



©FAO/Xavier Bouan

# SUPPORT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND MARKETS (CAEM) IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

October 2019

SDGs:



Countries:

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Project Codes:

TCP/LAO/3605

FAO Contribution

USD 299 000

Duration:

1 February 2017 – 31 August 2019

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Lao People's Democratic Republic  
FAO-LA@fao.org

## Implementing Partner

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF).

## Beneficiaries

Public institutions and individuals, including Department of Policy and Legal Affairs (DOPLA) and staff; and other central and decentralized policy and planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, information and decision-making staff in the MAF, and in collaborating partner ministries and agencies.

## Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Priority Area 1: Improved food and nutritional security through enhanced policy, planning and implementation mechanisms.



## BACKGROUND

The Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic has identified an urgent need to build and strengthen capacity in areas of agricultural economics and markets monitoring, information, analysis and assessment. The ultimate goal is to improve decision-making by policy level decision-makers, farmers, and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector. In response to this need, the project focused on building and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in areas of agricultural, forestry and rural development policy – encompassing economics, markets and other types of situation analysis, situation monitoring, information for policy development, policy analysis and assessment.

The project was originally designed to support the establishment of the Centre for Agricultural Economics and Markets (CAEM), under the Department of Planning and Finance (DOPF) in the MAF. However, based on the requirement to enhance the food security and agricultural commercialization policy of the Government, the primary MAF institution was changed to the Department of Policy and Legal Affairs (DOPLA).

## IMPACT

The project interventions and results are expected to contribute to improved socio-economic well-being of agriculture chain participants and national food security in the country, resulting from an increase in productivity, production, value addition and trade of agricultural commodities.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project supported the formation and operationalization of the DOPLA. In the relatively short period since it was established, it has become an important institutional and technical player among departments in the MAF.

At the national level, the DOPLA met with most of the important ministries and agencies involved in the development, approval and implementation of the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (AFRD) sector policy. At the sector level, the DOPLA organized workshops to explain its mandate to all departments in the MAF, and to review working policy development process at both institutional and technical levels. Similar meetings were organized at the levels of Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFO) and District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFO). At the decentralized level, a nationwide programme was implemented to support both PAFO and DAFO in the translation of policies into strategies and implementation programmes.

Since its establishment, the DOPLA has become a major source of analysed and synthesized information, and advice on various issues for DOPLA leadership and other stakeholders. This includes the following: i) at least five policy and situation briefings on issues covering nitrogen-use efficiency, water harvesting for climate-responsive farming systems, agricultural innovation and enterprise development, pesticides governance, and green extension; ii) a number of issues and situation reports covering selected crops, agricultural labour and employment, rural poverty, green agricultural growth, public-private-producer partnerships (PPPP); and iii) contributions to addresses/speeches by MAF leadership at major national, regional and international meetings. The DOPLA was also assigned lead roles by MAF leadership in the preparation of background material and actual implementation of major strategy formulation exercises, including the PPPP strategy, the rural development strategy, contract farming, and the overall development strategy for the AFRD sector.



The DOPLA-implemented training and capacity-building programme, together with the materials, supplies and equipment and general operating expenses provided by the project, contributed to rapidly building institutional and individual capacities in policy development in the MAF. The comprehensive training programme in policy development was supported by a draft Manual for Policy Development for the AFRD sector, consisting of eight modules and a number of addenda containing various skills sets, data and information system, and science, technology and innovation approaches, which were critical to the successful implementation of the policy development process outlined in the training programme and in the manual.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

The project was planned to be implemented over an 18-month (1.5-year) period, from 1 September 2016 to 31 March 2018. It was divided into Phase 1 (Launch) and Phase 2 (Establishment). The implementation of Phase 1 was delayed by five months. In addition, the processes leading to the formal establishment of the DOPLA, and the commencement of Phase 2 took longer than anticipated, owing to administrative constraints. As a result, project activities were running more than 12 months behind schedule. Thus, a no-cost extension (until 31 August 2019) was requested and approved, in order complete project activities. The activities were implemented within the planned budget.

### FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

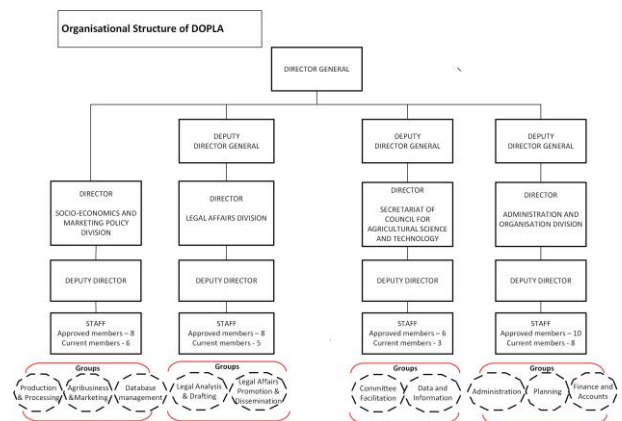
As mentioned above, the project contributed to rapidly building institutional and individual capacities in policy development in the MAF. Capacities would be further improved by: i) increasing the number of technical and support staff; ii) providing more training and mentoring, including long-term post-graduate training; and ensuring that future assistance paid specific attention to capacity-development needs; iii) further developing the Policy Development Manual; and iv) further developing contacts with other agencies in the region. In addition, a greater level of attention needs to be paid to the development of policy capacities and procedures at the decentralized level (PAFO, DAFO and other units), and in each of the individual departments of the MAF. It is recommended that the Government actively seek donor funds to assist in the implementation of these follow-up actions.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

