management
28. The inputs described define the resources required for accomplishing the immediate objective, and there is proper relation between inputs and scope of objectives
29. The vertical logic among inputs, activities, outputs, immediate objective, and development objective is realistic as a whole
30. Project management issues are dealt with as appropriate to the stage of the project.
31. When reviewing the matrix, an evaluation plan for the project can be defined

Annex 5

SUMMARY OF TA PROVIDED TO TABI

-	- John Chamberlain	May 2009 – May 2010, 6 weeks working time. 3 outputs defined in ToR (in contract annex)	Gender and ethnic minority background paper.(27pp) Voting and Monitoring instruments (2 pp) Cross cutting issues strategy(35pp)	30 days (Y1)	
-	Panh Phomsombath	9 April – 14 May 2010, 20 days	(jointly with Chamberlain,, above)	20 days (Y1)	
-	Malaithong	May 2009 – April 2010 6 weeks	An "established and functional ACCPAC system for financial accounting of SPA".	30 days (Y1)	
-	- Peter Jones	October 2009 – Feb 2010, amended 3 weeks	- PLUP Report, Sop Chia, Nov 2009 - Report: (PLUP): Land Management Planning Pak Hok Village , Jan 201	15 days (Y1)	
-	John Connel	May 2009 – April 2010	Mission report 1 (October 09) Mission report 2 – Review of Marketing Activities and NTFP Round table (Feb 2010) MR 3 – AWP Workshop (April 2010)	20 days (Y1)	
6	- Frida Arunsavath	Year 1 ? According to specific ToR	- CBD Stakeholder Mapping - TABI Capacity Needs Assessment, September 2010	30 days (Y1)	
7	- Frida Arunsavath	Year 1 ? ToR according to annex in Contract	1		

Annex 5

Jones		notes on observations of LUP in Phen village, 14 Oct'10 Draft SPA for support to NAFES GIS (LUP) Unit	
John Connel	November 2010 – April 2011 TOR in Contract " NTFP and other product market consultant"	Draft SPAs re NTFP quota regulations, and competitive marketing. Draft SPA on NTFP domestication. Draft SPA on enhancing local trade management.	15 days (Y2)

