

Detailed Gender Analysis

Project Number: 48409-004
June 2018

LAO: Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains
Sector Project

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(as of 8 June 2018)

Currency unit	–	Laotian kip (LAK)
LAK1.00	=	\$0.00012
\$1.00	=	LAK 8,381.19

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
DAFO	-	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
EA	–	executing agency
GAP	-	gender action plan
ha	–	hectares
IA	–	implementing agency
LDC	–	least developed country
MAF	–	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
NPMO	-	National Project Management Office
NSEDP	–	8 th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020)
PAFO	-	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office

NOTE

In this report, "\$" refers to United States dollars.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Brief project background and key gender concerns

1. This report presents the detailed gender analysis undertaken during the preparation and design of the Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project (CFAVCP) in Lao PDR.

2. The proposed CFAVCP will invest in pro-poor and inclusive agricultural value chains in three countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Myanmar).¹

3. The project's impact will be enhanced productivity, quality, value addition and rural household income in the project areas of Lao PDR (Vientiane Province and Capital, Khammouane, Saravane, Savannakhet, Sekong, and Champasack Provinces). The outcome will be more efficient resource utilization and climate resilience for competitive and inclusive agribusiness value chains in Lao PDR, through the provision of (i) improved and climate-resilient critical production and post-harvest infrastructure (ii) reducing energy costs by promoting renewable energy use and (iii) offering targeted agribusiness policy and capacity support services.

4. The approach to project preparation included identifying a small number of core / representative subprojects based on established criteria (e.g. contribution to food security, energy security, water security, environmental sustainability, positive social impacts) and through stakeholder consultations. Lao PDR has experience in sector modality in terms of identifying and realizing subprojects during project implementation, and has (i) an agricultural sector development plan, (ii) reasonable institutional capacity to implement the plan, and (iii) suitable policies applicable to the sector. Furthermore, capacity building will be integral to the investment.

5. Under the Lao PDR PPTA three subprojects have been identified and feasibility studies were conducted. Gender analysis of the three subprojects were carried out and the findings which are presented below were used in developing gender action plan (GAP) recommendations. The subprojects are:

- Khammouane Development Rice Millers Group: Upgrading of the Vanida Rice Mill Feasibility Study, Laophokham Village, Thakhek district, Khammouane Province
- Vegetable Producers Group for Export (Khum Pralit Peudpak Pheua Kan Song – Ok): Vegetable Collection Point and Pack House Feasibility Study, Thongset Village, Pakxong District, Champasack Province
- Upgrading the Dongxiengdee State Enterprise Bio-fertilizer Factory Representative Subproject Feasibility Study, Dongxiengdy Village, Naxaythong District, Vientiane Capital.

6. The social development consultant team undertook participatory assessments in these three areas, and the gender analysis findings are presented in this report. The gender issues of the target populations were analyzed to better understand the context and conditions of the target beneficiaries in the subproject areas. In addition, the proposed subprojects were discussed with male and female beneficiaries in order to elicit their views, opinions and recommendations for the interventions.

¹ ADB. May 2015 'Proposed Loans and Grants Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar: Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project'

B. Method used for preparing the gender analysis

7. Because of limited time allocated (1 person-month for International Specialist and 1.5 person-months for National Specialist), information concerning the beneficiary populations in the subproject areas was collected from:

- secondary data including recent social survey reports and publications;
- focus groups (both mixed gender and with women separately) with target beneficiaries;
- key informant interviews with local village leaders and Lao Women's Union representatives;
- interviews both face-to-face and by telephone with key informants;
- meetings with key Ministry of Agriculture and MAF Sub-CAW staff;
- meeting with ADB Social Sector Development and Gender Specialist; and
- meeting with International NGO, Oxfam in Vientiane Capital.

C. Summary of key gender concerns

8. The main priorities and needs cited by female farmers in the areas assessed are affordable short-term credit and all year round supplementary irrigation. Women farmers felt they still had insufficient technical skills related to productivity enhancement, insufficient information about the impact of climate change, and an inadequate understanding of market mechanisms and how to respond effectively to market information.

9. In terms of class and wealth status, the subproject target populations are largely homogeneous, but both ethnic minority (particularly Laven) households and female-headed households are reportedly poorer² than households with adult males and are constrained by labor shortages.

10. Women are key actors in value chains especially for rice and vegetable production. They are producers, collectors/intermediaries and rice millers, and own and operate their own brokerage and trading enterprises. Both men and women are active in marketing agricultural and livestock produce and both are able to take responsibility for selling produce.

11. Concerning property rights, women are treated equally with men and land titles are in the names of both the husband and wife, thus giving women joint access and control to land and capital together with their husbands. In addition, the wife is generally solely responsible for managing household finances but the husband is generally the decision maker for large investment expenditures. Even though both women and men are equally able to access markets to find out current prices, it is mainly men who do so. Instead, there is evidence that women are now accessing market information from their mobile phone (footnote 2).

12. Women in Champasack province (Feasibility Study 2) are increasingly taking responsibility for driving small tractors and trucks to transport produce.

13. While there are specific gender concerns in each subproject area which are described below, male and female farmers explained that the overriding priority was to acquire sufficient irrigation water for agricultural cropping purposes. Lack of year round water is a major constraint in all target areas. This impacts women's livelihoods because without year-round water, farmers are entirely dependent on only one rainfed cropping season as the source of annual household income. Persistent low levels of trust between value chain actors such as farmer-producers and

² Anecdotal data from interviews conducted in July 2016

collectors/intermediaries, were sometimes reported by male and female farmers. This is a substantial constraint to efficiency and innovation in the selected value chains.

14. The CFAVC project will be implemented in the same provinces as the previous Smallholder Development Project (PCR 1949 and 2809) and the Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Productivity Enhancement Project (G0144/0145) The GAPs of both projects contain useful information and lessons learnt that will be used in this project particularly related to points of reference for women's participation targets.

D. Main Recommendations for the Gender Action Plan in Project Intervention Areas

15. The CFAVC GAP mirrors the DMF and has links to MAF Gender Policy, particularly Gender Strategy Output 2.5.4 – increasing the participation of women in decision-making, and Goal 2.4.4 – increasing participation of women in technical training. The proposed project is categorized as effective gender mainstreaming and will involve activities that will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. The project will partner with MAF – Division for the Advancement of Women (Sub-DAW) and Lao Women's Union as key collaborators and implementer for the GAP.

Output 1: Critical agribusiness value chain infrastructure improved and made climate-resilient

16. In subprojects where there are civil works related to infrastructure (Feasibility Studies 1, 2 and 3), contractors will prioritize and report on the use of local unskilled labor sex-disaggregated data. Contractors will uphold the core labor standards, including not employing child labor. Men and women will receive equal pay for equal work. The specific baseline and targets for every infrastructure subproject will be established at inception and included in the subproject GAP using data and statistics from previous and ongoing irrigation projects in the country.

17. Stronger links between small farms operated by women in subprojects 1 and 2 and the agro-processing and agribusiness industry are to be facilitated by the implementing agency through productive partnerships (e.g., contract farming), training in business and other skills, and improved provision of market information.

18. Gender analysis of value chains and agribusiness policy will be conducted by the project during implementation.

19. Gender empowerment and awareness training will be provided in all subproject areas³ as well as awareness raising on land-titling rights, legal rights, the impact of agrochemicals, the risks of HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, gender division of labor, decision making and access to and control of resources

20. Promotional campaigns in all subproject areas will be implemented related to introducing biofertilizers for crop production.

Output 2: Climate-smart agriculture and agribusiness promoted

21. Women will have the opportunity to be trained to operate a range of agricultural machinery such as rice seedling transplanting machinery in all subproject areas, representing at least 50% of the increased labor pool over baseline by end of project (baseline is 0).

³ Recommendation of Social Development and Gender Specialist, ADB Resident Mission, Vientiane. July 2016

22. In all subproject areas, women's skills to prepare for climate-related disasters and build resilience to impacts will be developed. All women in target areas will have access to information on climate change mitigation, improving climate resilience and resource efficiency.

23. Agricultural extension activities related to irrigated rice production (Feasibility Study 1), and fresh vegetable production (Feasibility Study 2) processing and trading in project intervention areas should become more gender sensitive. Hiring and training of more female extension workers, the use of visual aids, varied information and communication technologies to improve extension outreach, and promotion of more active participation of women in management of farmer production groups, are measures to empower women and bring economic benefits.

Output 3: Enabling environment for climate-smart agribusiness enhanced

24. Gender stakeholders (MAF Gender Unit and gender focal points) will participate in policy committees and meetings.

25. Implementation of all the GAP activities is aligned and meant to support implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development 2016-2025. This also entails partnering with Sub-CAW and LWU as facilitators, and for awareness-raising and information sharing targeted at farmers including provision of market information.

II. GENDER IN NATIONAL CONTEXT (GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN LAO PDR)

26. The Lao People's Democratic Republic ranks 88 on the UN Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and 122 on the UN Human Development Index (HDI).⁴ Government policies combined with rapid economic modernization have supported the steady advancement of women's status in Lao PDR, particularly in urban areas.

A. Institutional and Legislative Environment

27. The Lao legal and policy framework for the promotion of gender equality includes the Constitution and various specific gender-related laws. As stipulated in the revised Constitution of 2003 and other laws, women and men have equal rights in all spheres: political, social-cultural, and family. The National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy—the government's national development plan—emphasizes gender as a cross-cutting priority. Several laws have been introduced or revised to guarantee women's rights: the 2004 Law on Development and Protection of Women designed to protect women's rights and interests and to ensure equality between women and men, the 2005 amendment of the Penal Law (article 177) criminalizing discrimination against women, a 2006 revision of the Labor Law, and the 2009 revised Family Law. The National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) has developed the National Gender Equality Development Plan for 2016-2020 and the long-term vision to 2030 which include specific gender targets for a range of sectors.

28. Three main institutions are responsible for gender-related work: National Commission for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) and Lao Women's Union (LWU) are the main institutions responsible for monitoring Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) implementation, mainstreaming gender into various sectors, ensuring social justice and combatting violence against women. The work of NCAW and LWU also includes coordinating the gender-related work of line ministries and development partners, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of national strategies and action plans, and conducting advocacy programs on

⁴ United Nations Development Program. 2010. *Human Development Report 2010*. New York.

gender issues. The gender agenda is transformative, but requires other ministries and departments to implement it, since gender is a cross-cutting issue. Within the country's political structure and hierarchy, the gender-related institutions do not necessarily have the leverage or influence to bring about fundamental changes. NCAW still lacks critical capacity, resources, and institutional support to effectively carry out its mandate.