DOPLA staff came from different branches of the MAF, which were not primarily policy related. The Ministry emphasised the need for the project to provide a year-long training programme on policy development, and requested that the DOPLA compile a comprehensive policy development manual. The manual is used as a reference toolkit within the DOPLA, and it will also be used in workshops, seminars and training programmes for other MAF departments and PAFO and DAFO staff. The need to employ staff outside the DOPLA was foreseen, given the fact that most policy development initiatives originated in the departments, and sometimes in the decentralized offices. In addition, it was anticipated that policy development in the MAF would be undertaken jointly by the DOPLA and concerned departments.

It is anticipated that within the next one to two years, the DOPLA will be able to offer policy development training services to other ministries and agencies, development partner agencies, and civil society organizations. In June 2018, a self-administered 43-item questionnaire was used to ask DOPLA staff to individually rank themselves, with respect to their familiarity with and knowledge and understanding of different aspects of policy in the AFRD sector. The average awareness and knowledge satisfaction score was 1.87 out of a maximum of four. When the same questionnaire was administered again one year later, in July 2019, the average score went up by 42 percent to 2.30. Individual scores, especially in the July 2019 testing, were higher for staff in the Socio-Economic Policy and Marketing Division and the Legal Affairs Division. Thus, there is confidence that DOPLA staff, who were the primary beneficiaries of the project, have increased their capacities to a level that will permit them to function without further technical assistance.



## 2. Gender equality

Almost one-half of the civil servants in the DOPLA are women. Thus, the project was of equitable benefit to both men and women. This served to bolster a strong government policy of non-discrimination against women, and paying attention to and addressing their special needs. The training and capacity-development programme, including the preparation of the draft Manual for Policy Development, emphasized the need for gender-sensitive policy development and implementation to be inbuilt in all situation analyses, policy prioritization, research and analysis, and the selection of options and formulation of policies and strategies. More than a dozen women in the DOPLA were empowered through the training and capacity-development programme, and other aspects of FAO's support to the DOPLA. In the long term, it is expected that DOPLA's close and systematic attention to gender issues will contribute to the formulation and adoption of policies that support enterprises and commodities, businesses and value chains, in which the development of the welfare of women is given prominence.

## 3. Environmental sustainability

The Project Document did not emphasize environmental sustainability as a concern to be directly addressed. However, mainstreaming environmental sustainability in policies, strategies and programmes is a major priority of the MAF. All policy development activities are required to address this concern. Much needs to be done in a practical manner in mainstreaming environmental sustainability in all policies and other aspects of the AFRD sector. The preparation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic National Green Agriculture Framework by the DOPLA, with the support of SEI, FAO and possibly some other partners, is expected to initiate the mainstreaming of environmental sustainability MAF policies, programmes and activities.



## 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The DOPLA took measures to ensure that in developing policies and strategies, the rights-based approach made it imperative to pay attention to the ways in which the roles and responsibilities men and women have in society influences how decisions are made and resources are accessed, controlled and managed. This was incorporated in the training programme and in concept notes and proposals for upcoming policy and strategy formulation exercises, such as the preparation of the National Green Agriculture Strategy and AFRD Strategy, in which FAO is involved. There is a definite growing understanding and commitment to the notion of human rights in the DOPLA. Through the study on agricultural and rural labour and employment, the DOPLA showed a commitment to quickly understanding the needs and issues of labour, especially with regard to youth, as well as seasonal and migrant workers, children and other vulnerable persons. DOPLA's work on contract farming was supported by another FAO project, but coordinated with the technical assistant of this project. It was motivated by the desire to address the issues of vulnerability of many farmers who sign farming contracts with private-sector operators.

## 5. Technological sustainability

The DOPLA's rapid development into an effective policy institution in the country's AFRD sector undoubtedly led to other development partners contributing to and collaborating in developing the Department and supporting its programmes. Additional sources of support to the DOPLA were provided by other FAO programmes in the country; the Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Laos (known as Helvetas)/Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service (LURAS) project; Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); the Centre for Development and Environment, under the sponsorship of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD). It was not possible to determine the exact monetary value of these contributions, but they were substantial.

The types of capacities and tools that were developed, including the training and workshop activities, Policy Development Manual, and other products and services, will enable the DOPLA and stakeholders to function without resorting to unsustainable external funding.

## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

### LAUNCH PHASE (FEBRUARY-MAY 2017)

- ❑ Concept Note: Establishment, Strengthening and Functioning of the Department of Policy and Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. March 2017.
- ❑ DOPLA-MAF: Guidelines for Establishing the Department and First 1.5 Years of Operation. Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. March 2017.
- ❑ Minister's Decision Regarding the Organization, Mandate and Activities of the Department of Policy and Legal Affairs (draft). Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. May 2017.
- ❑ Director General's Decision Regarding the Organization, Mandate Activities of the Economic and Social Policy Division (draft). Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. May 2017.
- ❑ Director General's Decision Regarding the Organization and Activities of the Rural Development Policy Division (draft). Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. May 2017.
- ❑ Director General's Decision Regarding the Organization and Activities of the Legal Affairs Division (draft). Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. May 2017.
- ❑ Food Safety and Market Access for Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) AgriFood Products – Insights from the Experiences of Lao People's Democratic Republic. His Excellency (H.E.) Dr Phouang Parisak Pravongviengkham, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic at Greater Mekong System Meeting on Food Safety and Market Access for GMS AgriFood Products, Cambodia, June 2017 - Talking points (draft). DOPF and Office of the Deputy Minister, MAF. April 2017.
- ❑ Director General's Decision Regarding the Organization and Activities of the Administration Division (draft). Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF. May 2017.

### INTERIM PERIOD (AUGUST–DECEMBER 2017)

- ❑ No. 3684/PM: Decision on the Organization and Operations of the Department of Policy and Legal Affairs. H.E. Dr Lien Thikeyo, Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Vientiane, 2 August 2017.
- ❑ Balancing Increased Commercialization of the Agriculture Sector and Enhancement of Food Security and Nutrition in Lao People's Democratic Republic: Diagnostic Review for Policy and Planning (draft). S. Musoke and S. Sammanvong. FAO Country Office/DOPF, MAF. Vientiane, December 2017.
- ❑ Increasing Agricultural Commercialization and Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition: A Toolkit for Planning at the Subnational Level. DOPF, MAF. December 2017.

- ❑ Report on Required Policies and Measures to Intensify and Accelerate Implementation of the Agricultural Commodity Production and Food Security Programme. DOPF, MAF. December 2017.
- ❑ Agendas and Presentations at Khammouane, Saravan and Luangnamtha Workshops on District Planning. DOPF, MAF. December 2017.

### ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONAL PHASE (JANUARY 2018–AUGUST 2019)

- ❑ Nitrogen-Use Efficiency – Policy Brief. DOPLA and Department of Agriculture Land Management (DALaM), MAF, with support from Asian Development Bank (ADB). May 2018.
- ❑ Draft Speech by Dr Phuang Parisak, delivered at 8th Multistakeholder Partnership Meeting of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock: Towards Sustainability, Livestock on the Move, at Ulaan Batar, Mongolia, 11-15 June 2018 - Senior Officers' Meeting, 14 June 2018.
- ❑ Promoting small-scaled pond water, soil nutrient management for climate resilient agricultural production, sustainable food security, livelihood improvement, and income generation - MAF Policy Brief. Prepared by DOPLA and DALaM, MAF. June 2018.
- ❑ Department of Policy and Legal Affairs – Draft Corporate Plan: 2019-2021. DOPLA, MAF. 2018.
- ❑ Rural Poverty Reduction in Lao People's Democratic Republic: Drivers and Challenges. Paper presented at Conference on Smallholders and Poverty Alleviation in the Asia-Pacific Region. V. Manivong, T. Saphangthong, and S. Musoke. Beijing, China, 30-31 October. 2018.
- ❑ Outputs and products reflecting work of DOPLA on policy development. DOPLA, MAF. 2018.
- ❑ Capacity building for policy development for the agricultural, forestry and rural sector: Policy Development Manual and training programme, and MAF departments and PAFO/DAFO partnership and capacity building. DOPLA, MAF. 2018.
- ❑ Protocol for Agriculture Sector Policy Formulation (draft). DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, October 2018.
- ❑ Briefing Note: for Dr Phuang Parisak - for the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)-FAO Conference: Accelerating the End of Hunger and Malnutrition High-level panel session: Accelerating the End of Hunger and Malnutrition: Country Policy Experiences. DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, October 2018.
- ❑ Governing Pesticide Use at the District Level - MAF Policy Brief No.03. Prepared by DOPLA, MAF, in collaboration with LURAS project. November 2018.
- ❑ Opportunities to Boost Agricultural Innovation in Lao People's Democratic Republic - NAFRI Policy Brief No. 002/2018. S. Sonethavixay and O. Keomipheth. NAFRI, November 2018.



ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONAL PHASE  
(JANUARY 2018–AUGUST 2019)

