Participatory Village Development and
Sustainable Land Use System
A General Description

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

1. Intended Audience of this Document
   • Policy makers, program planners and the donor community.

   Note: This is NOT a technical manual or guide for field use.

2. Explanation of "System"

   The Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System is comprised of four components: extension, land use planning and land allocation, sloping land research and joint forest management. The term “system” is used to indicate that the procedures and methods for each of these components are systematised and integrated into a system to facilitate agriculture and forestry development in villages.

3. Purpose of the Document
   • To provide an overview of the four components in the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use system.
   • To make information available to assist personnel involved in developing policy, planning development programs and providing donor assistance to the Lao PDR.
4. Information Provided in this Document

- Explanation of the components, objectives and ownership of the system.
- Justification for documentation.
- Experiences and lessons learned during the development of the system over a period of four years in target villages.
- Discussion on mainstreaming a gender in development approach and gender responsiveness of the system.
- Monitoring procedures and methods developed.
- The relevance of the system to government laws, policies and regulations.
- An assessment of sustainability and affordability of the system in the Lao context.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>DAFO</td>
<td>District Agriculture and Forestry Office</td>
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<td>DMS</td>
<td>DAFO Management System</td>
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<td>DOF</td>
<td>Department of Forestry</td>
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<td>GOL</td>
<td>Government of Laos</td>
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<td>JFM</td>
<td>Joint Forest Management</td>
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<td>LSFP</td>
<td>Lao-Swedish Forestry Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>LUP</td>
<td>Land Use Planning</td>
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<td>LUP/LA</td>
<td>Land Use Planning and Land Allocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry</td>
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<td>NAFRI</td>
<td>National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute</td>
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<td>NBCA</td>
<td>National Bio-diversity Conservation Area</td>
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<td>NSCSP</td>
<td>National Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Program</td>
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<td>PAFO</td>
<td>Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office</td>
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<td>PFO</td>
<td>Provincial Forestry Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>PVD&amp;SLUS</td>
<td>Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTC</td>
<td>Regional Training Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>S&amp;L</td>
<td>Saving and Credit/Loan Groups</td>
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   6.1 CENTRAL LEVEL
1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SYSTEM

The Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use (PVD&SLU) System is a model for implementing village development and addressing sustainable land use. The procedures and methods of this model have been developed during the last four years by the Lao Swedish Forestry Program (LSFP). The following description explains how system components (suan prakob) and tools (kruang meur) can be
integrated into a process of village development planning, implementation and monitoring.

Four components, land use planning and land allocation (LUP/LA), extension, sloping land research and joint forest management (JFM) have been combined into a system because they each contribute to village development and sustainable land use. Each of the components has tools that are described in more detail later in this document. Integration into a system aims to facilitate the co-ordination of village development activities. However, while the components are described as a system, the reader should be aware that the LSFP does not claim that these components are the only ones that can be used in a system for village development and sustainable land use. They are the tools with which the LSFP has had experience during method development work on village development and sustainable land use.

Some of the procedures and methods of the system are applicable in any situation in Lao PDR, eg., the general land use planning and land allocation procedures. Other procedures and methods are more specific to particular situations or farming systems, e.g., research for the upland or sloping lands. Users of the system therefore need to be aware that the system can not be applied directly or absolutely in any situation. Adaptations will be necessary depending on the particular characteristics encountered in a village or villages.

In addition to the tools for each component of the system there are cross-cutting tools (kruang meur tua bai). These have been named cross cutting tools because they are used in each of the components, e.g., gender mainstreaming occurs in land use planning and land allocation, participatory extension, agricultural and forestry research and joint forest management. The way in which cross-cutting tools are used within the system is explained later in this document.

2. COMPONENTS IN THE SYSTEM

The components in the participatory village development and sustainable land use system are:

- Land Use Planning and Land Allocation
- Extension
- Sloping Land Research
- Joint Forest Management

Figure 1: The Components and Cross-cutting Tools in the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System

![Figure 1: The Components and Cross-cutting Tools in the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System](image)

Figure 2: Components and Linkages for the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System

![Figure 2: Components and Linkages for the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System](image)
3. OBJECTIVES OF THE SYSTEM

Goal

Improved productivity, sustainable use and management of forest and agricultural land in village management areas.

Purpose

To provide the agriculture and forestry sectors with approaches, procedures and methods for implementing participatory village development and addressing sustainable land use.

Component Objectives

**Land Use Planning and Land Allocation:**

To develop, test and provide procedures, methods and tools for conducting participatory land use planning and land allocation at village level

**Extension:**

To develop and provide participatory extension procedures and methods which promote positive interaction with village communities, and enable self reliance, sustainable livelihoods and the sustainable use of natural resources.