29. The LWU is mandated to protect women's rights and interests, promotes and monitors the implementation of women's development programs, and acts as a link between the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the government, and Lao women from urban and rural areas.⁵

30. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus of the National Assembly reviews and drafts laws on gender, monitors laws on women and children, and monitors the policy on gender equality.

1. Gender Mainstreaming Status in Public Decision-making

31. In 2011 the proportion of women holding government administrative positions (i.e. Ministerial Level) was 10.3% (while in Cambodia it was 9.7% and in Viet Nam - 4.2%). Lao PDR has one of the highest proportions of women in national parliaments, well above the world average. The percentage of women in the National Assembly is 25% (with a female President of the National Assembly); a proportion that also compares favorably with the People's Republic of China - 21.3%, and Cambodia – 21.1%.

32. The government's goal as expressed in the Resolution of the IX Congress of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party and the VII 5-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan of the Government was that there should be at least 30% female representation in politics and at least 15% of decision making positions at all levels should be held by women. However, the proportion of women in decision making institutions within the government is still low (5% as of 2012).⁶

33. Women still remain underrepresented in senior and decision-making positions in the government (footnote 5). There are only two female ministers and a third woman in an equivalent position (as President of LWU); one female vice minister, and five equivalent positions filled by women. Progress in women's representation in the central government has not filtered down to provincial and local governing bodies, which are mostly made up of men.⁷ In 2008, 40% of the country's 109,359 civil servants were women. Disproportionately few women advance to senior positions even though most male and female civil servants have similar educational qualifications.

34. To increase the number of women in decision making positions in the public sector, the government has developed a Gender and Governance Sector Strategy. At local level, 98% of village heads are men, although the LWU is represented in village councils. There are no data on the private sector.

2. Lao Women Parliamentarians Caucus

35. The Lao Women Parliamentarians Caucus (LWPC) represents the rights and benefits of Lao women and children of all ethnic groups. It acts as serving body to the Standing Committee of the National Assembly with three main roles: scrutinizing gender mainstreaming in the

⁵ ADB. 2012. *Country Partnership Strategy: Lao PDR, 2012–2016 (Gender Analysis Summary)*. Manila.

⁶ UNDP. 2015. *Country Analysis Report – Lao PDR*. Vientiane.

⁷ At the provincial level, there are no female governors and only one female vice-governor. In 2009 there were only 148 female village chiefs out a total of 8,726 (1.7%), and 863 female deputy village chiefs out of 17,128 (5%). (taken from ADB Gender Analysis (Summary) Country Partnership Strategy: Lao PDR, 2012-2016

processes of formulating laws related to gender equality, promoting the advancement of women, women and children's health in the context of achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

36. The plans and targets for promoting gender equality in the country include the following:⁸

- (i) Distributing leaflets to all constituencies in order to provide local and rural people in remote areas at large with correct information;
- (ii) Raising awareness and publicizing gender mainstreaming tasks in all areas of responsibilities for the general public and students in order to enable them to acquire equal knowledge at large;
- (iii) Publicizing the prevention of all forms of discrimination, the prevention of using violence against women and children to the people at large including the procedures of solving problems;
- (iv) Fostering and promoting women in remote area about how to protect their own rights and benefits and have rights to receive various policies as determined by laws such as receiving various benefits during the working time;
- (v) Supporting women living in remote areas to dare to express their own opinions in families or during the village meeting time. Abolishing backward traditions and customs which negatively affect to women's health and that contradict with the Lao PDR's rules of laws;
- (vi) Supporting girls for receiving education in conformity thoroughly with statutory age for school attendance; and
- (vii) Boosting relevant sectors to implement the 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of achieving gender equality and empower women and girls.

37. The manual has the objective of improving the oversight procedures, law making and law improving methods, functioning as the representative of the Lao people as a whole, and serving all of Lao women multi-ethnic groups in particular.

3. Gender Issues in Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

38. The MAF Sub-Committee for the Advancement of Women (Sub-CAW) was established in 2002, with the Vice-Minister as the Chair; Sub-CAW Secretariat as the operational specialist unit for the advancement of women, and LWU focal point officers as the gender mainstreaming network. Progress in advancing gender equity into MAF institutions and programs has been slow. Initially committee structures were perceived as being temporary and ad hoc, and not a permanent commitment, and the Sub-CAW Secretariat was staffed only part-time and thus suffered from a shortage of human and other resources.

39. At the present time women remain underrepresented in decision making posts in the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The goal for the MAF Department of Planning and Cooperation in the 5-Year Plan for the Agriculture and Forestry Sector 2015 – 2020 is to promote gender equality. Out of a total of 120 staff positions, 44 are filled by women, representing 36.6% of the total. There are six Director General positions which are all filled by men. Of the 22 positions at the level of Director and Deputy Director of Division, there are only four women equal to 18% of the total. Of the 20 positions for Head and Deputy of Unit, there are five women, equivalent to

⁸ Manual on Gender Mainstreaming for the National Assembly VII Legislature Lao PDR: Women Parliamentarians Caucus.

25% of the total number of posts. Of the ten positions for Project Director and Deputy Director, there are only two women, equivalent to 20% of the total number of posts.

40. Data obtained from the Personnel Department of MAF revealed that in 2015 MAF had a total of 1,508 staff at the level of central Ministry. The total number of PAFO staff was 2,995 persons and the total number of DAFO staff was 5,003 persons. The total number of agricultural officers in Vientiane Province was 603; in Khammouane it was 583; in Savannakhet it was 868; in Saravane it was 464 and in Champasack it was 626 persons. On average female staff represent approximately 25.43% of total staff:

Table 1: Number of MAF staff by Province and Number of People Occupied in Agriculture Sector

Province	Total number of Agriculture office staff* and female staff	Total population occupied in agriculture sector* and number of women
Vientiane province		
Total:	603	344,500 (68% of total population)
Female:	143	167,200
Khammouane		
Total:	583	286,500 (75% of total population)
Female:	168	145,200
Savannakhet		
Total:	868	651,700 (70% of total population)
Female:	256	327,400
Saravane		
Total:	464	298,500 (89% of total population)
Female:	107	151,600
Champasack		
Total:	626	425,100 (75% of total population)
Female:	146	214,300

Source: Personnel Department, MAF. 2015

** Lao Agricultural Census 2010-2011

41. The number of people who were occupied in the agriculture sector in each province is detailed in the above table. Women represented approximately 50% of populations involved in the agricultural sector.

4. Education and gender in Lao PDR⁹

42. The gender equality gap has narrowed in recent years for all three levels of school enrolment, but challenges persist in completion of education for girls. With a gender disparity index (GPI)¹⁰ of 0.96 for primary education in 2014, gender analysis of education indicates that families are increasingly willing to send girls to primary school. However, beyond primary level, families still prioritize boys' education, and girls are more likely to be left behind, especially in rural areas. From primary and lower secondary up to upper secondary, gender disparity in enrolment progressively widens in favor of boys. Once in primary school, girls generally do better than boys. Girls stay longer, have less repetition, and are more likely to complete primary schooling than the boys. However, girls have less opportunity than boys to continue with secondary education. The GPI for graduation rates from lower secondary, although improved from 2012 (0.87), has not yet reached parity (in 2014 it was 0.94). The GPI for upper secondary graduation is still low, at 0.84.

⁹ UNDP. 2015. *Country Analysis Report – Lao PDR*. Vientiane.

¹⁰ Gender Disparity Index. A GPI of 1 means equality, GPI below 1 means a greater proportion of boys relative to girls. GPI above 1 means a greater proportion of girls relative to boys.

Girls have better school attendance rates, although their enrolment is lower than that of boys. At tertiary level, the gender equality gap is still well below parity, however, it is narrowing at a faster rate than that at secondary level. This is probably because young women who make it to tertiary level are likely to come from families where gender is less of a barrier.

43. There are two key determinants that drive the patterns of gender inequity in education; girls are more likely to be kept at home due to safety concerns and household responsibilities, especially if the secondary school is far from home. Parents do not put the same value on education for girls as they do for boys, especially if this view is part of their tradition, or if the parents are poor, or have little or no education. When GPI is calculated for primary and secondary school attendance in different socioeconomic groups and locations, the widest gap in gender equality is found among children from rural areas without road access, children from the non Lao-Tai groups, children of uneducated mothers and children of families in the poorest quintiles. This gap is much larger in secondary education: for example, for the same age group of the poorest quintiles, 66 girls attend secondary school for every 100 boys.

44. Gender disparity in young people's literacy levels has not changed significantly in recent years. In 2011-12, the GPI for literacy in the age group 15-24 years was 0.89 compared to 0.90 in 2001.¹¹ This reflects the same pattern as above, where girls have less opportunity to progress to the secondary level after primary school nor is primary schooling a guarantee of literacy. The survey found that over half (54-55%) the respondents who were illiterate had attended primary school.

5. Sexual and reproductive health

45. Lao PDR has one of the highest rates of early marriage in the region. One-third of women marry before the age of 18, while one-tenth marry before the age of 15.¹² Early marriage is often associated with early pregnancy. In 2012, 19.4 percent of reproductive-aged women had given birth by the age of 18, while 3.6% had done so by the age of 15.¹³ Both early marriage and adolescent birth have a negative impact on the education and livelihood opportunities of women.

6. Employment and gender

46. The share of women in wage employment is low in all sectors (at 35%), including in the non-agricultural sectors (34%).¹⁴ Among the unpaid workers for the family, 65% are women. The low share of women in wage employment, relative to men, is associated with lower education levels. Among those employed, 33% of employed males have completed secondary education, compared to 25% of employed females; 28% of employed females have no education, compared to 17% of employed males. Six% and 7% of employed men respectively have tertiary and technical school education, compared to 3% and 5% of employed women. Alternatively, 67% of employed females have no education or only primary education, in contrast to 54% of employed males.

¹¹ Lao Statistics Bureau, 2012. Both were literacy rates tested in surveys, rather than self-reported literacy.

¹² 37% of women aged 20-49 were married before the age of 18, while 9.3% of women aged 15-49 were married before the age of 15 (Lao Statistics Bureau, 2012)

¹³ Government of Lao PDR, Statistics Bureau. 2012. *Lao Statistics*. Vientiane.