- ❑ Steps for the formulation and endorsement of policies in the AFRD sector. DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, February 2019.
- ❑ Green Extension - Policy Briefing Note No. 01/. DOPLA, MAF, with LURAS project. March 2019.
- ❑ Concept Note - Building policy on sustainable green agriculture and preparation of Lao People's Democratic Republic Strategic Framework for Green and Sustainable Agriculture. DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, April 2019.
- ❑ English Language Training Programme and Agenda for High-Level Workshop for Launch of Steps for Drafting and Endorsement of Policies -- two activities under amendment to Letter of Agreement (LOA)/LAO/2018-16 between DOPLA and FAO. DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, April 2019.
- ❑ Policy Briefs - Guide to preparing policy briefs: for uptake of results of scientific research and extension, technology and management systems development, innovation and other initiatives. DOPLA and NAFRI, MAF. Vientiane, April 2019.
- ❑ Towards 'People-Centred Agriculture': Rethinking rural labour, youth employment and the agrarian transition in Laos. A. Shattuck (LURAS consultant, with DOPLA). DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, May 2019.
- ❑ Concept Note: "Regional Environmental Event Support" - Strategic Collaborative Fund, SEI - Sharing and learning from regional experiences to build effective and harmonized policy on sustainable agriculture in the Mekong Region: Lao People's Democratic Republic's Regional Dialogue Workshop -- Theme: Agriculture Subtheme(s): Policy: promoting green and sustainable agriculture throughout the region. SEI, Bangkok, Thailand, with DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, May 2019.
- ❑ Socio-Economic and Marketing Policy Division, Priority Policy Area and Initiatives, DOPLA, MAF. Vientiane, May 2019.
- ❑ Policy Development Manual – Facilitating the Development of the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development Sector in Lao People's Democratic Republic (draft).
- ❑ Documents related to ongoing discussion between DOPLA and MAF leadership on steps or protocol to be followed in formulating and approving policy. DOPLA, MAF, August 2019 (the documents are in Lao and will be subsequently translated into English).



## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

<b>Expected Impact</b>	<b>Improved socio-economic well-being of agriculture chain participants and national food security resulting from increase in productivity, production, value addition and trade of agricultural commodities in Lao People's Democratic Republic</b>		
<b>Outcome</b>	Improved and evidence-based decision making among public sector, private sectors, civil society, and other stakeholders regarding the planning and implementation of development programme and investment and other activities in the food and agriculture sectors		
	<b>Indicator</b>	Number of agricultural economics and market briefings provided by DOPLA to MAF	
	<b>Baseline</b>	No institutionalized mechanisms	
	<b>End Target</b>	2017 – four briefings	
	<b>Comments and follow-up action to be taken</b>	The initial purpose of the project was to create the CAEM under the DOPF in the MAF. However, based on the requirement to improve the agricultural sector towards commercialization, to ensure food security and nutrition, the Government changed this objective to the establishment of the DOPLA. Since its establishment, the DOPLA has become a major source of analysed and synthesized information, and advice on various issues for DOPLA leadership and other stakeholders. This includes: i) at least five policy and situation briefings on issues covering nitrogen-use efficiency, water harvesting for climate-responsive farming systems, agricultural innovation and enterprise development, pesticides governance, and green extension; ii) a number of issues and situation reports covering selected crops, agricultural labour and employment, rural poverty, green agricultural growth, PPPP; and iii) contributions to addresses/speeches by MAF leadership at major national, regional and international meetings. The DOPLA has also been assigned lead roles by MAF leadership in the preparation of background material and actual implementation of major strategy formulation exercises, including the PPPP strategy, the rural development strategy, contract farming and the overall development strategy for the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (AFRD) sector.	
<b>Output 1</b>	Strengthened institutional and procedural mechanisms, tools and methods in MAF and among key partners for economic and market monitoring, analysis and assessment		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Finalized internal organization structure, work allocation, and work plan for THE DOPLA	Approved Director General's Directive on internal organization and work programme of the DOPLA – July 2018	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	Prime Minister's Decree of March 2017 and Minister's Decree of August 2017 on DOPLA establishment and mandate		
<b>Comments</b>	The internal organization of the DOPLA was completed and agreed with the Department of Organization and Personnel, by July 2018. There is flexibility and room for the DOPLA to tweak, adjust and adapt the structure as needs, demands and circumstances evolve and emerge.		
<b>Activity 1.1</b>	Undertake an institutional and programme review of the MAF and its constituent Departments and other entities, in the light of the determination of the MAF to establish capacity for economic and market analysis in the MAF		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	DOPLA was supported to finalize the internal structure, working mechanisms, detailed first year work plan and programmes and indicative plan up to the end of the 8 <sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) in 2020	
<b>Activity 1.2</b>	Evaluate the need for and other criteria for establishing the Centre for Agricultural Economics and Markets (CAEM), which is currently the Department of Policy and Legal Affairs (DOPLA)		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	During the launch phase and interim period of the DOPLA, and to some extent during the establishment phase, there was a wide-ranging review of MAF's institutions and programmes structure, which was used as the basis for developing the DOPLA mandate and its structure. An ongoing review during the establishment and implementation phase played a significant part in developing the Policy Development Process that is guiding DOPLA's work.	