**Sloping Land Research:**

To develop procedures, methods and tools for adaptive research which are integrated with extension and are
appropriate for use in the sloping land areas of Laos.

**Joint Forest Management**

To develop procedures, methods and tools that involve villagers in the sustainable management of State Production Forests and village forests.

**Gender**

To develop and provide social analysis tools to ensure that attention to gender issues is mainstreamed and integrated throughout the stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of village development activities.

### 4. JUSTIFICATION FOR DEVELOPING THE SYSTEM

The system was developed to respond to government policies aimed at improving village development planning and implementation and the management of village forests and agricultural land. It is believed the use of the component tools of the system will have a positive impact on:

- Improving the co-ordination of planning, budgeting and implementation of development activities by the concerned government units.
- Improving field staff ability in participatory village needs identification.
- Providing field staff with procedures and skills in participatory planning and decision making.
- Ensuring that extension programs encourage villager self-reliance.
- Ensuring that gender and equity issues are adequately addressed
- Improving monitoring and evaluation of development activities.
- Improving the continuity of village development activities.
- Attaining more efficient and effective village development.

The participatory village development and sustainable land use system has the following attributes which are necessary to attain the impacts referred to above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-disciplinary</strong></td>
<td>Numbers of disciplines, components or units are involved, including those responsible for forest and agricultural land use planning and management, agricultural research, extension, gender and production forest use and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory</strong></td>
<td>It involves villagers in every step of the process and encourages them to make their own decisions in regard to village development and sustainable land use management.</td>
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<td><strong>Empowering</strong></td>
<td>It strengthens community organisation and capability and provides villagers with the skills and tools to solve their own problems and make improved decisions in regard to the sustainable management of forests and agricultural land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Responsive</strong></td>
<td>It promotes the active participation and equal opportunity for men and women in all decisions regarding resource allocation and management and addresses the unique problems of men and women by the use of social analysis and gender mainstreaming.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Networking/Exchange</strong></td>
<td>It promotes inter-village co-operation to solve resource use conflicts and improves community development and sustainable land use activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holistic</strong></td>
<td>It focuses at the level of the whole village natural resource management system including community livelihood systems, forest and land use management and production forests.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated</strong></td>
<td>It promotes integrated village development, sustainable land use, agroforestry research and production forest activities by linking village planning and extension, on-station and on-farm agro-forestry research, village forest land use and management activities, and forest production activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
activities.

**Decentralised**
The system and its components devolve responsibilities, authorities and rights to staff at provincial and district levels and at the village level to village organisations, village groups and individuals.

**Stepwise**
Procedures have a logical sequence of steps providing ample time for due consideration of village needs and opportunities, the outcomes of activities undertaken, and their implications, by both villagers and District staff.

**Strengthens staff competence**
In the process of using the components and tools in the system staff acquire new knowledge and skills which are improved with each planning and implementation cycle.

**Iterative**
As villagers implement development activities and adopt new resource management practices, conditions change, new problems and opportunities emerge and additional lessons are learned requiring that certain steps are repeated in the light of the changed circumstances.

### 5. OWNERSHIP OF THE SYSTEM

In the context of model/method development ownership refers to:

The government units responsible for developing the components and tools in the system: **Development**

Those responsible or concerned with co-ordinating the application of the system: **Coordination**

The end users of the system: **Users**

The target beneficiaries of the system: **Beneficiaries**

The table below summarises ownership in the village development and sustainable land use system

**Table 1: Ownership in the Participatory Village Development and Sustainable Land Use System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Component Development</th>
<th>Agency/Unit Co-ordination</th>
<th>Component End Users</th>
<th>Beneficiaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LUP and LA</td>
<td>LUP Sub-program of LSFP in cooperation with DOF, MAF and the National Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Program</td>
<td>MAF, DOF, PAFO, PFO, RTCs</td>
<td>LUP/LA Committees: Central, Province, District, NSCSP Staff, Provincial LUP Staff, District LUP Staff, Village Committees, Village LUP/LA Committees, RTC staff</td>
<td>The Nation, Provinces, Districts, Village communities, Village dev. Groups, Village social groups, Village families, Men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td>Extension Subprogram of LSFP in co-operation with DOF and MAF, RTCs</td>
<td>MAF, DOF, PAFO, PFO, RTCs</td>
<td>Provincial extension staff, District extension staff, Village Committees, TC staff</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloping Land Research</td>
<td>Shifting Cultivation Subprogram of LSFP in co-operation with NAFRI and the NPSCS, RTCs</td>
<td>MAF, NAFRI: FRC &amp; NARC, DOF, PAFO, PFO, RTCs</td>
<td>Provincial extension staff, District extension staff, Village Committees, Reg. Training Centre staff, Researchers</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The various stakeholders which have been involved in method development activity are depicted in Figure 2 above. This is both necessary and desirable to ensure that:

- End users at each level in the government system are capable of using the procedures and methods developed during the stages of formulation, testing and improvement.
- The procedures and methods are integrated and institutionalised in government policy and working procedures.
- Adequate testing has been undertaken at village level to ensure that the procedures and methods are appropriate and benefit communities, groups, families and men and women.

