

The Mekong Region Land Governance Project

Project Brief

Project Framework

The project aims to contribute to the design of appropriate land policies and practices in the Mekong Region, responding to national priorities in terms of reducing poverty, improving nutrition, increasing economic development, and supporting family farmers, so that they can be secure and make good decisions on land use and land management.

The development of appropriate land policies is crucial for the economic and social development of Mekong region countries. Recent and ongoing changes in land use are creating problems and creating conflicts which affect rural people's lives and the potential of land use in line with important objectives of socio-economic development.

The project will collaborate with all land and natural resource stakeholders, including government at national and local levels, the private sector and individuals and groups involved in family farming; and will support equitable arrangements for all.

Through a range of innovative learning and capacity building methods, the project seeks to support governments in the Mekong region to address the challenges they are facing of reviews and development of policies, laws and regulations, as well as their implementation through solutions and improved practices.

The project will facilitate sharing knowledge and experiences across projects and country borders, support multi-stakeholder dialogue, and assist in regional cooperation between Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam and beyond.

Country Focus

Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam

The Project Implementation Unit (PIU), including the expatriate Team Leader, Deputy Team Leader, and Fund Manager, is proposed to be located in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Hosting the Project Implementation Unit in Laos will increase the benefits of the project to Laos as it will be seen as the regional coordinating hub for a regionally relevant topic.

Development Partner and Funding

The **Government of Switzerland**, through the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), has committed to funding this Project in four Mekong region countries over a period of up to 10 years, with the preparatory steps starting in April 2014. USD 10million have been committed for the first 4-year phase of the project.

This project will be implemented by organizations that were selected through an international tender process and mandated by SDC: LEI (Land Equity International, Australia) who have partnered with Gret (Professionals for Fair Development, France).

The project design provides the flexibility for additional donors to join the funding mechanisms. A project appraisal mission to evaluate a commitment of USD 4.7 million has already been undertaken by Germany this month. There are also ongoing discussions to contribute funds by Luxemburg and others.

Project Objectives

To provide a wide range of stakeholders across the land, natural resource, and investment sectors with capacity building, learning and networking opportunities to improve policies, institutional strengthening and practical models which support family farmers, long term rural development and food security in the Mekong region (Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar).

Implementation Framework

The project provides a lean but technically valuable personnel structure through the PIU, and through individual facilitators in each focus country. The project will have four main operational modalities:

1. **National Land Governance Facilitators:** In each country, a national land governance professional will facilitate and organize exchange, learning and cooperation between government, civil society and private sector stakeholders.
2. **Funding for learning and alliance building activities:** The project has at its disposal a budget line to organize information collection, analysis, and dissemination, and for horizontal learning and structured learning visits, coaching and pairing, training and organizational strengthening, convening, etc.
3. **Quick Disbursement Facility (QDF):** To fund short-term activities contributing to land tenure security and to use windows of opportunity in anticipated or ongoing government policy processes.
4. **Innovation Facility (IF):** To fund medium-term (1 to 2 years) pilot activities of innovative practices, intended to be integrated later into regular next phase strategies and budgets of ongoing partner projects. It is the main instrument to translate new knowledge acquired through the learning components of the project into changed practices of local, national and regional initiatives and projects.

Project benefits

- The project provides a range of different **capacity building and learning opportunities** to land governance stakeholders.
- Project is designed to be **responsive to stakeholder demands**, this ensures sustainability of activities.
- Flexible and **responsive funding approaches** allow the project to evolve with needs and trends of the immediate context.
- The project acts as a multiple stakeholder platform for **technical & financial assistance** for **capacity building, learning, networking & practical collaboration**.
- Comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible **information & analysis** available to the Governments of the Mekong region, as well as to other land-related projects.
- Support to stakeholders for cross country exchange and learning at the regional level.
- Access to **global expertise** for government and other stakeholders.