<b>Activity 1.3</b>	Establish functioning DOPLA of MAF, including the following subactivities: Establishment of legal organizational structure; Finalization of staff positions and job descriptions of staff; Recruitment of staff; Finalization of South-South Cooperation (SSC) arrangement with institutions in other countries; Allocation of operational resources; Finalization of logistics; Identification and approval of technical assistance; Finalized Work Plan for Year 1	
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes
	<b>Comments</b>	<p>The following subactivities were carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The establishment of the DOPLA was authorized through Prime Minister’s Decree No. 99 Of 17 March 2017.</li> <li>- The Minister’s Decision on the Mandate of the DOPLA was issued, via the Minister’s “Decision on the structure and mandates of Department of Policy and Legal Affairs”, in August 2017.</li> <li>- The recruitment of core staff was completed, and staff were deployed in December 2017.</li> <li>- The internal organizational structure of the DOPLA was finalized in July 2018.</li> <li>- Work plans and logistical plans for 2018 and 2019 were prepared and used to guide activities.</li> <li>- DOPLA activities were funded under the Project for Capacity Building in Public Investment Program (PIP) Management (PCAP) - the main government programme for the allocation of national resources to development. However, the DOPLA will participate more strongly in the PCAP as the policy development process is strengthened.</li> <li>- The DOPLA identified areas of technical assistance required to develop the policy development process, with actual support secured from FAO, SDC/Helvetas, CIRAD, JICA, and other partners.</li> </ul>



	Consult national and subregional (Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN]) organizations and institutions, which will be working partners with DOPLA, to establish the basis for partnership and seek input on the DOPLA mandate and work plan	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 1.4	Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At the national level, the DOPLA met with most of the important ministries and agencies involved in the development, approval and implementation of AFRD sector policy, including: Research Department of the Prime Minister’s Office; Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI); Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC); Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment; Ministry of Health (MOH); National Institute of Economic Research (NIER); and National Bank of Lao People’s Democratic Republic (the Central Bank).</li> <li>- At the sector level, the DOPLA organized workshops to explain its mandate to all departments in the MAF, and to review working policy development process at both the institutional and technical level. Similar meetings were organized at the levels of PAFO and DAFO.</li> <li>- At the decentralized level, the DOPLA implemented a nationwide programme to support both PAFO and DAFO in the translation of policies into strategies and implementation programmes. The DOPLA developed a programme or further development of policy derived strategies and implementation programmes at the decentralized levels, with the guidance of the Sam Sang (Three Builds Principle).</li> <li>- Among the development partners, the DOPLA identified areas of technical assistance required to develop the policy development process, with actual support secured from FAO, SDC/Helvetas, CIRAD, JICA, and other partners. Means will be sought for DOPLA to work with other partners, such as World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and bilateral donors.</li> <li>- During the lead-up to the launch phase, contact was made with and visits exchanged between the MAF and Viet Nam Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development-described as the think tank of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, which is in charge of scientific research.</li> <li>- During the establishment and operational phase, the DOPLA was in touch with, and its staff visited, the following agencies of the Government of Thailand and one public academic institute: i) Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (very similar to the function of the DOPLA. Its portfolio includes the development of a sustainable agriculture policy); ii) National Economic and Social Development Council (developing the Strategic Plan B.E. 2560 - 2564 (2017 - 2021); iii) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (government agency concerned with the climate change agenda, which includes agriculture, forestry and rural livelihoods); and iv) Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University.</li> <li>- The DOPLA was also in touch with and visited the following international/regional institutions, which have a strong voice on agricultural, forestry, rural and environmental policy and activities: i) SEI Asia – the MAF requested that the SEI, FAO and LURAS/Helvetas participate in a joint programme to develop the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Green Agriculture Strategic Framework; ii) Asian Institute of Technology – programme on agribusiness, rural development, as well as extension/outreach; iii) the Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC), which focuses on community agroforestry policy and practice in Asia; and iv) Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), which addresses women and gender issues in agriculture.</li> </ul>
Activity 1.5	Produce, circulate and obtain approval for a consolidated set of DOPLA Guidelines (in one document) that comprehensively outline the processes of DOPLA’s establishment, functioning, outcomes, outputs, activities, staffing, budget and capacity development and work plans (with the First Year Plan being outlined in detail)	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>During the launch phase, the DOPF and the Department of Organization and Personnel prepared a consolidated set of guidelines comprehensively outlining the proposed process of DOPLA’s establishment, functioning, outputs, activities, staffing, resources, capacity development and First Year Plan. This was supported by documents containing the proposed mandates for DOPLA and its constituent divisions. These documents were used to prepare DOPLA’s and the divisions’ final mandates. The guidelines are still being used as a reference tool; much of their content has been incorporated in the Draft Manual for Policy Development, the Draft Corporate Plan of DOPLA, the Annual Work Plans of DOPLA and the divisions, and other working and long-term planning and capacity building initiatives.</p>