6. GENDER RESPONSIVENESS

The participatory village development and sustainable land use system incorporates attention to gender issues by using social analysis tools throughout the stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of system activities. This ensures that staff who are involved in village development activity give attention to gender issues in a systematic and structured way.

The tools used in social analysis focus on identifying and addressing social and gender concerns. They include examining gender roles and division of labour, gender relations and the relative access and control women and men have of village resources.

At the whole village level social and gender analysis also identifies the perceived development potential of village resources and empowerment and gender equity issues which could be addressed and supported.

This approach to gender mainstreaming provides equal opportunities for men and women to participate in and benefit from village development, through engaging both women and men in planning and decision making about village development priorities and activities.

Use of the system raises gender awareness levels of district and provincial staff and improves their capacity to consider gender issues in village development in all the components of the system. Actions are taken at central, provincial, district and village levels. These actions include:

6.1 Central Level

- The appointment of staff members to promote gender work.
- In-service capacity building activities involving both men and women.
- Providing opportunities for staff of both sexes to attend study tours and training courses.

6.2 Provincial Level

The appointment of gender focal persons in the provincial LSFP Co-ordination Offices to assist provincial and district staff with gender work related to village development and sustainable land use.

- Training courses for both male and female staff members on relevant gender issues.
- Participation of provincial gender focal persons in LUP/LA, extension and JFM field activities in target districts and villages.

6.3 District Level

- The appointment of gender focal persons in the DAFO to facilitate gender work related to village development and sustainable land use with communities, groups, and individuals.
- Participation of district gender focal persons in method development and testing at village level.
• Attendance of both male and female staff members of DAFO in meetings concerning development planning and activity implementation.
• Providing training courses on gender for both male and female staff members

6.4 Village Level

Organisational Actions

• The appointment of women to village LUP/LA, JFM and Savings and Loan Group (S&L) committees
• The appointment of women to school parent committees to encourage equal opportunity for boys and girls to attend school.

Planning Actions

• Gathering information from both village men and women when undertaking planning activities.
• Ensuring women, youth and village elders attend village decision making meetings
• Using approaches such as arranging convenient venues and times to facilitate women’s participation in planning and decision-making meetings.
• Conducting social analysis activities to assist village development planning
• Interviewing respondents of both sexes when monitoring component activities.

Training Activities

• Participation of men and women in study trips, field days and training sessions conducted by each of the components.

7. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Institutional Experiences and Lessons

Integrating Sub-program work facilitated co-ordination and the concept of the Participatory Village Development System

In the early stages each sub-program worked on developing procedures more or less on a sub-program or component basis in response to their purposes, inputs and outputs. The first attempt at physically integrating sub-program work occurred in January 1997 at Xieng Le Kok village in Savannakhet Province. Central, provincial and district level staff from LUP, Extension, JFM and the Xepon Regional Training Centre completed an integrated exercise of land use planning and village development planning. Similar exercises were later undertaken in which research and conservation sub-program staff participated.

These joint exercises were in fact a stepping stone to defining a village development system, based on the inter-actions between LUP, Extension, JFM, Research, and the RTCs during the inter-disciplinary field exercises.

Village Development is enhanced by integrating component work

In Luang Prabang procedures and methods were developed to link sloping land research, extension with training at the Northern Regional Training Centre. Similarly, associations have been created in southern Provinces between the LSFP and established research institutions and service departments to facilitate the provision of technical advice to both district extension workers and villagers.

In the JFM activity, PAFO, DAFO, village communities and private logging companies are partners in the development of viable systems to involve villagers in commercial forestry activities.

Linkages were made with the Regional Training Centres during development of the procedures and methods so that RTC staff gained the understanding and knowledge to assist with dissemination and training.

