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 population. 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.
- Many villages live under the threat of flooding 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.
- The land they own is very small: around 1.6 ha of rice per household.
- Migration is reducing the available labour in the family farm.
- 77% of the total population works in the agriculture sector. Most of them are farming families, usually working their own fields.

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
- Producing Safer Food
- Connecting to Markets

Connecting to Markets

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.

Providing Training and Technology
Introduction of exotic crops and new seed varieties, along with training on land preparation, grading, packaging, among others.

Promoting Good Agricultural Practices
Reducing Use and Risks of Pesticides

FAO is supporting family farmers to become an exporter of vegetables and horticultural commodities to the Greater Mekong and beyond. In the Boloven 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.