<b>Activity 1.6</b>	Facilitate MAF to implement the Capacity-Development Programme outlined in the Guidelines. Implement: i) training programme; and ii) logistics programme, including provision of operational supplies, such as computers		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Under a FAO-DOPLA Letter of Agreement (LOA), DOPLA undertook the day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of the DOPLA capacity programme for policy development in the MAF. This effort was supported by FAO technical assistance, provided through an LOA with Helvetas. The main outputs of the capacity development were achieved through a comprehensive training programme in policy development. This was supported by a Draft Manual for Policy Development for the AFRD sector, consisting of eight modules and a number of addenda containing various skills sets, skills, data and information system, and science, technology and innovation approaches, which were critical to the successful implementation of the policy development process outlined in the training programme and in the manual.</p> <p>Logistics are still a challenge, especially as the DOPLA has very limited office and meeting space, transport amenities, and other facilities for a department of its size, and the expectations that have been built around it. The DOPLA has taken a multipartnership approach to resolving these issues. FAO supplied the DOPLA with a number of computers, multimedia and other presentation and training equipment, and two servers to facilitate an Internet-based database and information management system, as well as with funds for training and other capacity-development related travel. LURAS/Helvetas provided some computers (as did JICA), and also undertook to renovate and reconfigure a meeting room for the DOPLA.</p>		
<b>Output 2</b>	Programme of regular monitoring and analysis of economic and market situations and trends		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Regular reporting of analyses and assessments of agricultural economics and market situations and trends - with provisions for reporting through online media, as necessary and convenient	First published situation reports on rice, vegetables, livestock and fisheries published by the MAF in March 2018; reports revised annually; gradually expand commodities and subject matter covered by situation reports, starting in 2019	<b>Partially</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	Reporting on situation in sector, commodity and issues occurring on an ad hoc basis, without targeting and wide circulation of reports		
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Situation analysis and the collection of information and reporting on the status of the overall sector, commodities, resources and the Development Programmes under the Agricultural Development Strategy is expected to be one of the main ongoing concerns of the DOPLA. The Project Document and the LOA, especially, identified the National Agricultural Commercialization and Food Security Programme (also called 13+8+8) as a major focus of the situation analysis activities. It is expected that work in this area will pick up steadily, especially as a result of the policy development training programme, and the request that the DOPLA contribute to the reviews of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and the formulation of the 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, and that it participate in the Annual Review of the MAF Development Programmes in early 2019.</p>		
<b>Activity 2.1</b>	Support DOPLA to build capacity for identifying, prioritizing, analysing, tracking, monitoring, and reporting of key economic areas, topics, subject matters, issues and trends		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
<b>Comments</b>	<p>Module 3 of the Manual for Policy Development (i.e. Situation Analysis) and the corresponding training programme presented a general approach on the regular monitoring, analysis and reporting of situations and trends. The manual and training programme also contained specific suggestions of subject matter areas and the type of data to be collected. This was grouped in four categories: Sector and Subsector Situation; Commodity Situation; AFRD Sector Development Framework; and Grassroots Situation.</p>		

Activity 2.2	Survey national/subregional partners and other stakeholders regarding data needs and resources currently available	
	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	<p>No structured survey of data needs and resources was carried out. However, many activities are being implemented, which will become integral parts of the DOPLA Data and Information Management System, once this has been set up, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the DOPLA is taking part in an Agriculture Census exercise led by the DOPF, with the support of the Lao Statistics Bureau. DOPLA's participation is to a large measure motivated by the need to be able to ensure that policy-relevant data is included in the Agriculture Census;</li> <li>- the DOPLA is working closely with the MAF's Centre for Agricultural Statistics (CAS) in identifying statistical data collection needs. The CAS is also supporting the DOPLA in the areas of data collection and analysis for policy development; and is participating in the DOPLA training and capacity-development programme.</li> <li>- The DOPLA has been collecting from relevant ministries, especially the MOIC, on trade, processing, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and other establishments, farmers groups, etc.; MPI on investments in the AFRD sector; MOH on nutrition, etc. However, these contacts have been carried out on a fairly ad hoc basis.</li> </ul>
Activity 2.3	Establish and maintain a collection of relevant national and international reports	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	A collection of national and international reports was undertaken by the Data Management Group and by individual officers in the DOPLA. This needs to be formalized under the Data and Information Management System.
Activity 2.4	Develop private-sector data sources working closely with implementing agencies and private sector organizations	
	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	No formal or structured system of working with data sources in the private sector, as a whole, was developed. However, data was collected from private sector and other stakeholders on a case-by-case basis
Activity 2.5	Establish a firm protocol for safeguarding and disseminating sensitive data	
	Achieved	No
	Comments	This will be implemented as part of the formalized DOPLA Data and Information Management System
Activity 2.6	Undertake regular tracking and analysis of changing economic trends that affect key MAF and stakeholder objectives and operations – based on topics and subject matters from Activity 2.1	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	<p>Some work that was prioritized and started included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- commodity profiles on rice, bananas, cardamom, cassava, cattle, coffee, goats, pigs and wild tea – much of this was carried over from research work;</li> <li>- a study and analysis of pesticide use – carrying out work initiated under the LURAS to policy level;</li> <li>- commodity production and marketing promotion study and analysis – funded through the PCAP; and</li> <li>- a DOPLA and LURAS study and analysis on rural labour, employment, and the agrarian transition in Lao People's Democratic Republic.</li> </ul>
Activity 2.7	Design and deploy system for regular recording and publicizing of situation and trends of changing economic trends that affect key MAF and stakeholder objectives and operations – majority of reporting Internet-based with selected printed and other media publications	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	As in many other countries, the most pervasive way to regularly record and publicize situations and trends is through the preparation of policy briefings/briefs. As part of the Capacity-Development Programme, the DOPLA, in collaboration with the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), prepared a document titled, "Guide to preparing policy briefs". It comprehensively outlines the need and use of policy briefs, and provides guidance on their preparation. It is designed to accommodate print, as well as electronic/Internet versions of concerned briefs. Guidelines on other types are being developed as needs emerge. For example, guidelines have been suggested and training imparted on the preparation of strategies and commodity, and other situation reports.



