



# NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR INTEGRATING ELEPHANT MANAGEMENT AND RURAL LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT

**The objective** is to improve the living conditions and socio-economic development of local people who coexist with elephant populations and ensure the conservation and management of viable populations of Asian elephants throughout their current range in the country.

## What is the project about?

Laos is considered to have the most important national elephant population in Indochina, with viable numbers remaining in many areas (Duckworth and Hedges 1998). The elephant has played an important religious and cultural role in Laos for centuries, and this role continues to be recognized. Known historically as the "Land of a Million Elephants", Laos had large populations of wild and domesticated elephants in the past. Current estimates of wild elephants are indicative only, ranging from ~800-1200 (Khounboline 2002) to 2100-3300 (Venevongphet 1988; see also Duckworth and Hedges 1998). The number of domesticated elephants was recently tabulated as 864 (Norachak 2002).

The programme responds to a need expressed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry for assistance with resolving human/elephant land use conflicts, which are currently widespread but considered to be still at a relatively early stage of development in Laos, and is consistent with over-arching national priorities for sustainable use and conservation of natural resources. This growing conflict is of immediate concern to those engaged in rural poverty alleviation as well as those responsible for wildlife management. The programme is structured around seven technical components and one managerial component, each designed to be funded and implemented separately. The programme has not started yet.

### Period

The Programme is for 5 years

### Partnership

MAF, FAO, UNDP, WWF, WCS, IUCN, National Tourism Authority National University of Laos

### Budget

Estimated budget requirement of US\$4,112,000

### Site

Nationwide

### Project Outputs

1. Trial sites for human/elephant conflict resolution established. Training and extension for human/elephant conflict prevention and mitigation developed and delivered
2. Institutional and implementation framework for human/elephant conflict resolution developed
3. Inputs provided to land use planning exercises at national, provincial and district levels
4. A national survey of elephant population completed
5. National level registration system developed and baseline registration of all currently owned elephants completed

For more information, please contact,  
FAO Representation, Mr. Thibault Ledecq, E-mail: [thibault.ledecq@faolao.org](mailto:thibault.ledecq@faolao.org), Phone-Xay Road, P.O. Box 1640, Vientiane