

Pre-consultation Meeting on Implementing Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness

The pre-consultation meeting was held, identifying a range of issues pertinent to implementing government strategies and goals to enhance green growth, climate change and disaster preparedness. Key issues identified are listed below, and more detailed summary points are included.

1. **Cross Sectoral Nature of GG & CC/DRM requires multi-sector coordination and collaboration:** Specific issues discussed ranged from forestry and forest degradation, curbing illegal wildlife trade, climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation, pest outbreaks, and other events requiring emergency response. It was highlighted that tackling these issues that are all inter-related and should not be treated in isolation. Also the emergency response requires cross sector collaboration. This would also include promoting approaches such as ecosystem-based approach to foster a more effective way for green growth that is cross-sectoral in nature.
2. **Institutional arrangement requiring MONRE oversight role and cross-sectoral coordination:** Specific SWG arrangement to induce such collaboration may be needed. Especially taking the example of forestry sector and the need for clarification of institutional arrangements reflecting the recent change. For green growth and implementing CC/DRM strategies, MONRE may position itself as an oversight ministry to better integrate environmental impact and climate/disaster risk consideration as well as support coordination across sectors.
3. **In particular, importance of forestry sector and clarification of institutional arrangements:** Forestry is a key sector that impacts Natural Resources and Environment, Green Growth, Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction – with national goals of 70% forest cover target, forest categories delineation and reclassification. Clarifying institutional mandate is urgent as MAF oversees all forest categories while MONRE oversees issues related to watershed management, land use and climate change.
4. **Building stronger governance system with data/information, monitoring and reporting system:** enhancing government strategies and implementation on GG & CC/DRM rely on having sound data and information, reliability and access. This includes strengthening the monitoring and enforcement for investments, wildlife trade, compliance of permits, etc. Use and availability of sufficient data from reports, surveys and databases, i.e. cadasters, and from plans like the NSEDPs and PIPs need to be enhanced. This includes (1) data sharing across departments and ministries, (2) data analytical and presentation capabilities for planning and evaluation, and (3) the required hardware, software and personnel capacities and investments by the government. Geo-data based planning, would greatly strengthen coordination and investments targeting capabilities.
5. **Importance in the clarity of rights of ownership, access and use:** clarity regarding assets in the form of land, forests and aquatic resources in Lao PDR will provide a solid basis for green growth and participation of the agencies and the people. When considering green economy as well as climate change issues and the corresponding policy options and implementation measures, it is indispensable for all parties to have clarity of land rights. Without clarity on entitlements and rights, especially regarding communal land rights, there will be no clear responsibility and no motivated participation of the people concerned. Furthermore, land conflict may be induced or aggravated, which would be detrimental to building peace and harmony.

6. **Efficiency and effectiveness of plans and investments by the government:** efficiency and effectiveness of efforts can and should be enhanced, by emphasizing evaluation and learning from implementation, for improvements and up-scaling. A systematic strengthening of a learning and information sharing culture would be highly beneficial.
7. **Engaging the Private Sector for green growth:** Nature of the engagement with private sector needs to be clarified as the 8th NSEDP is dependent on FDI; and green growth strategies, for example, will require private sector engagement.
8. **Reduction of Illegal Wildlife Trade:** Lao PDR has been identified as a transshipment country for illegal wildlife trade. This is a key emerging priority identified by the CITES Secretariat during a Mission to Lao PDR earlier this year, which produced recommendations for curbing the illegal trade in wildlife. GoL also committed to taking the necessary steps to reduce the illegal trade at the CITES COP. The Wildlife Working Group 15.7 is committed to supporting the Government on implementing the CITES recommendations.
9. **Implementation at sub-national level:** Continued and increased attention and support to subnational implementation of GG & CC/DRM strategies and actions are needed. Enhanced capacity to implement policies and enforce regulations need attention when adopting stronger and more appropriate rules and regulations. A good illustration of this lies in the area of pesticides, where the new law is currently being considered by the National Assembly but its implementation will be critical to the environmental health of Lao PDR.
10. **Implementing Sam Sang policy in the context of green growth and improved preparedness:** in implementing the Sam Sang policy and with the need to ensure people's participation in and benefits from land allocations, investments and mitigation measures local planning and oversight competencies have to be built carefully and systematically across all central and decentral levels of government and administration. The appropriate general development management and administration capacities will have to be strengthened over all levels and sectors, particularly on the district level.