¹⁴ The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicator, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sectors is expressed as a percentage of female workers within the total wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. Wage employment refers only to wage earners and salaried employees, or persons in paid employment jobs. It does not include employers. (ILO definition for the MDGs). In Lao PDR this is 34%. However, this is not appreciably different from the share of women in wage employment in all sectors, which is calculated to be around 35%.

47. An equal share of men and women make up the working population,¹⁵ but women generally occupy the lower rungs of the labor market. Women are relatively more excluded from formal sectors and the social protection that this brings. Sixty four percent of workers in the elementary occupations¹⁶ and 63 percent of those classified as service, shop and market sales workers are women. Alternatively, men account for the majority of civil servants, professionals, and technicians. Although women have significant roles in agriculture, they have less access to and control of farming inputs and credit (this is discussed below).¹⁷ Women account for only 23 percent of all employers,¹⁸ more often of small enterprises, rather than medium to large firms.¹⁹

48. Women undertake multiple roles and begin working at an earlier age, which affects their well being. Women spend over four times the amount of time in housework each day (2.6 hours) than do men (0.6 hours), in addition to agricultural activities (2.3 hours for women and 2.5 hours for men).²⁰ Across all ages and locations, the proportion of economically active girls is substantially higher than that of economically active boys. In urban areas, for example, nearly 40 percent of girls aged 15-19 work; compared to 28 percent of boys of the same age. The likely causes are boys' higher participation rates in secondary and tertiary education, and a lower age of marriage for girls, especially in rural areas (footnote 17).

49. Migration for work, whether within or outside the country, entails significant risks for women. For example, in the export-oriented garment industry, labor standards are poorly enforced (footnote 17) and women often work long hours in poor conditions, suffer from poor nutrition and various illnesses.²¹ Other issues include forced overtime, underpayment of salaries, penalties for slowness and verbal abuse in the workplace. Young uneducated rural women are exposed to higher risks of violent or coercive sexual encounters, unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion (footnote 21). When the migrant goes to a foreign country, most often to Thailand the risks of abuse and exploitation are heightened.²² Many push and pull factors drive the migration, such as the desire to escape hardship and poverty, the presence of friends and relatives in the place of migration, the ease of transportation, information and media linkages, and the attraction of jobs perceived as tickets to a better life.²³

50. Female migrants who work abroad are more at risk than male migrants. The average age of female migrants is 16.5 years while it is 21 years for male migrants. 63% of female migrants

¹⁵ Females form 49.8% and males form 50.2% of those employed

¹⁶ Tasks performed by workers in elementary occupations usually include: cleaning, restocking supplies and performing basic maintenance in apartments, houses, kitchens, hotels, offices and other buildings; washing cars and windows, helping in kitchens, delivering messages or goods, carrying luggage and handling baggage and freight, collecting and sorting refuse, sweeping streets and similar places, performing various simple farming, fishing or trapping tasks; performing simple tasks connected with mining, construction and manufacturing, etc. (Extract from ILO: International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO 08, 2012).

¹⁷ Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank, 2012. Country Gender Assessment for Lao PDR: Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Opportunity. Mandaluyong City, Philippines and Washington, D.C., USA: Asian Development Bank and The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2012.

¹⁸ Lao Statistics Bureau 2010.

¹⁹ International Labour Organization, 2010.

²⁰ Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Combined 6th and 7th CEDAW reports examined at 44th Session, 2009.

²¹ CARE International. 2012. *Sewing the line: a qualitative baseline analysis of the risks and opportunities posed for young women by migration from rural Laos to Vientiane for the purpose of employment in the garment manufacturing industry*. Vientiane.

²² Thailand's language and culture similarities, as well as its proximity and affluence attract migrant workers from Lao PDR.

²³ CEDAW Committee. 2009. Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic report of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, adopted by the Committee at its forty-fourth session, 20 July – 7 August 2009. United Nations, Geneva.

are under 16 years of age, in contrast to 14% of male migrants. The younger age makes girls extremely vulnerable to labor and sexual exploitation.²⁴ Women from Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups are disproportionately represented among young migrants aged 15-25 years who go to work in Thailand (footnote 17). Women from resettled villages account for a high proportion of trafficked women.²⁵

51. Lao PDR has amended the Labor Law with important new provisions for women in occupational safety, health and maternity benefits and protection. The new law explicitly prohibits discrimination in hiring and firing of women due to pregnancy or maternity status. It also provides additional protections with regard to discrimination and equal pay. The revised labor law also states that an employee may terminate her or his employment contract and seek compensation in case of sexual harassment, but does not provide a definition of the latter. Further, the amended Law does not provide a comprehensive definition of discrimination, and does not appear to prohibit discrimination on several of the grounds required by the ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), such as religion, political opinion, race, and social origin. The ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations expressed the view that sexual harassment was a form of sex discrimination and should be addressed within the requirements of the Convention.²⁶

7. Violence against women

52. Violence against women is a common phenomenon and the impact of violence on women may include poor health, miscarriage and abortion. A recent study²⁷ showed that approximately 30% of Lao women had experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence. Lao PDR has a range of mediation and counselling mechanisms²⁸ including traditional channels. The Counselling Centre for Women and Children Protection under the Central Lao Women's Union provides counselling and temporary shelters for the victims of violence. There are also Provincial Counselling Offices, District Counselling Units and village mediation units.

53. Following the Concluding Observations made by the CEDAW Committee, Lao PDR passed the National Law on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Children in 2014 and adopted the National Action Plan on Eliminating Violence Women and Children the same year. However, an appropriate amount of budget will need to be allocated for the implementation of these instruments.

8. Women's health: Access to safe water and sanitation

54. Lao PDR's maternal mortality rate has dropped by 78% between 1990 and 2015 according to UNFPA statistics.²⁹ Since 2005, the number of maternal deaths has decreased from 450 out of 100,000 live births down to 220. Education, wealth, and ethnicity are important predictors of skilled attendance at delivery and use of antenatal care. Lack of a skilled birth attendant at delivery,

²⁴ United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2004. *Trace Study: National Survey on Human Trafficking*. Vientiane:

²⁵ UNIAP. 2008. *SIREN Human Trafficking Data Sheet: Lao PDR. Vol 1.0*. Vientiane.

²⁶ International Labour Organization (ILO). 2003. General observation on Convention No. 111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Report III (Part 1A). International Labour Conference, 91st Session, Geneva, 2003.

²⁷ Preliminary results from the 2014 National Study on Women's Health and Life Experience (provided by UN Women, Vientiane).

²⁸ Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic: Combined 6th and 7th CEDAW reports examined at 44th Session, 2009.

²⁹ UNFPA. <http://www.unfpa.org/news/maternal-death-rate-plunges-lao-pdr#sthash.60Vv2sGx.dpufi>

access to basic emergency obstetric care and hospitals, poor nutritional status of women, and food taboos during pregnancy are key factors contributing to the high maternal mortality rate.

55. Early marriage and pregnancy place young women at risk, and access to family planning and reproductive health services remains limited. While the Lao PDR remains a low prevalence country for HIV/AIDS, the disease seems to be spreading more quickly among women in the 15–29 years age group.

56. Only 23% of households in rural areas without roads have access to safe water (piped or from a protected well-water source), compared with 88% of urban households. Women are highly affected by poor access to quality water and sanitation facilities as they are primarily responsible for tasks related to household water and sanitation, taking care of sick children affected by waterborne diseases, and community environment improvements.

9. Challenges for Gender Equity in Lao PDR

57. Significant inequalities exist between urban and rural areas, geographic areas of the country (north, center, south) and between different ethnic groups, within which gender disparities and challenges are accentuated.

58. The key gender issues of ongoing concern in Lao PDR are:

- (i) high rates of maternal mortality at 405 deaths per 100,000 live births;³⁰
- (ii) a lack of access to reproductive health services;
- (iii) gender disparity at all levels of education; and
- (iv) limited access to training, financing, and opportunities for economic advancement.

59. The main challenges are:

a. Human Development

- (i) Increasing coverage and quality of health services, with a focus on remote areas and among ethnic groups, particularly in areas of maternal health, sexual and reproductive health and nutrition, and with attention to demand-side issues, and the role of men in maternal health-seeking behavior;
- (ii) Improving access to education, through investments in rural schools and educational services, to reduce gender gaps, regional disparities, and gender stereotypes in secondary and tertiary education, vocational training, and adult female literacy; and
- (iii) Increasing access to, and women's participation in, clean water and sanitation, especially in rural areas, while ensuring women's voice is reflected in design and maintenance.

b. Economic Opportunities

- (i) Pursuing a labor intensive growth strategy that expands wage labor opportunities for both women and men, especially in such emerging industries as tourism, garments textiles, and food processing and beverages;
- (ii) Expanding women's access to and control over inputs for farm and non-farm enterprises, including finance, land, agricultural extension, and business training; and

³⁰ Government of Lao, Ministry of Health Statistics. 2009.

- (iii) Improving gender mainstreaming in infrastructure investments, by expanding electricity access for poor and female headed households, expanding rural roads access, and improving benefit sharing and women's participation in design and implementation of hydropower, and mining operations.
- c. Agency
- (i) Improving capacity and institutional support for the gender mainstreaming machinery in Lao PDR, by retaining use of designated gender focal points at every level of government in each sector and including women's continued representation;
 - (ii) Supporting progress in women's representation in national and local government, by monitoring 7th NSEDP goals of 15 percent of leading posts (above district mayor level) to be held by women; and 30 percent of National Assembly members to be female; and
 - (iii) Reducing incidence of violence against women through legal reform efforts, as well as efforts to increase public awareness, and capacity of health, law enforcement and protection services staff.
- d. Emerging Areas and Risks
- (i) Through regional fora, such as the GMS Working Group on Human Resources Development, and the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT), supporting regional policy dialogue on enhancing women's human capital base to capture the opportunities of, and minimize risks from, regional integration;
 - (ii) Improving outcomes for vulnerable migrant populations through legal reform, improved services, and strengthened anti-trafficking mechanisms. Improve outcomes for vulnerable migrant populations through legal reform, improved services, and strengthened anti-trafficking mechanisms; and
 - (iii) Mainstreaming gender considerations into climate change and disaster planning, and ensure that women participate in consultation and decision-making at local, regional and national levels.
- e. Gender Mainstreaming
- (i) Using sex-disaggregated indicators and targets in planning, implementation and monitoring, and strengthen capacity among government sectoral ministries in this area; and
 - (ii) Analyzing gender trends with consideration to existing rural/urban, regional and ethnic disparities in the country.

