

2016

Project Implementation Review (PIR)

of

PIMS 2903

Mainstreaming biodiversity in Lao PDR's agricultural and land management policies, plans and programmes

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A. Basic Project and Finance Data

Project Implementing Partner:	The Department of Planning and Cooperation of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
GEF Focal Area:	Biodiversity
Country(ies)	(LAO) Laos
Project Start Date:	19-Apr-2011
Planned Project Closing Date:	31-May-2016
Revised Planned Closing Date:	31-Dec-2016
Total GEF Grant (U\$S)	\$ 2,379,545
GEF Grant Disbursed as of 30 June (U\$S):	\$ 2,046,685.16
Total Co-financing (as planned in CEO endorsement request):	\$ 4,900,000.00
Overall Risk Rating	Low
Overall DO Rating	Satisfactory
Overall IP Rating	Satisfactory

B. Project Contacts and Links

Partner	Contact Name	Email Address
Project Coordinator / Manager	Mr. Pheng Souvanthong	pensvt@live.com
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Ms. Chitlatda Keomuongchanh	chitlatda.keomuongchanh@undp.org
Project Implementing Partner	Mr. Xaypradeth Chounlamany	
GEF Operational Focal Point	Mr. Khampadith Khammounheuang	kkhampadith@gmail.com
Other Partners	Dr. Stephen Rudgard	Stephen.Rudgard@fao.org
UNDP Technical Adviser	Doley Tshering	doley.tshering@undp.org
UNDP Programme Associate	Pakamon Pinprayoon	pakamon.pinprayoon@undp.org

Project website, etc.	Project results have been put on UNDP, FAO, and Government Web-sites (SWG-ARD), YouTube (two events) and Ms. Helen Clark's "UNDP twitter" and Ms. Margaret Jones William's "UNDP twitter". Further, the rice IPM/FFS trainers have made their own face book site.
Links to media coverage	The project annual review meeting was organized and press were prepared. Twitter was available as well https://twitter.com/MargaretJWUNDP/status/723437645162901509?cn=cmV0d2VldA%3D%3D&refsrc=email Agro-Biodiversity key to food security and nutrition http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2016/04/22/agro-biodiversity-key-to-food-security-and-nutrition.html UNDP Administrator Helen Clark: Development gains need to be spread more evenly to leave no one behind in Lao PDR http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/11/29/undp-administrator-helen-clark--development-gains-need-to-be-spr.html Oyster mushrooms draw smiles on Phonexay District farmers' faces http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/ourwork/environmentandenergy/successstories/oyster-mushrooms-draw-smiles-on-phonexay-district-farmers--faces/ Domestic wide mushroom info.

http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/img/Success%20Stories/ABP%20Factsheet_osyter-01.jpg Project fact sheet update http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Project%20Briefs_Fact%20Sheets/Environment/ABP%20Project-Brief_March08.pdf
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C. Project Summary

Lao PDR encompasses the species rich Mekong Valley and the Annamite mountain range, and has an extensive protected areas network. Agriculture plays a significant role in Lao PDR and many rural people rely on wild species, particularly aquatic species, for a large part of their diet. Farming intensification and the conversion of land for mono-crop plantations is reducing crop, livestock and wild species diversity. Lao PDR is a globally important centre of diversity of rice, with estimates of over 3,000 local varieties, and at least three species of wild rice. Many local varieties of rice and other crops have been displaced by improved varieties with higher yields and greater needs for agrochemicals. Wild relatives of rice may be at risk from changes in land use, including wetland drainage. Lao PDR has a rich diversity of wild species but there are concerns that numbers and distribution are being reduced rapidly. Significantly, many globally threatened species make use of agro-ecosystems. The project will work strategically with government, agribusiness, farmers, donors active in rural development, and the general public, to make biodiversity a key consideration in routine day to day decision making. Agro-biodiversity management will be used to promote benefits in both global biodiversity and in food security and quality of life.