Institutionalisation requires involvement from stakeholders at all levels
As explained in Table 1 the development and adoption of models for PVD&SLU has better prospects for success if ownership of the system is shared by stakeholders at all levels in the organisation. During the formulation and improvement stages of component development care was taken to ensure that all stakeholders were involved in an appropriate capacity. This created the ownership of the procedures and methods at the operational level and facilitated their acceptance at the policy level. The potential for expansion of the procedures and methods to non-project areas is enhanced. This was the case with the LUP/LA procedures, which were developed in co-operation with the MAF and the NSCSP and subsequently adopted nation wide.

**The benefits of de-centralisation in method development were demonstrated**

The GOL has a policy to decentralise authority and rights to provincial, district and village levels. The PVD&SLU system through the distribution of ownership at the various levels supports this policy. This is possible because the system possesses the important attributes summarised on page 3. The system is integrated, participatory, empowering, gender responsive, networked, stepwise and iterative. These attributes provide mechanisms for devolving authority and rights, particularly at the district, village, group, family and individual levels and therefore are attractive tools for the GOL’s de-centralisation program.

**The Regional Training Centres were linked to village development and sustainable land use activities**

Staff of the RTCs have been involved in all method development activities with each component of the PVD&SLU system. Examples of this activity include participation in LUP/LA, extension, sloping land research and JFM method development activities in model development villages, and formal and informal training for extension staff and villagers. Curriculum development at the RTCs has been based on field experiences during method development work in target areas. RTC staff have developed training material with assistance from land use planning, extension and research staff who have field experience with the procedures and methods. This cooperation helped to ensure that training provided is relevant and appropriate for village development work.

**The LSFP whole village approach to village development offers more opportunity to effect change in village communities**

A "model farmer" is usually a person who has a farm which exhibits numbers of exemplary farming activities which serve as a complete demonstration for others in the village to follow. Assistance is provided by the extension service to ensure that the farmer is successful in producing a very attractive “show-piece”. Typically extension effort and funds are concentrated on just a few farmers.

The LSFP uses a “participatory whole village” approach which is characterised by participatory methods, equal opportunity for village social groups, logical sequences or steps and repeated activity as circumstances change.

The LSFP experiences indicate that concentrating extension and development resources on a few selected framers does not offer the opportunity to reach all sectors of the village community, invariably does not incorporate gender concerns or perspectives, and may not address the issue of poverty alleviation satisfactorily.

It is concluded that the phased whole village approach, through the steps of demonstrating selected farming practices, farmer testing and evaluation to adoption is a more satisfactory approach than the model farmer method because the majority of families in the community have opportunities to access, test evaluate and adopt technologies.

**There was duplication in the LUP and LA and extension procedures which was corrected in the latter stages of the program**

"Extension" was included as a latter stage in the LUP/LA procedure. This was done in an attempt to create a linkage between LUP/LA and extension at a time when there were no systematic extension procedures and methods developed for use at district level. This is no longer the case as satisfactory and adequate extension procedures and methods are now available. Furthermore, as both Extension and LUP/LA are integral parts of a village development system it is inappropriate that Extension be considered as part of a LUP/LA procedure because LUP and LA are tools in the village development process. It is therefore not necessary for land use planning and land allocation personnel to attempt to define an extension plan at the time land allocation is being done. This anomaly could be rectified by simply removing extension as a stage in the LUP/LA procedure and using the extension procedures and methods which have been developed and documented.
Extension activities should be undertaken whether LUP/LA has been done or not. It would be more satisfactory if those responsible for LUP/LA completed specific LUP/LA tasks after which extension would continue with the task of participatory village development planning and implementation.

7.2 Social Experiences and Lessons

Gender has been progressively understood and partially adopted in the system

Gender concerns and activities have gradually been mainstreamed in the attitudes of staff involved in village development and sustainable land use activities. The initial perception that gender meant "women" and that gender activities were the exclusive concern of the Lao Women’s Union, have been progressively dispelled and there exists a better understanding of how gender mainstreaming can benefit village development.

Participation was demonstrated and partially mainstreamed in system procedures and methods

The GOL has well defined policies for participation in rural development with the aim of increasing villager involvement in decision making. The PVD&SLU system is a participatory one in which staff inter-act with village communities, groups, families and men and women in undertaking each of it's components, LUP/LA, Extension, Research and JFM. The term "participation" is widely assimilated in the vocabulary of field staff. Methods and techniques for applying participation are still being learned. Participatory approaches are now embedded in the curricular of the Regional Training Centres responsible for training extension staff.

Staff competence in village development activities was improved

The participatory and practical training methods used improved the competence of district staff in planning and implementing village development activities. In each of the components of the system the procedures and methods all advocate and necessitate consistent dialogue by staff with communities, groups or individuals through-out the process of preparation, planning, implementation, follow-up and monitoring of village development activities. Village development activities defined therefore reflect community needs and opportunities and government visions, policies and development objectives.