III. GENDER IN SECTORAL CONTEXT (AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT)

A. Summary of conclusions

60. The main gender issues in the CFAVC project area which are reflected in the gender analysis are given below. This information should be used adequately to identify appropriate gender interventions in this project.

- (i) Lack of affordable credit remains a major constraint to both female- and male-led micro and small agribusiness development. Regrettably, the CFAVC does not provide credit to farmers. For this reason, it will be important to support and assist farmers to identify sources of affordable credit.
- (ii) Women farmers have insufficient technical skills related to productivity enhancement; male and female farmers share important responsibilities in agriculture/production but women continue to have less access to skill development.
- (iii) Insufficient information available to farmers about the impact of climate change.
- (iv) There is inadequate understanding of market mechanisms and how to respond effectively to market information.
- (v) Ethnic minority (particularly Laven) households and female-headed households are poorer than households with adult males and are constrained by labor shortages.
- (vi) Women are key actors in value chains especially for rice and vegetable production but they face culture barrier on time use, because women are responsible for housework. Because this is a critical issue, the CFAVC project will undertake a study of how women's work burden can be reduced, and will provide recommendations.
- (vii) Because village authority leadership and decision making levels are male dominated, the project will implement gender equality and women empowerment awareness-raising activities in all target communities.

B. Climate Change

61. As a low income country with an agriculture-based economy, Lao PDR is highly vulnerable to climate change.³¹ The 7th NSEDP has estimated a 1.1 percent negative impact on GDP due to climate change.³² This is because of increasing drought and flood risk; and changes in ecosystems and decreased crop production, from a temperature rise of 1-2°C. With unpredictable floods and drought and the Mekong River bordering the country's western corridor, Lao PDR is very vulnerable to the growing risks of climate change (footnote 31). In Lao PDR women have the major responsibility for household water supply and energy for cooking and heating, and for producing the family's food, yet their voices are often excluded from local and national decision making processes about how to manage risks from natural disaster and climate change, with their gender-specific needs often overlooked. Women's roles in climate change mitigation and adaptation have been insufficiently recognized and supported. Adaptation to climate variability and climate change depends on such factors as wealth, levels of infrastructure resources and technology, and social capital and access to information, all of which are mediated by gender dynamics in the household, economy and society.³³

C. Rural characteristics

62. More than 71% of households, including 40% of urban households, report agriculture, forestry, or fishing as their main activity, and most of this work is on family-run smallholdings.³⁴ Agricultural productivity therefore remains vitally important for economic growth, poverty reduction and for women's economic empowerment. While agriculture in Lao PDR is becoming

³¹ Yusuf, A.A. and H.A. Francisco. 2009. *Climate Change Vulnerability Mapping for Southeast Asia*. Ottawa.

³² Seventh Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015). Vientiane: Government of Lao PDR.

³³ 2010 Economics of Adaptation to Climate Change: Social Synthesis Report. Washington DC: World Bank

³⁴ LECS4 2007/08.

commercialized, most farming households are still engaged in subsistence or semi subsistence production, with a gender division of labor that varies by ethnic group and regional poverty levels.

63. Increased agricultural productivity and opportunities for off-farm jobs are helping to pull some households, and select areas, out of poverty. For women in asset-poor households and areas, including those who have lost access to arable land and lack non-farm skills, the commercialization of agriculture can also increase vulnerability. Shifting from subsistence-based to market-oriented household economies can be more difficult for women in non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups whose cultural roles, limited Lao language and technical skills, leave them unprepared to engage with the market. On average, female-headed households have less household labor and productive assets than male-headed households.

D. Land rights and land titles

64. The possession of a land title is an essential prerequisite for a farmer investing to improve farm land. A land title is evidence of permanent land-use rights, which can be bought and sold, mortgaged or bequeathed. CFAVC project interventions may include upgrading irrigation schemes which use water more efficiently. Women farmers will participate in training and it is important that land tenure is understood and secure so that investments in improved irrigation are secure and that planning for the long term can be undertaken. The issue of land ownership and tenure in Lao PDR is therefore discussed in detail here.

65. In Lao PDR, women and men have equal status under the law with regard to land tenure, property ownership and inheritance rights. Land and property laws state “property that is acquired before marriage received through inheritance, or granted specifically to a particular spouse, is not considered as conjugal property”.³⁵ Land acquired by a couple is to be issued a joint land use certificate or title with co-signatures of wife and husband. The 2005 Prime Minister’s Decree 192, on compensation and resettlement for people affected by development projects, states that “All affected persons, regardless of land use right, will be entitled to compensation for lost assets at replacement cost, and provided with other assistance during the transition period, and economic rehabilitation assistance to ensure that they are not worse off due to the project”.³⁶

66. Women have benefited from increasing rates of female and joint land titling. However, to date only about one third of the country’s estimated 1.6 million registrable land parcels have been titled mainly in urban and peri-urban settings, and a significant proportion of state land remains unmapped and unregistered. Occupants of land who lack formally assigned titles remain vulnerable to eviction or expropriation without compensation.

67. There are also risks for both women and men associated with the government’s broader national policies and practices regarding village consolidation and resettlement. As the country accelerates the use of its natural resources, the number of development or investment projects (particularly hydropower, mining and agribusiness) that require significant resettlement is increasing. The government has policy in place for dealing with this (Decree 192); however, the enforcement of this policy is uneven. In addition, the government’s own village consolidation policy is resulting in both a physical relocation process and an administrative process. Women are particularly vulnerable in such settings to: losing land and use-rights; being under served by agricultural extension agents; dropping out of school at higher levels; and having higher labor burdens through increase in agricultural wage labor, or through participation in prostitution or

³⁵ Government of Lao PDR, National Assembly. 2008. *Prime Minister’s Decree No. 61/PO-Law on Land: Article 43*. Vientiane.

³⁶ Resettlement Decree 192 as described in EC (European Commission) 2011 ‘Resettlement in Laos: Final Report.’ Vientiane: SOGES

cross-border migration. UNIAP (2008) has found that the proportion of trafficked women from resettled villages is disproportionately high.

10. Intra-household rights to land and gender differences³⁷

68. Male and female children inherit equally under the Inheritance Law and the Land Law makes no gender distinctions. However, the public has limited knowledge of formal laws affecting women, especially in rural areas. Under customary rules, property passes to women mostly through inheritance. Although customary norms vary by ethnic group, both daughters and sons can inherit land under most customary systems in Lao PDR. The majority Lao-Tai group is matrilineal, meaning that the husband moves in with his wife's family upon marriage. Under this system, the wife more easily keeps ties with her family members, resources and support and tends to have more input in household decisions. Under this tradition, the youngest daughter must stay in her parents' home after she is married in order to care for them in their old age. When the parents die, the youngest daughter inherits the family homestead, and any other parcels and moveable property are divided evenly among the other children. Other groups, such as the Hmong, are patrilineal and patrilineal. Upon marriage, the wife moves in with her husband's family, and inheritance passes from father to son. Under this tradition, men control the land, and women have access to land through their husbands or male relatives.

69. As ethnic minority groups have migrated closer to urban centres and Lao-Tai villages, they have tended to move away from patrilineal traditions. Families with small holdings often cannot divide the land equally among all their children. Despite both formal and customary recognition of women's land rights, the country has been slow to issue land documents to women. As of the 1998/1999 Agricultural Census, women made up only 9% of holders of agricultural land. Although women inherited land more frequently than men, more land was titled solely in the names of men, and although half of all parcels had been acquired jointly by women with their husbands, only about 7% of parcels were documented jointly. Low levels of document issuance in the names of women have been especially prevalent in rural areas with high proportions of ethnic minorities. Women's participation is hindered by low levels of literacy and education, limited knowledge of the Lao language and the greater role that men traditionally play at public meetings. Additionally, even where jointly issued, temporary land use certificates (TLUCs) only have space for one signature, and husbands usually sign. More recently, the Government has increased efforts to include women in land rights documentation, and there are now higher numbers of land documents that include women's names, either individually or jointly. For instance, a 2006 study of nine provinces found women's names on approximately 40% of land title certificates.³⁸

E. Agricultural production and Gender division of labor in the subproject areas

- (i) Work profiles in agriculture and organization of paddy production (Feasibility Study 1 – Khammouane Development Rice Millers Group: Upgrading of the Vanida Rice Mill, Laophokham Village, Thakhek district, Khammouane Province)

70. Vanida Rice Mill currently purchases paddy from a total of 1,349 households located in Khammouane and Savannakhet provinces. The 21-member farmers' producer group in Dong Tai village situated close to the rice mill is one of the villages in Thakhek District which sells paddy to

³⁷ USAID (no date) Country Profile: Property Rights and Resource Governance. Lao PDR

³⁸ Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under Article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Combines sixth and seventh periodic report of States parties in 2008 in Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Vanida and receives good quality inputs and technical assistance from the mill. The average size of land holding per household is 1 – 2 ha.

71. Men are principally responsible for land preparation, irrigation preparation, fertilizer application, pesticide application, and hauling and transport of crops. Women are principally responsible for weeding and poultry management.³⁹ Both men and women are involved in buying farm inputs, nursery preparation and sowing rice seed, pulling transplants, planting/transplanting seedlings, harvesting, small animal management and selling farm produce.

72. Both husband and wife take active responsibility for selling farm produce such as paddy, vegetables (chilli, onion, cucumber, pumpkin, tobacco, cabbage) and livestock. Vegetables produced by the farm households are sold locally in the village market. Both husband and wife jointly decide on which livestock to raise, which farm equipment to buy and which household appliances to purchase. Paddy is mainly sold to Vanida Rice Mill and to other local collectors. The Vanida mill buyer comes directly to the village to purchase paddy and is the preferred buyer because a fair price is offered to farmers. Both male and female farmers have attended rice production training and additional technical training related to high yielding seed varieties and integrated pest management.

73. The main problem identified, shared and agreed on by male and female farmers together in Dong Tai village is insufficient water for cultivation purposes. Consequently, households are only able to grow one crop of rainfed rice per year because there is no supplementary irrigation water. Farmers would like to be able to produce two crops of paddy per year to increase household income. The local irrigation scheme is in need of rehabilitation and the main canal needs to be cement-lined.