D. Progress toward Development Objective

Objective/Outcome	Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2014	Level at 30 June 2015	Level at 30 June 2016
Objective	To provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity within the farming systems of Lao PDR	Area under improved management for conservation of agro-biodiversity directly and indirectly influenced by the ABP project [Revised]	0	100,000 ha	300 ha (accumulated) The project is actively following up with local authorities, but no significant results have been achieved during the reporting period.	300 ha (accumulated) Work done in close collaboration with the TABI project. A digital satellite map (SPOT 6, Archive Imagery, 2,900 km ²) have been purchased facilitating the verification of draft village land use plans including allocation of biodiversity important areas. Expected to be approved by local authorities during the 3rd quarter of 2015. Other started-up biodiversity conservation activities include forest areas for wild tea and melientha trees (used as vegetables). The forests in these	97,300 ha (Accumulated) ABP has contributed to land use plans (verification process) in 44 villages covering a total area of 266,000 ha of which 174,000 ha are community forest land. With ABP taking some 50% of the costs (excluding international TA), the ABP contribution to forest land conservation area can be set to 87,000 ha. Further, the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Xieng Khouang Province has resulted in conservation of three district based conservation areas at a total of 5,000 ha and tree plantations of approximately

						<p>areas have been surveyed for wild tea and maps and reports are being prepared as basis for the district authorities to regulate as conservation areas, The regulations together with the ongoing domestication efforts are expected to significantly reduce the unsustainable harvests in the forest.</p>	<p>20,000 ha, of which the project can claim to have 25% influence (i.e. 5,000 ha).</p>
		<p>Number of agro-biodiversity taxonomic groups with improved status in the two pilot districts [New]</p>	0	4		<p>0 The project has drawn attention to Oyster Mushrooms, Wild tea, Melientha and wild mushrooms and these groups are expected gained special status during the latter part of 2015.</p>	<p>4 (Accumulated) Oyster mushrooms (agaric group) and Melientha (leaf and flower vegetable from 4,000 domesticated forest trees) have gained significant foothold in Phonexay district to the extent that the project in the current period has expanded the activities to two additional villages</p>

							and the activities to other villages. In Phoukout district, the wild edible and poisonous mushrooms have drawn particularly interest including the world famous and expensive "Matsutake mushroom. Further, in Phoukhout District, domestication of wild tea has been supported with transplanting of 96,000 seedlings as well as identification of two tea species i.e. Camellia sinensis var. assamica and Camellia kissi var. confuse.
		GEF SP-2 Tracking Tool Score 0 for policy and regulatory frameworks [New]		5 out of 5 for agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors		General: For the first time biodiversity has repeatedly been mentioned in the 8th. Socio-Economic Development Plan e.g. output 1 of outcome 3 where biodiversity is stressed as an	General: Agro-biodiversity is continued to be in high focus, not least due the good coordination work of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Center (NAFRI). During the reporting period the project