7.3 Technical Experiences and Lessons

Research has been linked to village development and extension

The difficulty of linking research and development is addressed by this system. Approaches linking extension and research have been positively demonstrated in contrasting situations. In the shifting cultivation areas of the north the research component uses on-station and on-farm research methods to address and demonstrate conservation farming technologies. This is done in collaboration with other research organisations, district extension and land use planning staff and villagers. In the lowland rain-fed areas of the south, the extension program involves the government rice research station in rice trials, training of district staff and villagers and demonstrations to address the problem of rain-fed paddy rice insufficiency. Similar initiatives have been demonstrated in the economic area of Laongam District where technical agencies have assisted village extension staff with advice and training on specific economic development activities identified by villagers.

Practical, field focused and relevant training methods were successful in improving staff competence

The training planned and provided by the four components of the PVD&SLU system had very similar characteristics. Provincial and district staff first received orientation or awareness raising training either at RTCs. Districts or in the target villages followed by on-the-job training on procedures, methods and practices with villagers. The on-the-job training was associated with village development activities outlined in the method development work plan. This approach ensured that theoretical training was focused and relevant and that staff practised the procedures, methods and tasks in the field.

Monitoring and evaluation was introduced and practised as an integral part of the planning and development cycle in target villages

In the past monitoring and evaluation generally received less attention than other stages in village
development. The village development and sustainable land use components have made variable progress with developing and testing monitoring and evaluation procedures and methods. Never-the-less, considerable progress has been made on four aspects of monitoring:

- Progress or activity monitoring
- Monitoring impacts of village development activities
- Monitoring staff adoption of component procedures and methods
- Monitoring the functioning and effectiveness of village committees in managing village land use agreements.

The monitoring methods include simultaneous extension follow-up and advice on activities being implemented in villages.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND METHODS

Monitoring methods have been developed or are being developed for land use planning, land allocation, extension research and JFM. In addition the program developed methods for a DAFO Management System (DMS) which aims to improve management at district level by establishing staff duty statements and routines, procedures for office management, procedures for planning and reporting on field activities and information management. Monitoring procedures and practices are embodied in the DMS, and if used properly DMS is a valuable tool for monitoring village development and extension activities.

The methods involve villagers (both men and women), village organisations and district staff in monitoring activity. Monitoring is based on the principle that those undertaking the monitoring will also be the end users of the results including villagers.

Monitoring is a tool used to provide information to review village development and sustainable land use activity being undertaken by the various village development units and personnel.

The monitoring procedures and methods being developed for each of the components in the PVD&SLU system are in different stages of development and refinement depending on the availability of resources available to devote to monitoring methods development within each of the components. The LUP/LA component has made the most progress with the development of monitoring methods because the sub-program has had technical assistance with this activity.

Monitoring is also conducted to assess the extent extension personnel are adopting the methods and practices of each of the components of the village development and sustainable land use system.

8.1 The Purposes of Monitoring

Monitoring activity has the following purposes:

8.1.1 Development of monitoring procedures and methods

- To help improve monitoring approaches, procedures and methods at village level
- To help improve the use or application of monitoring itself.

8.1.2 Application of the monitoring procedures and methods

- To help evaluate and analyse the field work done by DAFO staff.
- To help improve the field work done by DAFO staff.
- To help improve village development activities and forest and agricultural land use at village level.

The application of the procedures and methods provides information to improve decision making at the various levels concerned with village development and sustainable land use.
8.2 The Types of Monitoring

8.2.1 Progress or Activity Monitoring

This aspect of monitoring is undertaken at regular intervals to assess the level of progress of activities being conducted in the annual work plan. It has two parts;

- monitoring progress and results of staff activity against their work plans

Examples: The number of days of training completed by staff at the RTC
The number of days conducting demonstrations with villagers

- monitoring of progress and results with activities at village level

Examples: The number of on-the-job training sessions done with villagers
The number and membership of savings and loan groups formed

8.2.2 Monitoring of impacts from village development activities

This aspect of monitoring is done with villages and communities to assess both the short and long-term social, economic and environmental impacts, using interviews and discussions with village committees and separate groups of men and women.

Examples: The amount of land available to families after LUP/LA
The increase of rice yield after adoption of new rice varieties

8.2.3 Monitoring of staff adoption of component procedures methods and practices

This aspect of monitoring addresses the level of adoption by field staff of "better practises" in undertaking LUP/LA, extension, research and JFM. Indicators for the processes, procedures and methods of each of the components are used to assess the extent to which they are applied by field staff when undertaking activities at village level. This is divided into adoption of field practices and adoption of office management routines.