- (ii) Work profiles in agriculture and organization of vegetable production – Feasibility Study 2 – Vegetable Producers Group for Export (Khum Pralit Peudpak Pheua Kan Song – Ok): Vegetable Collection Point and Pack House Feasibility Study, Thongset Village, Pakxong District, Champasack Province.

74. Some female vegetable farmers practicing new techniques are self taught and have recognized the financial potential of growing vegetables in greenhouses. They have observed other growers and informed themselves of advanced production methods. There are a total of six vegetable production groups in Houayset village.⁴⁰ One producer group of 24 farming households cultivates greenhouse vegetables. Some of the female farmers of the group learnt about how to cultivate greenhouse vegetables from direct observation of greenhouse cultivation in Pakse, Phonthong District, approximately 45 km away during visits to relatives. Vegetables grown in greenhouses include pumpkin, cucumber, onion, garlic, green leafy vegetable, Chinese cabbage, chilli and Swiss potato.

75. The main decision maker for coffee production is the male farmer and the main decision maker for vegetable production is the female farmer. The main difference is related to the greater degree of physical labor involved in coffee plantation establishment and related coffee-tree tasks and maintenance.

76. Men are principally responsible for land preparation for vegetable and coffee cultivation, fertilizer application, and pesticide application. Women are principally responsible for weeding, poultry and small animal management. Both men and women are involved in buying inputs, nursery preparation and sowing seeds, pulling seedlings, transplanting seedling, harvesting,

³⁹ Data collected by participatory assessment: Dong Tai November 2016

⁴⁰ Data collected by participatory assessment: Houayset July 2016

hauling produce, transportation and selling produce. Women are increasingly taking responsibility for driving tractors and small vehicles, and are familiar with machinery. However, from interviews, the numbers are still small. Both husband and wife jointly decide on household budgeting, decisions concerning children's education, which livestock to raise, and which farm equipment and household appliances to buy.

77. Women are active along the vegetable value chain. As well as being active farmers and producers, they undertake a range of supply chain functions. For example, the collection of vegetables is usually done by female collectors who receive orders from male or female clients / buyers in Vientiane and other provinces. There are six large vegetable collectors in the area – both male and female. Collectors buy cabbage from farmers at 1,000 Lao kip per kilo and they sell it at 1,500 Lao kip per kilo. One female collector also operates a packing activity and hires female workers to pack fresh cabbage into plastic sacks for transport and resale. Vegetables are usually sold in local domestic markets or to other provinces such as Savannakhet, Saravane and also to Vientiane Capital.

78. Regarding access to information and knowledge and training opportunities, female focus group participants believed that men currently have greater access to capacity building opportunities than women.⁴¹

- (iii) Work profiles in biofertilizer production - Feasibility Study 3 – Upgrading the Dongxiengdee State Enterprise Bio-fertilizer Factory, Dongxiengdy Village, Naxaythong District, Vientiane Capital:

79. The biofertilizer factory at Dongxiengdy Village, Naxaythong District, Vientiane Capital is a wholly-owned Lao state enterprise which was established in 1997. The factory's clients include farmers in several provinces of the country - Khammouane, Savannakhet, Vientiane Province, Vientiane Capital and Bolikhamsay. Biofertilizer is used in the cultivation of paddy, fruit trees, rubber trees, flowers and other crops.

80. Approximately 95% of the raw materials needed by the factory is obtained from rural areas. An important raw material is buffalo and cow dung. This is mainly supplied to the factory from farmers in four villages (Tinhphou village, Phonsavanh and Nakhouloung and Nabua) in Bolikhamsay District, Bolikhamsay Province. There are approximately 25 – 30 farm households in these villages where livestock-rearing is an important livelihood. In Khammouane province, there are four villages in two districts – Nong Bok District and Buarapha District which supplies the factory with buffalo and cow dung. Bat dung is another raw material used in the manufacture of biofertilizer. The main suppliers are a group of approximately 25 households who collect bat dung from a cave near to Nakham village, in Phuong District, Vientiane Province.

81. At village level, there are collectors who source livestock manure for sale to the factory. These collectors are generally women who act as brokers and sell the manure to larger buyers who are usually men. Local female collectors are usually aged between 35-45 years and are often village shop owners. The female village collector visits farm households explaining how many

⁴¹ Only 39% of total number of producer group training participants were women, when the target was supposed to be more than 40% (Reference: Aide Memoire; ADB Grant 0144-LAO and IFAD GRANT 0145-LAO (DSF 8025-LA) Sustainable Natural Resources Management and Productivity Enhancement Project. Project Completion Review Mission 09 January – 17 February 2017. Also, only 20% of total number of those who attended consultation meeting between PAFO, DAFO, ATECs, and research institutes were women, when the target was supposed to be at least 30% (Reference: ADB Completion Report: Project Numbers: 31351-013 and 31351-014 Loan Numbers: 1949 and 2809 June 2016. Lao People's Democratic Republic: Smallholder Development Project)

kilos of cow or buffalo manure she would like to purchase. She usually buys from farmers who have large numbers of livestock. In some localities, female collectors hire laborers to manually collect and transport manure. Laborers are both male or female, but are more commonly male. Regarding the collection of bat dung from caves, it is usually the men who work inside the cave and women work outside the cave packing the bat dung into sacks. This manure collection activity is usually carried out after crop harvesting. A gender analysis perspective indicates that there is a clear division of labor regarding the collection of bat dung from caves, with women undertaking the less physically demanding task of packing, rather than more hazardous and difficult collection of dung material. At the level of sourcing and purchasing bat dung, there is a clear gender division. Female collectors are small-scale village level operators, who do not have access to large vehicles or trucks for transporting dung large distances to factory sites.

82. **Gender division of factory employees and staff:** Following the upgrading of the factory facilities, the Director says that approximately 20 workers will be employed in the factory. Currently there are only seven employees. Of the seven permanent staff, there are four females responsible for administration; marketing; finance and manual laborer. There is equal pay for equal work. There are three male staff and all have positions of higher management: one is the factory Director, one is the Deputy Director and one is the Head of the Finance Division. The female staff member responsible for marketing is a Business Management graduate and had been working at the factory for three years.

83. One of the recommendations was that a farmer outreach program should be set up to raise awareness of the advantages of biofertilizer use in agriculture. A major advantage of biofertilizer is that it is less costly than chemical fertilizer imported from Thailand, and would therefore be especially attractive for poor farmers. The outreach team should be made up of three persons – two females and one male in order to ensure the effectiveness of communication with both male and female farmers in the village. Regular campaigns and visits to villages would provide valuable follow-up and feedback for the factory from farmers. A management committee could be established at the factory with the inclusion of female staff members to improve the effectiveness of operations; to discuss working conditions and to plan activities such as monitoring and implementing awareness campaigns.

84. **Summary.** In general, women of the Lao Lum ethnic group have a relatively high level of control over decisions related to crop (vegetable and paddy) production in feasibility study areas as decisions are made jointly with husbands. The control of household finances is usually managed entirely by women including decision making related to household expenditure (making purchases and payments) whereas decisions concerning crop and vegetable production expenditure involves the man of the household. Rural women of the Laven ethnic group may take more traditional roles. Out migration is not a significant phenomenon in the feasibility study areas and decision-making patterns have not changed as a result of out-migration.

F. Contract farming

85. Evidence from a recent study suggests that contract farming is a strategy with good potential to modernize agriculture and reduce rural poverty in Lao PDR. The government has promoted contract farming (i.e. a verbal or written agreement between farmers and processors/traders regarding production and outputs under agreed future prices), as a strategic policy to improve farm income and modernize agriculture. Contract farming generally operates in the form of a 2+3 modality where farmers supply land and labor, and the investor provides the capital, techniques and market. A recent study examined the impact of different contract farming

arrangements on household incomes, and to a lesser extent, on the environment.⁴² The study focused on banana, cassava and maize farming using 2+3 (with variants1), 2+3, 1+4, contract farming models respectively. In order to assess the economic impact of contract farming, the net returns from contract farming were compared with the net returns from other crop production, such as growing upland rice, Job's tear (i.e. Chinese pearl barley) and fodder maize.

86. The main problems observed from contract farming included inflated prices being given for land clearing tasks and crop inputs by the investor; unattractive land rental fees i.e. same rent being fixed for 15 years; and producers being unable to sell produce on the open market. Many farmers did not understand the details of the contracts they had signed and after a few year of contract farming, many farmers were not satisfied with the contract farming process, especially in the case of banana and cassava production. Despite some of the problems associated with contract farming, producers were still able to show positive net returns with the exception of cassava production. Cassava proved to be the most challenging case since farmers were also required to provide capital.

87. Farmers generally lack important business skills and sufficient knowledge of contract farming arrangements when negotiating terms of the contract. This has led to farmers being exploited through unfair pricing, prohibited sales and diversion of most of the risk to the farmer. Contract farming of banana and maize showed the most promising net returns. The net impact of contract farming measured as a percentile of the poverty line, varies greatly however between the different crops. Despite some of the disadvantages associated with contract farming, most cases demonstrated financial gains above the poverty line with the exception of cassava. However, the study did not analyze differences between men and women involved in contract farming and whether women farmers faced any specific disadvantages.

88. The contract farming study showed that in general, practices are in line with government policy but that there are weaknesses which have let to farmers being exploited. With the exception of contracted cassava production, contract farming can lead to reductions in rural poverty.

89. Regarding the impact on the environment, it was concluded that the economic costs of contract farming may outweigh the economic gains unless appropriate protection measures are in place and adhered to. Fair and transparent contract templates should be used and contracts should adequately incorporate social and environmental concerns. Farmers also need to participate in the formulation of contracts and both farmers and agribusinesses should be monitored for compliance according to policy requirements and regulations.

IV. GENDER ISSUES IN PROJECT CONTEXT (AGRIBUSINESS VALUE CHAINS - PRODUCTION TO MARKETING)

A. Women and value chain functions and market access

90. The following value chain diagram illustrates the main phases of crop production and marketing:

⁴² Ministry of Planning and Investment, National Economic Research Institute. 2015. *Development Strategy and Master Plan Research Division Poverty Environment Initiative: The Impact of Contract Farming on Poverty and Environment in Lao PDR*. Vietniane.