						<p>important element of sustainable natural resource management, managed by the farmers. The new research strategy of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute states agro-biodiversity a one of the three objectives. Further, the agro-biodiversity is increasingly discussed in Sector Working Group Meetings and the government encourage local government to consider to link agro-biodiversity into their sector activities As per tracking tools the project has achieved score 2 of 6, and will increase emphasis on implementation, enforcement and monitoring in the remaining period. The score for these three sectors</p>	<p>and NAFRI has completed the National Agro-biodiversity Programme and Implementation Plan, 2015-2025 and subsequently been presented to the Government, Development Partners, NGO's and Private Sector at two meetings, i.e. the sub-Sector Working Group on Agrobiodiversity and the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development. Further, the project has added Agro-biodiversity issues into the report to the CBD secretarial and as well as to the new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2016-2025. As a result the project has increased its rating from 2 to 3. Agriculture 4: The Draft Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), 2020</p>
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						<p>(Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery) is increased from 0 to 2 as biodiversity considerations are mentioned in sector policy and specific legislation. Detailed explanations are given below. - Agriculture 2: The Draft Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS), 2020 Short-medium term: Promote environmental friendly market-integrated ANR growth. Long-term: Ensure agricultural and forestry practices are ecologically sustainable, maintain production potential and quality of agricultural biodiversity. Further, the new Upland Development Strategy (2015-20) includes:</p>	<p>approved by National Assembly: Short-medium term: Promote environmental friendly market-integrated ANR growth. Long-term: Ensure agricultural and forestry practices are ecologically sustainable, maintain production potential and quality of agricultural biodiversity. The new Research Strategy of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) has added agro-biodiversity as one of their four technical programmes. Further, the new Upland Development Strategy (2015-20) includes: Biodiversity conserved for eco-tourism as one of four objectives. National Agro-Biodiversity Programme and</p>
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						<p>Biodiversity conserved for eco-tourism as one of four objectives. - Forestry Sector 2: The draft Agriculture Development Strategy stresses: Biodiversity conserved for eco-tourism and to protect and domesticate NTFPs and to protect forests. Fishery Sector: 2 - Fish Biodiversity is mentioned in the NBSAP and PBSAP as part of agro-biodiversity and it is agreed and acknowledged by Lao Government. The government is establishing fish conservation zones in rivers as stipulated in the Fisheries Law and underpins the ongoing aquatic biodiversity conservation efforts.</p>	<p>Implementation Plan 2015-2025 (NABP-II) has been finalized. - Forestry Sector 2: The draft Agriculture Development Strategy stresses: Biodiversity conserved for eco-tourism and to protect and domesticate NTFPs and to protect forests. Agro-biodiversity issues related to forestry added to 2nd National Agrobiodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP-II) and the Lao Report to the CBD secretariat. Fishery Sector: 2 - Fish Biodiversity is mentioned in the NBSAP-II and agreed and acknowledged by Lao Government. The government (assisted by ABP and others) is establishing fish conservation zones in rivers as stipulated in the Fisheries Law and underpins the</p>
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							ongoing aquatic biodiversity conservation efforts.
Outcome 1	National policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable use, and in-situ conservation of biodiversity in agro-ecosystems	Number of new national plans, policies, laws, and guidelines with agro-biodiversity	Land use policies and legal instruments do not include focus on biodiversity (especially agro biodiversity). Agriculture Law does not incorporate emphasis on biodiversity, including agro-biodiversity. Integration of biodiversity related criteria into ESIA guidelines are poor.	6	3 (accumulated) Additional 3 ongoing: The Upland Development Strategy (spearheaded by the Northern Upland Development Programme) was approved in July 2013. Regarding the subsequent and ongoing action and investment plans, the project is providing agro-biodiversity related inputs. Led by IUCN and Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE), the NBSAP consultation process is ongoing (workshop financed by project end June), thus not yet approved by the Government. The formulation of the National Agro-biodiversity	4 (accumulated) Several rounds of comments have been provided the recently approved Upland Develop Strategy (added a biodiversity objective), as well as its Implementation Plan. Further, comments have been provided to the National Nutrition Strategy and the Environment Strategy 2020. As a result both none of them have included agro-biodiversity issues. Both need formal approval. ABP project is assisting the government to preparing the second National Agrobiodiversity Programme with expected Government approval during	6 (accumulated) Final comments to the NBSAP has ended a long process of consultations and commenting. Linked to the CBD, the project has also successfully added agrobiodiversity issues into the MoNRE's report to CBD secretariat. Another key event has been the finalization of the National Agro-Biodiversity Programme and Implementation Plan, 2015-25 (NABP-II). Further, assisted by IUCN, the project is in the process of finalizing the PBSAP for Luang Prabang Province. As a result of the increased focus on Agro-biodiversity, NAFRI has in their presentation of their new research strategy grouped

					Programme II has started during Q1 of 2014.	the latter part of 2015. Finally, the project will provide inputs to the 5th National Report to CBD and is in the process of starting-up support to preparation of the Luang Prabang Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.	their activities under the three technical areas of which one is Agro-biodiversity. One indirect result of project interventions and close collaboration with NAFRI. .
		Number of national workshops with biodiversity content [Indicator deleted after MTR and consideration by project board]	Emphasis on agro-biodiversity in BD strategy and action plan is weak	10 workshops	4 Including one workshop on agro-biodiversity related laws.	Indicator deleted	
		Number of yearly agro-biodiversity inter-sectoral coordination meetings [Indicator deleted after MTR and consideration by project board]	Currently, there is no formal coordination mechanism for agro-biodiversity conservation	2 yearly meetings (see below)	2 Strongly encouraged by the project, the sub-sector working group on Agro-biodiversity was launched in September 2013, followed by one meeting in June 2014 focusing on rice and medicinal plants. At next September meeting follow-up technical and policy issues will then be	Indicator deleted	

					drafted and reported to and considered by the sector working groups. ABP Project, FAO and UNDP attended.		
		Number GOL officers actively participating in meetings and training on agro-biodiversity [Revised]	Institutional and staff capacities of MAF/GOL to mainstream biodiversity into agriculture and land use policies are low.	500 officers	415 (Accumulated) Financed by ABP, the workshop (August 2013) on the Internal Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) cum Convention on Bio-Diversity (CBD (50p) made strong contribution to awareness raising on (agro)biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Subsector working group meetings on Agro-biodiversity (September & June 2013). The latter meeting added knowledge to agro-biodiversity in rice and medicinal plants. Organized by ABP, two workshops (25	490 (accumulated) One launching workshop (25p) on the Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) was organized for Xieng Khouang Province (August) and one PBSAP planning meetings (30p) was held (October) in Luang Prabang Province. Further, two National Agro-biodiversity Programme formulation feed-back meetings (20 p) have been held in March. At these meetings participants were actively discussing (agro) biodiversity issues.	995 (accumulated) The project collaborated with Ministry of Science and Technology in preparation of a two-day seminar on Access and Benefit Sharing, attended by 40 government officials and CBD secretariat and an "Agrobiodiversity presentation" was made by the project together with FAO. The final meetings for the finalization of the NABP-II included active participation of 65 Government staff. At the World Food Day agrobiodiversity issues were an integral part of the exhibition and presentations attended by some 200 government