<b>Output 3</b>	Programme of assessment of the economic, market and other impacts as they relate to various policies		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Prioritized in-depth analysis and research being undertaken and used to support policy formulation	Programme of prioritized in-depth analysis and research topics agreed by January 2019 – to be discussed and updated annually	Yes
<b>Baseline</b>	In-depth analyses and research often ad hoc and driven by development partner ideas		
<b>Comments</b>	Based on the priorities established for the AFRD sector in the 8th NSEDP, Agricultural Development Strategy and Vision 2030, other strategic programmes and frameworks of the sector, and the guidance and direction of MAF leadership, the DOPLA prioritized a number of areas for policy development		
<b>Activity 3.1</b>	Make suggestions for a prioritized in-depth programme of agricultural economics and market analyses and assessments that DOPLA will need to develop over the years		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The following areas were prioritized for policy development, including in-depth economic and market studies and assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Food production: assurance of nutrition and food security, which is enough for both rural farming and urban people, through support.</li> <li>- Commercial production: expansion of production of more and higher quality crop and animal/livestock commodities for sale in expanding domestic export markets for fresh and processed items.</li> <li>- Harmonization of production chains among large enterprises and SMEs: technical assistance; cooperation and coordination with SME-supporting international organizations; research and development finance; feasibility studies; and other methods.</li> <li>- Domestic and foreign investment: streamlining collaborative relationships between MAF, PAFO and DAFO, on the one hand, and the MPI, other ministries and corresponding MPI sections in the provinces and MPI units in the districts, on the other.</li> <li>- Forestry and forest resources management: support restoration of forestry resources for upkeep of the richness of the natural resources base and ecosystems, and overall landscape and specific landscapes of the AFRD sector.</li> <li>- Rural industries, services and livelihoods: promote variety of value-addition goods production and services in rural area to reduce the reliance on natural resources; and study and apply lessons learned in innovation and enterprise and entrepreneurship development in the agricultural sector.</li> <li>- Sustainable and Green Agriculture: support the implementation of the priorities and goals of the National Green Growth Strategy. Preparation of the national Green Agriculture Strategy is expected to be completed in 2019.</li> <li>- Climate change adaptation and resilience building: long-term partnership with FAO on adaptation and building resilience to climate change effects, especially for small and subsistence farmers.</li> <li>- Emergency response and disaster-risk management: policies to support rehabilitation of farmers affected by flash floods and dam burst in 2018, and to build long-term capacities for emergency response and disaster risk management.</li> <li>- Capacity development: the DOPLA and concerned individuals, organizations and societies enabled to obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve policies and concerned instruments for the achievement of development over time.</li> </ul>	
<b>Activity 3.2</b>	Prepare guidelines and train staff on some selected topics (such as cost of production, value chains, enterprise analysis and farm modelling) based on the prioritization schema		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Training, and the preparation of a manual and specific guidelines was undertaken. The modular nature of the training programme and the manual will facilitate easy revisions, amendments, and additions to material already covered, and the introduction of new topics.	

<b>Activity 3.3</b>	Undertake actual in-depth agricultural economics and market analyses and impact assessment of a few (1 to 3) very high priority topics in collaboration with key national and subregional partners		
	<b>Achieved</b>	Yes	
	<b>Comments</b>	<p>Since its establishment, the DOPLA's engagement in actual policy development work has included the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AFRD sector strategy preparation: review commenced for the preparation of a consolidated AFRD sector development strategy and vision, to lead the sector into the upcoming 9th NSEDP cycle – the DOPLA coordinating the Secretariat.</li> <li>- Contract farming: the development of a road map for Improving Policy and Legal Framework for Contract Farming in Lao People's Democratic Republic.</li> <li>- Irrigation Master Plan: the DOPLA as Secretariat to Task Force to develop a master plan for irrigation in the country, which is linked to overall water management issues and practices in Lao People's Democratic Republic.</li> <li>- Green extension: preparation of an issues briefing on green extension for wider awareness, discussion and prioritization of the issue.</li> <li>- Innovation and enterprise and entrepreneurship development: categorizing and inventorying of innovations, and linking them to the development enterprises and entrepreneurship.</li> <li>- Sustainable and Green Agriculture Strategic Framework the DOPLA is Secretariat for Task Force established to prepare Sustainable Green Agriculture Strategic Framework for the country, in accordance with the Green Growth Strategy of the Government.</li> <li>- Enhancing resilience through rainwater harvesting and improved nitrogen use efficiency: with the Department of Agricultural Land Management (DALaM), the DOPLA is working on two policy briefings respectively: i) the storage of rainwater in ponds for use in the production of diversified range of crops during the dry season; and ii) more efficient use of nitrogen fertilizer by farmers through a combination of chemical and organic fertilizers.</li> <li>- Rural development and poverty reduction: in line with the Prime Minister's 2018 Decree on Rural Development and Poverty Reduction, the DOPLA has the responsibility to contextualize rural development and poverty reduction in a realistic and well-considered multisectoral, multi-institution and multifaceted framework, which facilitates the balancing of policies, legislation and programmes, and other initiatives that may sometimes have countervailing results, effects and impacts.</li> <li>- Emerging labour issues and interest in the agricultural transition: in collaboration with LURAS, the DOPLA initiated a study on the most urgent and outstanding issues in agricultural and rural labour and employment.</li> </ul>	
<b>Output 4</b>	Establishment of a high-quality communication programme for the Minister, Deputy Ministers and Heads of Departments and other stakeholders within and outside MAF to inform policy and decision-making		
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
	Flow to and use by Ministry leadership, Departments and partners of policy and legal affairs information, on both regular and as requested basis	Regular and on-request production of agricultural policy and legal briefings; DOPLA progress reports; proceedings of agricultural economics and markets forum	<b>Partially</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	Few and rather irregular reporting formats for policy and legal affairs information		
<b>Comments</b>	The framework was set out in the module of the Policy Development Manual and the training programme, to develop communication as part of the stakeholder management of the policy development process. Stakeholder management is a cross-cutting issue that is essential at all stages and phases of the policy development process. It is the intention of the DOPLA to develop a communication plan that has a mix of communications methods and media, such as websites, published documents, press advertisements, public campaigns, workshops/seminars and meetings, among other things. The communication plan needs to have flexibility to allow for different ways of communicating at different stages of the policy development and implementation process. It is also recognized that powerful communication mechanisms exist and can be inbuilt in policy development tools and protocols that are being developed and deployed, such as the draft or yet-to-be-approved guidelines for AFRD Sector Policy Development (also called the Policy Development Protocol).		