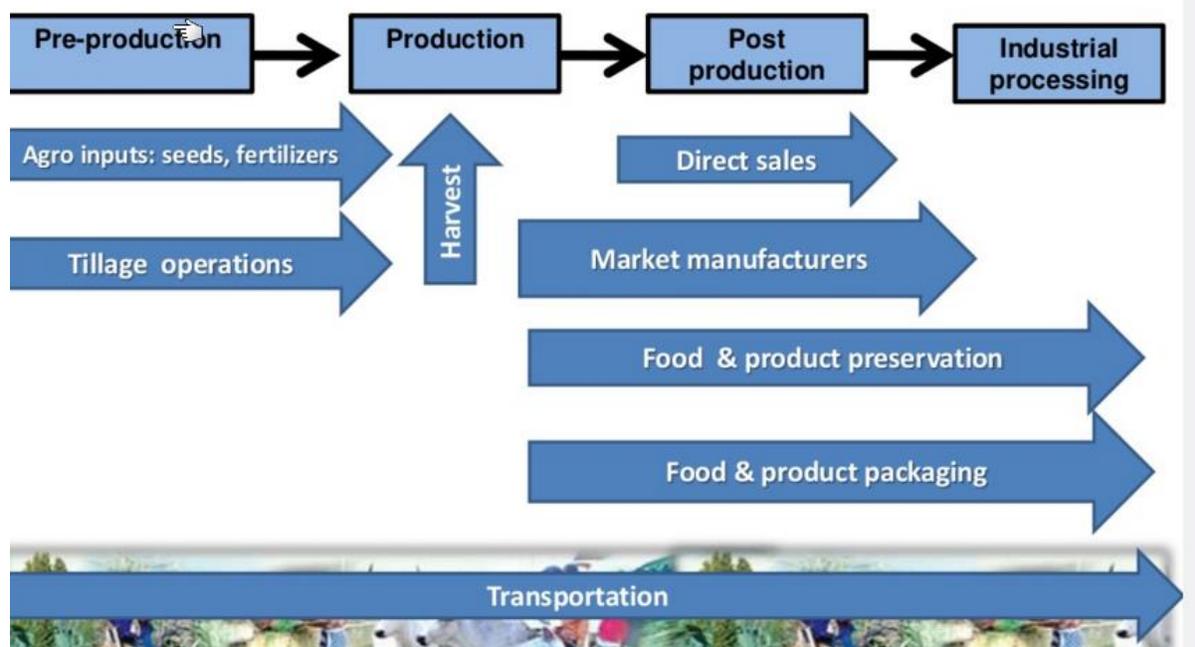


Figure 1: Value Chain Diagram

91. Women in Lao PDR are important value chain actors and provide labor inputs for pre-production, production and post production tasks and functions, thereby creating significant value added. The visual presentation presented above is useful to analyze where women are currently concentrated in the VC for each subproject and is used in identifying opportunities for more targeted women empowerment. As described in earlier sections, farm women are jointly involved with their husbands in several pre-production tasks such as nursery preparation, purchasing agro inputs, harvesting and transporting produce. As collectors, women are also responsible for direct sales of crops industrial processing or export. This is particularly true for paddy production (Feasibility Study 1) and vegetable production (Feasibility Study 2). For Feasibility Study 3, local village collectors act as brokers for the sourcing and movement of animal dung for biofertilizer plants.

92. The CFAVC project will produce more detailed and gendered value chains for each product to identify where women are concentrated, and how to increase their presence in higher value steps of the value chain.

93. From gender assessments carried out in the subproject areas, it was found that women own and operate farming enterprises in feasibility study areas 1 & 2 and are:

- (i) crop collectors/intermediaries at village, district and province levels;
- (ii) rice mill owners and operators at district levels; and
- (iii) wholesalers and retailers.

94. As their production and collection operations have expanded, they have acquired trucks for transporting vegetable produce. Frequently, the hauling and transporting functions are interchangeable between husband and wife. Financial operations and management is traditionally the responsibility of women.

95. The buying and selling of vegetables level is normally a woman-to-woman transaction between the farm household and collector. Inside the household, both husband and wife decide on where to sell crops and to whom and it is then usually the responsibility of the wife to contact the collector and find out about the current market price. Relations between female collectors and female producers were satisfactory and producers were able to check current market prices for themselves by mobile phone.

96. When interviewed, female collectors explained that they had learned their skills from other family members, and they were motivated by the desire to educate their children and improve their family's living standards.

97. The price offered to farmers by female collectors and brokers is dictated by their clients who own wholesale enterprises or mills, plus a small mark up for themselves. In Pakxong district, female collectors are also frequently approached by ethnic minority farm households (Laven) for working capital loans.

B. Access to credit

98. Most Lao households rely on informal networks of family and friends for credit, and borrowing from moneylenders is less common. In 2006, only approximately 6.5% of the country's population aged 15-64 belonged to organizations providing microfinance.⁴³ Since 2007 however, 11 new commercial banking licenses have been issued in the country, including banks that have experience with reaching poorer borrowers. Microfinance in Lao PDR has a strong female client base. According to the 2006 Lao Rural and Microfinance Statistics, microfinance schemes only covered slightly more than one-third of the villages surveyed, such as those run by development projects, government agencies, banks and NGOs.⁴⁴ Microfinance schemes are mostly semi formal and as data on informal saving groups demonstrated, more women than men participate. Women make up 61% of microfinance savers nationally. The average size of individual women's microfinance savings (204,000 LAK) is almost twice that of men's (106,000 LAK) (footnote 43). The difference may be due partly to the Lao Women's Union well-developed service network.⁴⁵

99. The northern region of Lao lags behind other parts of the country in terms of microfinance activity. In the central region, female clients' savings are seven times that of male clients. In the south, even though the numbers of female and male clients are not very large, female savers are twice as numerous as male savers and save five times more than men. In the north, the amounts of saving by women and men are similar. This is likely due to the fact that many microfinance providers in this region offer services to households rather than specifically targeting women. Additionally, projects and funds initiated by women's groups are less widely organized in the north than in other parts of the country.⁴⁶

100. For many women, the cultural stigma associated with debt and low levels of financial literacy are barriers to credit access. Evidence gathered in Vientiane Capital in 2003 from a number of large markets demonstrates that women avoid financial formalities to get loans and lack confidence to enter formal banking institutions.⁴⁷ They prefer to get quick loans from

⁴³ National Economic Research Institute (NERI). 2006. *Rural and Microfinance Statistics in the Lao PDR*. Vientiane.

⁴⁴ The survey covered about 90 percent of all villages in Lao PDR (NERI 2006). 3,420 of the 9,111 villages surveyed had microfinance coverage.

⁴⁵ LWU reports that in 2008 it supported 1,142 savings groups, which averaged 100 members and savings of nearly 115 million LAK per group.

⁴⁶ National Economic Research Institute (NERI). 2007. *Rural and Microfinance Statistics in the Lao PDR*. Vientiane.

⁴⁷ LWU, GRID and ILO. 2003. *Gender, Microfinance, and Income Generation Activities*. Vientiane.

moneylenders offering simple loan procedures, or join informal savings schemes and credit groups.

101. Due to these preferences and lack of familiarity with formal banking, women often depend heavily on their husbands to access capital. Few women are aware that they can use their land as collateral for loans from banks. Many women take a loan in their husband's name, as husbands often have greater financial literacy and are more comfortable with formal banking procedures, including loan repayment.

C. Access to irrigation

102. In the areas of proposed project feasibility studies, there were no water users groups present. In Dong Tai village (Nong Bok district, Khammouane Province) the irrigation scheme which is supposed to serve the community is in disrepair, and farming households are only able to produce one crop of rainfed paddy per year. In Houayset village, Pakxong District, Champasack Province, there is no functioning irrigation scheme and farmers rely on water from tubewells for vegetable production.

103. However even where there are irrigation schemes, women are often left out of key irrigation management decisions since they are not nominal landowners—a common prerequisite for membership of irrigation water user groups.⁴⁸ Recent project results in Lao however, indicate that increased active participation by women in irrigation activities and food production reduces poverty and raises food security. The ADB-financed Northern Community-Managed Irrigation Sector Project, implemented from 2004 to 2011, contributed to reducing absolute poverty from 64% in 2005 to 40% in 2009 in 11 remote, mountainous and poor districts in five northern provinces of Lao PDR. Women were involved in all aspects of project planning and implementation from village consultations to establishment and participation in water user user associations (WUAs) and farmer producer groups.

104. Water projects designed and implemented with the full participation of women have been found to be more effective than those without. A further study by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Gender and Water shows that when women are trained to contribute to asset management there is greater sustainability of assets due to improved operation and maintenance.⁴⁹ Similarly, some ADB supported projects designed to increase women's decision making in community-based organizations (CBOs), such as water user associations, farmer groups, self-help groups, and sanitation committees, have led to improvements in community water infrastructure, water supply, and sanitation (footnote 5).

D. Access to training

105. There are proven linkages between actions which increase women's access to technical training, inputs, and financial services, and women's economic empowerment, because of their contribution to the reduction of household poverty in rural areas. ADB-funded development programs in Lao PDR have mainstreamed gender through project-specific GAPs, targets, and indicators that have promoted women's participation, empowerment, and access to benefits (footnote 5). The ADB Smallholder Development Project aimed to establish sustainable

⁴⁸ F. Sugden. 2014. *Feminization of Agriculture, Out-Migration and New Gender Roles: An Imperative to Change Conventional Engagements with Women Water Users*. Presentation for Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Water Management Institute (IWMI) workshop, *From the Shallows to the Deep: Who is Taking the Lead? Women, Water and Leadership: A Workshop for Asia and the Pacific*. Manila. 13–14 February

⁴⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water. 2006. *Gender, Water and Sanitation: A Policy Brief*. New York.

commercial smallholder agriculture and associated agribusiness in 16 districts in four target provinces of Lao PDR. The project's GAP addressed identified gender gaps in agriculture extension services, agricultural cultivation, commercialization, and other productivity enhancement interventions.⁵⁰ At project completion, the prospects for sustainability for many of the FPMGs was considered positive, although the number of households participating in FPMGs during the period 2011 to 2015 fell significantly, even as the number of FPMGs rose. At completion of the additional financing, a total of 221 FPMGs were established and registered, compared to the target of 190. Within these groups, 2,222 members (17% women) received training in production, processing and packaging, while 284 members (14% women) received agribusiness and marketing training. Twenty seven percent of committee members of FPMGs were women, against a target of 20%. It was concluded in the Completion Report that while farmer groups still existed at the end of the project, it was not clear how they might expand or be replicated. The future of FPMGs would also depend on how effectively they could deepen linkages with the private sector. Extension service support was not maintained in all previous target villages after the close of the project. Despite successful adoption of new technology such as improved rice seeds, many FPMGs faced problems in overcoming credit and trade policy constraints.