Examples: Are staff using the 9 stage process for LUP/LA properly
Are staff using the participatory methods for extension planning properly

8.2.4 Monitoring of the functioning and effectiveness of village committees

This aspect of monitoring assesses the level of commitment and effectiveness of the village administrative organisations and committees in the management of village development activities and forest and agricultural land. It is important in preventing inappropriate practices and to protect the promulgated village forest and agricultural land use agreement. This type of monitoring is conducted using discussions in the village and at the district office and through general observations by field staff when visiting villages.

Examples: Is the Village LUP/LA Committee implementing the Village Forest and Land Use Agreement as intended
Is the Village Committee assisting with managing the JFM Development Fund as intended

8.3 Monitoring Procedures and Methods

Procedures are specified for conducting monitoring activities for each aspect of monitoring conducted. For example if the aspect concerns the adoption by field staff of LUP/LA procedures and methods, procedures are defined to gather information, using relevant indicators, which enables an assessment of the level, effectiveness and quality of the activities used by the field staff.

A common feature of monitoring methods is that they are participatory, meaning that information is sought using dialogue between staff and/or staff and villagers.

In some cases formal questionnaires are used in interviews and in others cases key points are used to elicit
information during discussions with individuals or groups.

Methods are quite diverse and flexible including:

- individual interviews with staff and farmers
- subjective monitoring using group interviews with different social groups including men and women
- whole village meetings to understand village perspectives
- comparisons between control villages and project villages
- discussions and observations

9. RELATIONSHIP TO GOL LAWS, GOVERNMENT POLICY AND REGULATIONS

9.1 Laws

The Laws most relevant to the village development and sustainable land use system are the Forestry Law and the Land Law. These have particular relevance to the LUP/LA component as they state the requirements for village level forest and land allocation. These laws reaffirm the commitment of the government to providing forest use rights to communities and land use rights to individuals through a process of forest and land allocation.

The Family and Property Laws confirm the government’s intention to allocate land rights fairly to both men and women. These Laws recognise the traditional land inheritance systems and protect the land ownership rights of women in marriage.

9.2 Policies and the Strategic Vision for the Agricultural Sector

The LSFP has concentrated on developing procedures and methods for use at provincial and district levels which if adopted would be effective tools in implementing four of the eight National Priority Programs in the Socio-economic Development Plan and four of the six programs in the Agriculture and Forestry Sector Development Plan.

A summary of the components of the PVD&SLU system which are relevant to the National and Ministerial programs is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Priority Programs</th>
<th>Most Relevant Components of the PVD&amp;SLU System</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning Approach</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. GOL/MAF Planning and Decentralisation</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Extension; JFM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sustainable Upland Development</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Sloping Land Research; Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Shifting Cultivation</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Sloping Land Research; Extension</td>
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<tr>
<th>Agriculture and Forestry Sector Programs</th>
<th>Most Relevant Components of the PVD&amp;SLU System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Food production</td>
<td>Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Sloping Land Research; Extension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Agric. and Forestry Research</td>
<td>Sloping Land Research; Extension; JFM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Human Resources Development</td>
<td>LUP/LA; Extension; Sloping Land Research; JFM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The procedures of each of the PVD&SLU components addresses the policies and strategies of the National Priority Programs indicated above. They would also be effective in implementing the programs and priorities to achieve the outputs as documented in the Government’s Strategy Vision for the Agricultural Sector.

9.3 Regulations

Regulations on Forest-Land Classification, Land Use Planning and Land Allocation have been drafted with the assistance of the LUP Sub-program. The regulations will be a valuable tool in facilitating the implementation of forest and land zoning at the national and provincial levels and LUP/LA at the district and village level. The adoption of the regulations will also facilitate the promulgation of practical guidelines and instructions for the implementation of these activities which are critical for sustainable forest and agricultural land use. Facilitation of their review and adoption is therefore a priority issue in facilitating sustainable forest-land use at village level.

10. SUSTAINABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY

It is difficult to quantify sustainability and affordability without an economic assessment. However, in the absence of such an assessment, the following observations are made which indicate that the adoption of the procedures and methods of the components of the system may improve the potential for sustainability and enhance affordability.