Activity 4.1	Consult with MAF leadership and outline regular communication system with the Minister, Deputy Ministers and Director Generals of Departments to coordinate topics and receive requests on agricultural economics and markets issues	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 4.1	Comments	One of the defining features for building a communication system to serve MAF leadership, the departments and the DOPLA was tackled through the development of draft guidelines for policy formulation in the AFRD sector. The guidelines were prepared after a sustained period of discussions with departments and with other ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office. Once approved, they will form the basis for formalizing communication around the policy development process, and for the development of templates that can be used to provide information on policies and related programmes and activities.
	Develop a formal process to address requests (for information) and reporting templates	
Activity 4.2	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	In addition to the draft guidelines for policy formulation, some templates were developed for facilitating communication and information flow on policy, including: i) Format for Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Sector Policy Formulation Concept Note; and ii) Format for Policy Document.
Activity 4.3	Define reporting needs and analyse impacts across all areas of the Ministry's mandate	
	Achieved	Partially
Activity 4.3	Comments	Reporting needs were partly analysed by the DOPLA as a part of preparatory work for the guidelines for policy formulation in the AFRD sector. A more comprehensive undertaking can be made after the approval of the guidelines.
	Coordinate within MAF (especially with NAFRI – Policy Research Center and Policy Think Tank) and with other government ministries and agencies regarding ongoing research programmes to streamline research and analysis provision to decision-makers and to minimize redundancies	
Activity 4.4	Achieved	Partially
	Comments	DOPLA and NAFRI staff informally to discuss ongoing policy research activities. The guide to the preparation of policy briefs effectively streamlines approaches to research and analysis synthesis of research and analysis results for policy formulation and for communication with MAF leadership and stakeholders.
Activity 4.5	Agricultural Economics and Markets Briefings - Prepare and effectively circulate Briefings	
	Achieved	Yes
Activity 4.5	Comments	As reported under Activity 3.3, there is already a sustained programme of policy development, including the preparation of policy briefs, situation briefs, and other documentation.
	DOPLA Progress Reports - Prepare and release DOPLA Progress Reports	
Activity 4.6	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	The DOPLA has not yet adopted the practice of dedicated progress reports. However, it reports semi-annually to the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development, as part of a de facto policy subsector (or Policy Think Tank) report. In 2019, the DOPLA also started contributing to the Policy Section at the MAF annual meeting.
Activity 4.7	Agricultural Economics and Markets Forum - Organize and conduct Agricultural Economics and Markets Forum	
	Achieved	Partially
Activity 4.7	Comments	The type of stakeholder Agricultural Economics and Markets Forum (revised to Policy Forum) that was foreseen in the Project Document has so far been subsumed under meetings of the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development and the MAF annual meetings. With specific regard to detailed discussions of the Policy Development and Policy Research Agenda, the Manual for Policy Development (Module 2) contains suggestions for constituting a formal Subsector Working Group on AFRD Policy. This Subgroup would be tasked with formulating the harmonization of AFRDP Policy Development (under the DOPLA) and AFRD Policy Research (under the NAFRI), and would be the origin of the harmonized policy and policy research agendas. Suggested methodologies for developing the harmonized agenda have been made. These proposals need to be presented to the Sector Working Group and to MAF Leadership for respective endorsement and approval.



Outreach, Marketing and Reporting Unit (PSRR)  
Business Development and Resource Mobilization Division (PSR)

For more information please contact: [Reporting@fao.org](mailto:Reporting@fao.org)