V. GENDER ISSUES IN PROJECT INTERVENTION AREAS (PROVINCES, DISTRICTS AND VILLAGES)

106. Village heads in the feasibility study areas have provided socio-economic and gender-disaggregated data concerning the target communities:

107. **Feasibility Study 1** – Khammouane Development Rice Millers Group: Upgrading of the Vanida Rice Mill, Laophokham Village, Thakhek district, Khammouane Province

108. Project beneficiaries:⁵¹

109. **Vanida Rice Mill** currently buys paddy from approximately 1,349 households located in Khammouane Province and Savannakhet Province, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2 - Districts, villages and farm households supplying paddy to Vanida Rice Mill

Province	District	No. of villages	No. Households
Khammouane	Thakhek	8	278
	Nong Bok	3	232
	XeBang Phay	5	104
	Buarapha	10	250
Total	4	26	864
Savannakhet	Xayboury	5	385
Grand Total	5	31	1,249

110. The range of farm land holdings is from 0.4 ha (small) to 1.5 ha (medium) to 2 ha (considered large). Farmers are organized in farmers' producer groups with approximately 100 farmer members in each group.

111. **Dong Tai village, Nong Bok District, Khammouane Province**

112. Dong Tai village is one of the villages in Thakhek District which sells paddy to Vanida Rice Mill. The socio-economic characteristics are as follows:

⁵⁰ Appendix 8 of Project Completion Report of ADB Lao PDR: Smallholder Development Project.

⁵¹ Source of information: Director, Vanida Rice Mill, Village Head and Deputy Head of Dong Tai village, November 2016

- Ethnicity: Lao Lum
- Total village population: 1,833
- Total number of females: 981
- Total number of households: 333
- Number of very poor households: 2
- Number of average income households: 191
- Number of above-average income households: 40
- Total area of available farm land: 639 ha
- Average size of land holding: 1– 2 ha per household
- Number of farmer producer groups: 1
- Number of farm households in farmer producer group: 21
- Number of people out-migrated from village: 28
- Number of females out-migrated: 15
- Number of males out-migrated: 13
- Daily wage rate for transplanting rice is 70,000 LAK / day for both men and women
- Daily wage rate for harvesting paddy is 50,000 LAK / day for both men and women.

113. **Feasibility Study 2** – Vegetable Producers Group for Export (Khum Pralit Peudpak Pheua Kan Song): Vegetable Collection Point and Pack House Feasibility Study, Thongset Village, Pakxong District, Champasack Province

114. Project beneficiaries⁵²

- Name of village: Houayset village
- Ethnicity: Lao Lum (50%), Laven (50%)
- Literacy levels: for Lao Lum: approx. 90%; for Laven: approx. 60%
- Total population: 1787
- Total number of females: 878
- Number of village unit heads: 20
- Number of female village unit heads: 10
- Total number of households: 335
- Total number of families: 365
- Number of poor households: 1
- Number of vegetable producer groups: 6
- Number of members in VPGE: 27 (3 group leaders and 24 members)
- Average size of vegetable land holding: 1-2 ha per household
- Average size of coffee land per household: 4-5 ha
- Total homestead land area in Houayset village: 213 ha
- Total available land for crop production: 630 ha
- Total available land for coffee production: 522 ha
- Total vegetable production land: 110 ha
- Daily wage rate for planting and harvesting: 50,000 LAK / person for both men and women
- Daily wage rate for unskilled construction work is 80,000 LAK per day (for men).

115. **Feasibility Study 3** – Upgrading the Dongxiengdee State Enterprise Biofertilizer Factory, Dongxiengdy Village, Naxaythong District, Vientiane Capital

⁵² Source of data: Houayset village head Mr. Khamsay Butthammavong, July 2016

116. Project Beneficiaries⁵³

- Number of biofertilizer factory employees: 7
- Number of females: 4
- Number of males: 3

117. Raw material suppliers

- Number of villages supplying buffalo and cow dung from Bolikhamxay Province: 4 (Tinphou village, Phonsavanh, Nakhouloung and Nabua, Bolikham District,)
- Total number of households supplying animal dung: 25-30
- Number of villages and districts supplying buffalo and cow dung from Khammouane Province: 4 villages in 2 districts (Nong Bok District and Buarapha District)
- Price to farmers for manure: 850,000 LAK / ton
- Location of bat dung raw material: Nakham village (cave), Phoung District, Vientiane Province
- Number of households collecting bat dung: 25 households.

A. Summary of socioeconomic characteristics

118. Out migration is not a significant phenomenon in the feasibility study areas. Only 28 people migrated from Dong Tail village (total village population: 1,833) and reportedly none from Houayset village. There are two ethnic groups in the feasibility study areas: Lao Lum and Laven, and the predominant group is Lao Lum. In terms of class and wealth status, the subproject target populations are largely homogeneous with very few households defined as poor: one household in Houayset village and two very poor households in Dong Tai village. Farm sizes are small in Dong Tail village at approximately 1.5 ha per household while households in Houayset have both vegetable land (1-2 ha per household) and coffee land (4-5 ha per household).

119. Women and men differ in their roles and responsibilities although these are not rigid. Heavy physical work is almost always men's responsibility. Women are exclusively responsible for managing household budgets. Many tasks are carried out by both husband and wife particularly for vegetable production, and both husband and wife share responsibility and decision making for the sale of produce.

120. The village populations needs and demands were assessed in relation to the proposed subprojects and both women and men expressed the same priorities. The overriding priority was for sufficient supplementary water for cropping purposes. Lack of access to year round water was reportedly a major constraint for households in subproject areas. Because of low levels of trust between value chain actors such as farmer-producers and collectors/intermediaries in the rice-growing village of Dong Tai, villagers expressed their satisfaction with the fair price offered by neighboring Vanida Rice Mill.

121. Regarding the beneficiaries absorptive capacity for the proposed subprojects, the ways in which men and women will participate was assessed. Since husband and wife jointly control land and capital, the subprojects are unlikely to adversely affect women's access to and control of resources. There is a good fit for the subprojects although villagers have a range of needs. In Feasibility Study 1 area (upgrading Vanida Rice Mill) the needs included: support for a microfinance facility; rehabilitation of the local irrigation scheme; improving the capacity of the rice

⁵³ Source of Data: Director, Bio-fertilizer factory, November 2016

farmers' production group; and technical training in rice pest and weed control. For the Feasibility Study 2 area (construction of vegetable pack house and facilities) the needs included: construction of an irrigation scheme to ensure sufficient water for vegetable production; access to affordable microfinance; knowledge and understanding about contract farming mechanisms and capacity building in vegetable pest and weed control. For Feasibility Study 3, as well as upgrading the biofertilizer factory facilities, there was a need to improve the approach by initiating a farmer outreach program and farmer feedback mechanism to monitor the impact of biofertilizer use.

B. Men and women's access to and control over productive resources

122. Findings from the participatory assessments indicate that there is joint access and control to productive resources such as land. The land title is in both the husband's and wife's name and joint agreement is necessary before land can be sold off. If it is the wife who has inherited the land parcel from her parents, then the woman's signature is first on the land title. If it was the husband who inherited land from his family, then the man's signature is first. If the married couple buy land after marriage, automatically the man's signature is first on the land title.

123. There is joint access to and control over capital, i.e. money. For accessing a loan, the bank requires both signatures on the loan agreements. If a loan is taken from Phatthana Lao Bank or from Policy Bank, both husband's and wife's signature is necessary on the loan agreement if the land title is used as collateral. If a loan is taken from a private moneylender only one signature is required.

124. Both male and female farmers complain that their access to information, knowledge and education is still limited. In general, invitations to village level extension training activities are made to farmers producer group members, represented by the formal heads of household and not to both husband and wife.

125. There is equal access of men and women to markets. Both men and women are active in marketing agricultural and livestock produce and both women and men take responsibility for selling household produce and jointly agree when, where and to whom to sell farm products. For Feasibility Study 1 (Vanida Rice Mill) households preference is to sell all paddy to Vanida Rice Mill because of the fair price offered. For Feasibility Study 2 area, the current practice in the village is to sell vegetables in local domestic markets or to other provinces such as Savannakhet, Saravane and Vientiane Capital. The collection of vegetables is usually done by female collectors who receive orders from their clients nationwide. It is frequently the wife who contacts the local female) vegetable collector by telephone. Women have increasing opportunity to receive information about market prices by mobile phone and they also increasingly monitoring market vegetable prices.

C. The participation of women in civil works

126. Gender disparities in employment remain in Lao PDR, primarily because of traditional attitudes about appropriate occupations for women and men. This is particularly true in the construction sector, where it is either believed that women do not wish to engage in manual labor, or husbands are reluctant to permit female family members to engage in construction work because the work is considered too arduous. However, women are already engaged in manual labor in the agriculture sector, and there are many construction jobs available which would allow women to earn cash wages.

127. For this reason, targets for women in skilled and unskilled civil works have been included in the CFAVC GAP/DMF.

D. Mechanization and the participation of women in agricultural machinery operation

128. Output 2 of the proposed CFAVC project (Strengthened agribusiness policy and capacity support services) will focus on the development of public and private human resources and institutional capacity, and the support services to enable climate-friendly agribusiness growth and management. Three sub --outputs identified include the following: (i) climate smart agribusiness policy development, standards and climate-resilient varieties; (ii) capacity strengthening for climate smart agriculture, agribusiness and farm mechanization; and (iii) green finance for climate-smart agriculture and agribusiness.

129. Tractors are being introduced to save labor in land preparation, and mechanized rice transplanters, harvesters and threshers are being introduced to improve efficiency. The latter task in particular tends to be traditionally undertaken manually by women and so mechanization will reduce the demand for women's labor. In some areas where cash cropping is now the norm, women actively drive vehicles for transporting produce and are familiar with agricultural machinery such as hand tractors. In other areas such as the paddy-producing area in Nong Bok district, Khammouane province, village women do not currently have access to vehicles but would like the opportunity to learn how to drive two-wheel tractors and other agricultural machinery in the future. This would allow them the opportunity to have paid work as drivers and also prepare them for future farm mechanization. Mechanization can also increase productivity and free up time for more value-added productive work. The training of machinery contractor operators and the wider use of the operators will contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases due to increased economies of scale in the agricultural operations making savings on fuel and machinery wear and tear.