10.1 Sustainability

10.1.1 Land Use Planning and Land Allocation

The LUP/LA procedures are sustainable as they have been adopted and institutionalised by the GOL for use throughout the country and will be applied in all areas. The LSFP program has been making adaptations to the eight-stage procedure to include other important activities, including the secure storage of LUP/LA information and the establishment of Land Allocation Record Books at the DAFO level. These two activities are very important in maintaining permanent and lasting records of maps, reports, data, and the land use certificates issued to families. Should they not be adopted in the procedures the future of the LUP/LA program will be in jeopardy because follow-up and monitoring work has indicated that these records are being damaged and/or lost in most cases. Sustainability of the program will therefore be enhanced if the GOL adopts these procedures.

10.1.2 Extension

The procedures and methods tested and described for participatory extension are very compatible with the GOL vision and policy for the agriculture sector at provincial, district and village levels. The village administrative organisations, with assistance from district staff, will be responsible for preparing “whole village plans” which will be incorporated in District Plans. The village plans will be responsive to both GOL policy and community needs and opportunities. These plans will also be consistent with country agro-ecological zonings and village forest-land use zoning and agricultural land allocation. The extension procedures and methods support very well these GOL criteria because they are participatory, responsive to policy and provide for district extension support and follow-up for the village plans. They therefore have a high potential for sustainability if incorporated in regular GOL planning and village development procedures.

Another aim of the GOL vision and policy is to move towards integrated district level extension services comprised of the various rural development sectors, within which DAFO staff would play an important role. This policy includes developing a responsive, integrated and interdisciplinary extension service at district level. The participatory extension model fits this objective because it includes:

- A core process for preparing village plans based on participatory planning, and
- An integrated extension support system which has four functions:
  
  Village community strengthening
  
  Technology testing and development
  
  Technology dissemination
  
  Village finance provision and management.
The procedures and methods in the extension model for providing finance for village development activities uses S&L group ownership with limited and selective financial support from government or other sources. This has the effect of placing the responsibility for finance and credit management in the hands of villagers and provides the potential for reducing the amount of funding required from government or outside sources. This is perceived as a very cost effective and sustainable approach to financing village development activities. Village savings groups provide steppingstones and pathways to sustainable land use in areas where institutional forms of credit are not readily available.

10.1.3 Joint Forest Management

JFM is a sustainable approach because it involves villagers, DAFO and PAFO in forest management, has sustainable harvesting plans, provides tangible benefits for communities in return for efforts made in sustainable forest management and protection, while providing GOL with benefits from taxes and royalties. Staff also receive incentives for participating in the work. It provides sustainable forest protection simultaneously.

Conjecture exists concerning the compatibility of the JFM model in relation to the intent of the Forestry Law, one argument being that the approach does not distribute benefits from harvested timber widely enough outside the communities involved. Should this argument prevail the sustainability of the approach would be severely compromised.

However the JFM has other attributes which make it an attractive approach for involving villagers in sustainable production forest management while complying with government policy and legislation;

- Ownership of the forest resource is vested in the State
- Management and use of the forest resource is decentralised to provincial, district and village level stakeholders
- JFM fosters livelihood development activity which has the potential to lessen pressure on forest resources
- Benefits from harvesting in any village are distributed between all villages involved in the JFM production plan
- Taxes and royalties collected by the Government can be distributed to villages outside the JFM production forest area
- Revenues from JFM have the potential to reduce the government rural development burden
- Investments are made in village development and community infrastructure

10.1.4 Research

The Thong Khang Research Station which plays a primary role in sloping land research in shifting cultivation areas, has now been integrated into the Forestry Research Centre with the National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI). This assures that it’s operation is not totally dependent on “Project” assistance as it will receive financial support from NAFRI for which a research strategy and long term plan is being developed. Thus this station will be able to make a continuing contribution to sloping land research in shifting cultivation areas.

10.2 Affordability

10.2.1 Research

The LSFP adaptive research-extension approaches make technology development and options more affordable because they are focused on real problems and needs identified with communities. The testing is done by research and extension staff with farmers simultaneously which reduces costs because land use options are being assessed by farmers while trials are proceeding.

10.2.2 Extension

The LSFP extension model encourages farming communities to express their perceived problems and opportunities, encourages farmers to participate in finding solutions to problems and to capitalise on opportunities by gaining access to resources. This encourages self-reliance and ownership which has the potential to reduce government inputs for extension. Extension inputs would therefore be relatively simple, affordable, focused and productive, and thus cost benefit effective.
The advocated “whole village” extension approach involves not only selected “model farmers” but a cross-section of farmers who show an interest in testing and evaluating promising technologies. Such an approach is compatible and consistent with the cost benefit effective approach successfully demonstrated in lowland irrigated farming systems by the Pilot Extension Project.

10.2.3 Land Use Planning and Land Allocation

The LUP/LA procedures themselves appear to be sustainable however the question of affordability is a concern. The comprehensive procedure for LUP/LA is relatively expensive if all stages are undertaken each time LUP/LA is conducted.

