



# caring for Family Farming in LAO PDR

## Farmer Families are The Heart of Lao PDR's agricultural production.

Lao farmer families sustain agriculture's contribution to the economy, which makes around

**30%**  
of the total GDP.



**77%**  
of the total population

works in the agriculture sector. Most of them are farming families, usually working their own fields.



Today Lao farmer families are facing economic hardship. They remain vulnerable to the rapidly changing economic context.

In the last ten years, Lao PDR has seen a shift from subsistence to market-oriented agriculture. Currently, 33% of family farmers are producing mainly for sale. As farmers gradually start to produce more for industries and larger markets, more challenges are added to those they already face:



The price of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other inputs that make crops more productive is increasing.



Migration is reducing the available labour in the family farm.



The land they own is very small: around 1.6 ha of rice per household.



Many villages live under the threat of floods and droughts. Climate change can make this worse. In 2013, floods damaged 7% of rice fields.



Families have limited access to infrastructure and mechanization. Nearly half of the villages in upland areas do not have road access.

## FAO is helping Lao Family Farmers to achieve their Full Potential

Working closely with the government and development partners by:

### Developing Policies To Reduce Vulnerabilities

Family farming can boost local economies and achieve greater productivity, but adequate policies are needed to reduce families' vulnerability to the changing economic context and natural disasters. Since 2013, FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have been working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry identifying risks, mentoring and sharing knowledge to design and implement better public policies that support family farmers.



### Producing Safer Food

Thousands of Lao rice, vegetable and fruit farmers have been introduced to pest management practices to reduce the use of agro-chemicals and produce safer food. This has been the result of more than 18 years of cooperation between FAO and the Lao Government on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training using the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach.

Promoting Good Agricultural Practices

Reducing Use and Risks of Pesticides



### Connecting to Markets

FAO is supporting family farmers to become an exporter of vegetables and horticultural commodities to the Greater Mekong and beyond. In the Bolovens highlands, poor agronomic and harvesting practices have affected the quality and safety of vegetables crops. FAO and partners are working with smallholder farmers in Paksong district to improve their market access:

#### Providing Training and Technology

Introduction of plastic canopies and new seed varieties, along with training on land preparation, grading, packaging, among others.

#### Improving Quality Standards

A packing house will smoothen the logistic process and supply chain. It will help to meet regional certification standards and minimize post-harvest loss.

#### Sustainable Trade, Stable Market

Written contracts and pre-agreed prices for a mutually fair and responsible relationship between Lao producers and buyers.