E. Biofertilizer as a cost-saving input

130. Biofertilizer use remains limited in the areas assessed. Its use would contribute to production cost savings for farmers compared with purchasing imported chemical fertilizer. However, there is still a lack of awareness among the general public about the benefits of biofertilizer use. The project will upgrade the biofertilizer factory at Dongxiengdy village, Naxaythong district, Vientiane Capital. Field monitoring of biofertilizer use by farmers will therefore provide useful feedback concerning the effectiveness or otherwise of biofertilizer compared with alternatives.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GENDER ACTION PLAN IN PROJECT INTERVENTION AREAS

131. The CFAVC GAP mirrors the DMF and has links to MAF Gender Policy, particularly increasing the participation of women in decision-making and increasing participation of women in technical training. The main details contained in the GAP are described in this section. The design features take into account local aspirations as identified by women during participatory consultation. Women expressed the desire to continue to receive training, to be kept up to date with agriculture developments, to participate in planning, demonstrations, decision making and to be consulted on infrastructure design related to community-based subprojects. The proposed Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project is categorized as effective gender mainstreaming and will involve activities that will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. The CFAVC project will partner with MAF – CEDAW, Sub-DAWs and Lao Women's Union as key collaborators and implementer for the GAP.

A. Output 1: Improved and climate-resilient critical agribusiness value chain infrastructure

132. There will be civil works related to infrastructure development in all three of the Feasibility Studies. In the case of the vegetable pack house construction (Feasibility Study 2), the target farmers vegetable producer group (VPGE) will establish a construction committee to provide a mechanism for members input to the planning, survey and design of that infrastructure. Representatives will disseminate information from construction engineers to their group. Women members will have the opportunity to discuss construction designs, and feedback will be given to subproject planners and construction engineers. It is important that the VPGE group sign off on the final design before it is submitted to the GOL and ADB for approval. Should any subsequent changes be necessary, these must be taken back to, and ratified by, the beneficiary farmers group.

133. Contractors will prioritize and report on the use of local unskilled labor disaggregated by gender. At least 30% of unskilled workdays created will be for women. Contractors will uphold the core labor standards, including not employing child labor. Men and women will receive equal pay for equal work. Women who can read and write will be encouraged to work as recordkeepers. The specific baseline and targets for every infrastructure subproject will be established at inception and included in the subproject GAP.

134. Stronger links between small farms operated by women and the agro processing and agribusiness industry are to be facilitated by the implementing agency through productive partnerships (e.g., contract farming), training in business and other skills, and provision of market information.

135. Gender analyses of value chains and agribusiness policy will be conducted by the project during implementation.

136. Gender empowerment and awareness training will be provided for women in all subproject areas⁵⁴ as well as awareness raising on land-titling rights, legal rights, the impact of agrochemicals, the risks of HIV/AIDS, human trafficking, gender division of labor, decision making and access to and control of resources

137. Promotional campaigns in all subproject areas will be implemented related to introducing biofertilizers for crop production.

B. Output 2: Climate-smart agriculture and agribusiness promoted

138. Women will have the opportunity to be trained to operate a range of agricultural machinery in all subproject areas, representing at least 50% of the increased labor pool over baseline by end of project.

139. In all subproject areas women's skills to prepare for climate-related disasters and build resilience to impacts will be developed. All women in target areas will have access to information on climate change mitigation, improving climate resilience and resource efficiency.

140. Agricultural extension activities related to irrigated rice production (Feasibility Study 1), and fresh vegetable production (Feasibility Study 2) processing and trading in project intervention areas should become more gender sensitive. The use of visual aids, varied information and communication technologies to improve extension outreach will improve the effectiveness of

⁵⁴ Recommendation of Social Development and Gender Specialist, ADB Resident Mission, Vientiane. July 2016

messages especially for ethnic minority women farmers. The promotion of more active participation of women in management of farmer production groups, are measures to empower women and bring economic benefits.

141. The GAP is provided in the linked documents.

C. GAP Implementation

142. Project Gender Specialists together will be responsible for implementing capacity building and preparing training materials in gender equity awareness and gender mainstreaming linked to MAF Gender Policy and Sub-DAW for both implementing agency and village authorities, in order to ensure that women are provided every opportunity to participate in activities and decision-making. Regular monthly meetings will be conducted with women farmers organized by gender focal points and LWU, supported by female staff from MAF PAFO / DAFO, project gender specialists, to find out their concerns and specific training needs, and to ensure that they are included as demonstration farmers for the adoption of climate-friendly techniques. Rural men will also receive awareness-raising in gender equity so that they understand the importance of women's participation in project activities, particularly agricultural training and climate change-related awareness-raising, and to avoid household conflict.

143. National and International gender consultants working with the project executing agency in collaboration with the MAF Sub-DAW and other interested stakeholders will assist in the preparation of capacity building training materials for infrastructure committees, farmer producer groups, FWUCs and cooperatives to ensure that they are easily understood, and that they are sensitive to gender and ethnicity.

144. Training and demonstration activities including business development and financial management will be conducted in locations and times convenient for women farmers, and attention will be paid to providing child care during training events to ensure that women participate fully.

145. Gender issues and analysis will be included in all the project's foundation studies during the life of the project such as socioeconomic baseline survey, value chain assessments and market studies.

146. Subproject baseline and periodic monitoring using specific indicators disaggregated by gender will be maintained throughout the implementation of CFAVC project. The project management system will monitor participation in all project capacity building, training events and meetings, at both the implementing agency and community level. This will ensure that women have equal access to technical information. Participatory monitoring of project impact will be implemented at the mid-term of the project and this will include interviews with women's focus groups, gender focal points, and LWU representatives. Household interviews will include adequate representation of female-headed households.

D. Gender Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators

147. The project impact evaluation will be monitored and measured through the use of baseline surveys and follow-up surveys. The follow-up survey will be conducted at the midterm point and also at project completion. An important part of the monitoring and evaluation activity will be the use of women's focus groups for obtaining qualitative data and also individual household interviews for quantitative data collection. Gender disaggregated data collection will be used for project monitoring particularly regarding activities which are linked to specific GAP actions and

for which verifiable sources of data for monitoring will be available at subproject level from village authorities. Value chain-related indicators for each new approved subproject will be elaborated together with stakeholders and MAF Sub-DAW during the lifetime of the demand-driven CFAVC sector loan project.

148. Indicators will include:

- women's participation in discussions and planning for infrastructure subprojects;
- women's participation in demonstration subprojects and agricultural training and extension meetings;
- women's participation in agricultural mechanization skills training;
- uptake of biofertilizer by households;
- women's membership in farmers producer groups, cooperatives and FWUCs;
- women's representation on farmers group, cooperative and FWUC management committees;
- women's crop production income-generating activities in subproject areas including off-farm employment in post-harvest operations and processing;
- sources of household income and expenditure in female-headed households;
- use of credit and level of household debt;
- women's uptake of climate-friendly technologies following training;
- women's representation on MAF policy working groups;
- women's representation in NPMO, PPO and DAFO extension teams;
- improvement in ability of Lao Women's Union village representatives to monitor the performance of women farmers following training; and
- change in men and women's gender equity responsive in target populations following training.

E. Implementation Arrangements for GAP

149. Overall responsibility for the implementation of the GAP will rest with the project executing agency in Lao PDR. International and National Social Development and Gender Specialists will be recruited to provide technical assistance to the executing agency. The national Social Development and Gender Specialist will work regularly and continuously during the project's lifetime, while the international Social Development and Gender Specialist will make regular inputs to support the national Specialist. The MAF Sub-DAW will also be closely involved in monitoring implementation arrangements for the GAP and reporting will be linked to MAF Gender Policy implementation and monitoring. Regular gender sensitization training will be provided to all NPMO and agency staff. The project M&E framework will include indicators for the GAP. All NPMO reports submitted to the ADB will report progress against the project GAP. Gender Specialists will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the GAP and preparing progress reports.

F. Budget and human resource (consultants) allocation for implementation of GAP

150. The project will recruit both an international (6 person-months) and a national (30 person-months) Social Development and Gender Specialist, who will be responsible for monitoring and reporting the progress of the project GAP. In addition, they will be responsible for preparing reports on subproject poverty and social assessments, subproject GAP baseline and target indicators, stakeholder communication strategy, and consultation and participation plans for local community engagement to ensure beneficiaries leverage full impact of the project's activities. The terms of reference of the specialists are contained in the PAM. Identification of subprojects will be

accomplished through organizing stakeholder consultations in coordination with the specialists, with the aim of setting the long term vision and objectives of the value chain, identifying constraints and opportunities that are holding back growth and competitiveness, and jointly agreeing on commercially viable solutions that can address these constraints. High priority value chain subprojects will be identified based on established criteria (e.g., contribution to food security, energy security, water security, environmental sustainability, positive social impacts).

GENDER ACTION PLAN MONITORING TABLE

Date of update: XX

Project Title: Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project**Country:** Lao PDR**Project No.:** 48409-004**Type of Project (Loan/Grant/TA):** Grant XX**Approval and Timeline:** XX**Gender Category:** Effective Gender Mainstreaming (EGM)**Mission Leader:** Srinivasan Ancha**Project Impact:** Agricultural competitiveness in project areas improved through enhanced productivity, climate resilience, quality and safety, value addition and rural household incomes**Project Outcome:** Productive and resource efficient agribusiness value chains developed

Gender Action Plan (GAP Activities, Indicators and Targets, Timeframe and Responsibility)	Progress to date (as of _____) (This should include information on period of actual implementation, sex-disaggregated quantitative updated (e.g. number of participating women, women beneficiaries of services, etc.), and qualitative information. However, some would be on-going - so explain what has happened so far towards meeting the target.)	Issues and Challenges (Please include reasons why an activity was not fully implemented, or if targets fall short, or reasons for delay, etc., and provide recommendations on ways to address issues and challenges)
Output 1: Critical agribusiness value chain infrastructure improved and made climate resilient.		
1.		
2.		
3.		
Output 2: Climate-smart agriculture promoted.		
1.		
2.		
Output 3: Enabling environment for climate-friendly agribusiness enhanced.		

Comments/ Remarks:

Accomplished by: _____

Date Accomplished: _____