The identification of priorities for LUP/LA would permit flexibility in choosing an appropriate level of intervention. It would result in more effective use of available LUP/LA funds at district level. In areas of very low priority LUP/LA may not be necessary because little or no benefit will result from the effort and expense. In areas of very high priority resources could be concentrated and a higher level of intervention applied as the benefits will be substantial.

The table below provides an indication of how priorities could be established and appropriate levels of LUP/LA intervention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appropriate Procedure</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reasonable staff resources available Critical area or focal area Very high land demands Very high population Land value high (economic cropping well established) Type 1 NBCA villages Obvious land degradation</td>
<td>Delineate village boundaries Complete land use zoning Prepare village agreements in groups of villages Undertake land allocation Intensive extension activity</td>
<td>Very high priority All steps in the LUP/LA procedure conducted. Extension is focused on management of zones, population management and agricultural land productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Moderate staff resources available Semi-critical or focal area High land demands High population pressure Type 1 NBCA villages Some land degradation Economic cropping on the increase</td>
<td>Delineate village boundaries, Complete land use zoning in groups of villages Complete village agreements in groups of villages High extension activity</td>
<td>High priority Village management agreements are the framework for management planning Focus extension on management of land use zones and productivity in the agricultural land use zone LA is done after land use zone management systems are established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Scarce district resources Types 2 and 3 NBCA villages Semi-critical area Moderate land demands Moderate population pressure</td>
<td>Delineate village boundaries in groups of villages Complete land use zoning in groups of villages Moderate extension activity</td>
<td>Moderate priority Establish land use management zones in villages and resolve land disputes Land allocation can be planned for a later date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Very scarce district resources Very isolated subsistence level villages Non-critical area Low land demands Low population pressure Types 3 and 4 NBCA villages</td>
<td>Delineate village boundaries in groups of villagers Limited extension activity</td>
<td>Low Priority Establish village management areas and resolve boundary disputes Land allocation not necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

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Jones, P.R. (July 1995) Participatory Land Use Management Planning: Consultant’s Report, Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry, Lao PDR.

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Hansen, P.K and Houmchitsavath Sodarak. (November 1996) Land Use and Demographic Conditions in the Target Areas of the Lao Swedish Forestry Program: Paper presented at the planning meeting on measurement of institutional development, Department of Forestry, Vientiane.


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Jones, P.R. (June 1999) Monitoring Method Development Activity; A Summary of Observations and Results from No 7 and No 10 Villages in Xieng Ngeun District of Luang Prabang. Lao Swedish Forestry Program.

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Programme in Lao PDR, Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

Trethewie, R.J. (June 1997) Assessment of Promotion Bank Activity in Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme Target Areas. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

Flint, C (December 1995 to July 1997) Field Visit Reports. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.


Anon., ( ) Village Profile Data Collection Form; Lao and English versions. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

Trethewie, R.J. (October 1998), Methodologies Development for Village Financial Services: Background Paper, Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.


Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.


Anon., (January 2001) Training Course Curriculum Module 1- (): A course curriculum document prepared by the Northern and Southern Regional Training Centres. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

Anon., (January 2001) Training Course Curriculum Module 2- (): A course curriculum document prepared by the Northern and Southern Regional Training Centres. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

Anon., (January 2001) Training Course Curriculum Module 3-Participatory Extension: A five segment course curriculum document prepared by the Northern and Southern Regional Training Centres. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

**Sloping Land Research**


Key Shifting Cultivation Research Sub-Program Reports

TR 1 Agro-forestry Research for Development in Shifting Cultivation Areas of Laos, SCR - Sub-Programme, 1996. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

TR 2 Environment, Socio-economic Conditions and Land-use in Ban Thong Khang Subdistrict, Northern Laos, SCR - Sub-Programme, 1996. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

TR 3 Land allocation - The Experiences of the Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation Sub-Programme, SCR - Sub-Programme, 1998. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

TR 4 Land-use and Demographic Indicators for the Target Areas of the Lao Swedish Forestry Programme, SCR - Sub-Programme, 1996. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

TR 5 Selected Socio-economic Data of Luang Prabang Province, SCR - Sub-Programme, 1997. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

TR 6 Potentials and Constraints on Shifting Cultivation Stabilisation in Northern Laos. SCR - Sub-Programme, 1997. Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.

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Joint Forest Management 1 and 2


Anon., (November 1997) Dong Kapho State production Forest; 5-10 Years Harvesting Plan, (translated from Lao). Lao Swedish Forestry Program, Department of Forestry.


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