Pre-Consultation Meeting Summary Points

I. In attendance

The NRESWG Pre-consultation meeting held on 3rd November 2016 at MoNRE Hall was chaired by His Excellency Sommad Pholsena, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, and co-chaired by Her Excellency Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator, and UNDP Resident Representative. Representatives from relevant ministries, international organizations, diplomatic corps, non-government organizations and other stakeholders working in natural resources and environment sector also attended the meeting. The title of the meeting is ‘Implementing Green Growth, Climate Change, and Disaster Preparedness’.

II. Opening Speeches

With permission from the chairman, Dr. Saynakhone Inthavong, Director General of Department of Planning and Cooperation, formally welcomed the participants and delivered his opening statements, which highlighted on several aspects in NRES particularly the summary of Green Growth, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. He urged participants to intervene and provide as much information as possible during the meeting in order to achieve effective outcomes.

III. Introductory Presentations

The presentations provided at the meeting were given by representatives from MPI’s DoP, MoNRE’s DPC and DDMCC and NERI (formerly in MPI). The details of each presentation are as followings:

- Mr. Phanovanh LouangAphai, Officer from MPI’s DoP, presented on Green Growth in Lao PDR;
- Mr. Virana Sonnasinh, DDG of DPC reported on the Green Growth in NRE Sector;
- Dr. Saykham Voladet, Division Director from the National Economic Research Institute, provided Capacity Building on Mainstreaming Green Growth Agenda into National, Sub-National and Sectorial Strategy and Action Plans;
- Mr. Syamphone Sengchandala, DDG of DDMCC, presented on climate change and disaster preparedness strategies.

IV. Open discussion

1. Representative from FAO emphasized that tenure assets comprise of land, aquatic resources, forest and products in the forest. With regards to the emerging issues in the area of Green Growth, Climate change and Disaster Preparedness. He emphasized it is critical for all parties to have clarity of rights of ownership, access and use. FAO’s Voluntary Guideline on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT) are now being finalized in a Lao language version in consultation with MONRE, and they will provide good basis for development of the Land Law and associated regulations etc., as well as guiding actions and follow-up. FAO underlined that emergencies can be caused by biological agents, including pests and diseases such as the current locust outbreak and the recent detection of avian influenza. These agents can only be effectively prevented and/or combatted by cross-sectoral interventions, as the Government has already shown.

2. Representative from UNICEF noted the work needed in sound regulations and guidelines but also

a good balanced needed for implementation.

3. Representative from GIZ stressed that GG should take into account land rights and the importance of having sufficient data and building a culture of information sharing. Towards this end he emphasized also the need to enhance means to measure effectiveness and efficiency of development efforts. On the importance of land, he emphasized that in considering green economy as well as climate change issues and the corresponding policy options and implementation measures, it is indispensable for all parties to have clarity of land rights. He also highlighted the usefulness of the Voluntary Guideline on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT).

4. Representative from UNDP iterated the three areas of GG concept – efficiency, sustainability and negative impacts on the environment. The most important thing is the engagement of sectors. On climate change response, notable was GoL staying engaged in the climate change dialogue and follow-up on the commitments to the Paris Agreements, by having a delegation from Lao PDR attend the UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakesh. UNDP is currently working with MAF on a funding proposal for the Green Climate Fund which will look at building resilience to climate impacts to secure livelihoods and enhance food and nutrition security.

5. Representative from WB pointed to making use of the Green Growth Strategy and Monitoring and Reporting system that NERI and MPI DOP are developing. Under the umbrella of GG, the M&E framework and reporting system can support enhancing aid effectiveness. In addition to enhancing cooperation across sectors, institutionalized means of reporting would be examples of good governance and information sharing, which is at the center of green growth and on improving governance around natural resources use.

6. Representative from the Philippines Embassy highlighted the social and inclusiveness of green growth and for improved preparedness to climate change / DRM. She also emphasized that MoNRE should increase its efforts to engage and involve the other sectors of the Government at the policy and at the programmatic level to achieve a truly effective approach to Green Growth etc.

7. Representative from WHO emphasized ensuring coordination and improving aid effectiveness.

8. Representative from HELVITAS referred sustainable agriculture to clean production system that would have sustainability, low impact, and resilience. She highlighted the importance of investment to local community. Good coordination between government agencies and development partners are crucial.

9. Dr. Saykham of NERI described in further detail the Green Growth Monitoring and Reporting system, which is part of the activity under implementation with financing from the Environment Protection Fund. Also, he emphasized official definition of GG should be made available in order to effectively implement it. Dr Saykham further commented that strategic formulation process should be clear and measureable.

10. Representative from DIC MPI appreciated the meeting organization. He then informed the meeting about the upcoming RTIM to be held in Vientiane Province.

V. Closing

The meeting ended at 12:00 PM on the same day.

**Minister of Natural Resources
and Environment**

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