



## Stakeholders acknowledge FAO's role in agricultural policy and capacity development in Lao PDR

*The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has delivered relevant support for agricultural policy development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and achieved significant results in capacity building of government partners, says the report of an evaluation of FAO's country programme in Lao PDR from 2009 to 2014, recently conducted by the Office of Evaluation (OED).*



The majority of stakeholders interviewed in the evaluation acknowledged the vital role FAO played for agricultural policy development in Laos PDR and expressed their desire for FAO to play a leading role in the process of establishing and implementing these policies.

Through support for the development of the Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action 2010-2015, FAO played a central role in assisting Lao PDR to make progress on nutrition-related issues and indicators. Developed with support from FAO, this first policy document on nutrition provided the foundation for other policy documents, which altogether contribute to providing an enabling environment for sustainable food

production in the country. This evaluation brings to the fore the need for FAO to re-position itself as a key supporter for the Government of Lao PDR in its effort to improve the nutrition situation for its people.

FAO's normative standards and products, although underutilised, according to the report, have helped the country to make significant progress in animal health and pesticide management. Similarly, FAO's support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) for the development of a monitoring and evaluation system enabled Lao PDR to develop a set of indicators with which to monitor progress in agriculture and food production.

The report highlights the need for FAO to provide more support for strengthening evidence base for nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Lao PDR, to step up support for linkages between local foods and nutritional outcomes, help strengthen the role of the Ministry of Agriculture in nutrition, and build awareness on how agriculture can contribute to nutritional outcomes.



The evaluation found that FAO's use of a value chain approach to promote environmentally sustainable production among smallholder farmers was appropriate, and that projects implemented using this approach were mostly effective.

Over the last ten years, the agricultural sector in Lao PDR has witnessed an accelerated shift from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. However, the report noted that Lao PDR has a large number of laws, regulations, strategies and other policy instruments, which were sometimes prepared without thorough policy analysis, and are sometimes not fully implemented. This has led to donor fatigue in funding further policy development work. The report therefore recommends that FAO strengthen its policy support in Lao PDR by putting greater emphasis on strengthening analysis, implementation and enforcement of these policies.

The report further recommends that FAO strengthen its partnership building strategy with multilateral and bilateral development and UN agencies and the Government of Lao PDR in order to increase the results of its technical support for nutrition-sensitive agriculture. This, the reports says, will help FAO to consolidate and better streamline its technical assistance efforts and overcome the limits represented by the current numerous, small and "over-fragmented" projects and programmes in the country.

For further information on this evaluation, please contact:

The full report of this and other evaluations is available online at [www.fao.org/evaluation](http://www.fao.org/evaluation)

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