					<p>p., during December 2013) on preparation of information and awareness materials of laws with agro-biodiversity related content was conducted. Organized by ABP, a workshop (25p., December) on guidelines on Land Use Management was conducted. Meeting (50 p., December) on ABD-related laws funded by ABP in Phoukhout District was organized. Meeting (50 p., December) on ABD-related laws) funded by ABP in Phonexay District was organized. Co-organized by ABP, NBSAP/PBSAP workshop (40 p., June) was organized.</p>		<p>officers from various ministries and organizations. The two sub-Sector Working Groups meetings on Agro-biodiversity and the three Sector Working Group Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Development discussed Agro-biodiversity issues attended by approximately 150 government officers. The PBSAP kick-off meeting in Luang Prabang was attended by 80 provincial and district officers. In addition, several heads of departments participated in the annual review cum steering committee meeting, of which some (20) were "new-comers".</p>
		Number of tools (FFS, info & awareness materials) developed to support and enhance incorporation of	Existing tools such as training, extension, communication and mapping are not	6 tools	5 Tool no 3: Report on 95 edible and medicinal plants and animals in	Achieved, 6 tools. Tool no 6: General awareness and information	8 (Accumulated) Tool No 7 relates to technical reports (aquatic organisms,

		<p>agro-biodiversity into national and institutional frameworks issues are discussed [Revised]</p>	<p>adequately used for wider stakeholder awareness or mainstream biodiversity into their work</p>		<p>upland paddy rice based ecosystems for international decision makers (FAO Council members). Additional information and awareness material will be developed. 18 posters on ABD related law issues (Tool No 4). Handbooks for TOT training on agro-biodiversity related laws. Tool 5: Training of trainers ABD Cum vegetables Farmer Field Schools (FFS)/Integrated Pest Management (IPM) with the purpose of knowledge, skills and confidence development of ABD issues at local level - concluded with farmers field days of some 150 participants including provincial and district heads.</p>	<p>material. As part of a comprehensive awareness and communication strategy and implementation plan (December), the project has initiated a number of general awareness and information material, including a) project brochure (English and Lao, 250 copies each), prepared a stand for the World Food Day (October) on agrobiodiversity issues, prepared one success story (aquatic organism) and project brief (English) on wild mushrooms (English), conducted one press conference in connection with the International Day on Biodiversity, environment day (summary uploaded on YouTube), and</p>	<p>oyster mushrooms, Matsutake and wild tea) and material and Tool No 8 is networking (see below) The training, information and awareness interventions can be divided into six headings (1) formal training, (2) on-the-job training, (3) famer field days/farmer exchange visits, (4) general agro-biodiversity information and awareness, (5) Project activities, and (6) meetings, networking and visits. Under these headings a number of tools are used. Progress includes (under heading 2): On-the-job training continued with the oyster mushroom growers and carried out at one event with the Melientha grower groups; and the Farmer Field Schools focusing on regular visits in</p>
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						<p>prepared one video on TOT-participants reaction on 8-week training (in Lao with English subtitle).</p>	<p>farmer fields, where crop responses and demonstrations are discussed with extension staff and among farmers. (Under heading 3): One farmer field day was organized for rice farmers in Xieng Khouang Province; and two farmer to famer visits (Oyster Mushrooms and Melienta) have been organized in Luang Prabang Province. (Under heading 4): General information and awareness about agro-biodiversity issues have mainly been done through press releases from World Food Day, on Oyster Mushrooms and progress on the Agro-biodiversity Programme; distribution of awareness posters have continued; and four Ethno-botanical plots in Luang Prabang Botanical Garden have been completed where</p>
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							<p>groups of university students provided feedback. (Under heading 5): Specific information of project activities have intensified during the last year and has resulted in the preparation of total of 5 sets of one-page project intervention fact sheets (English and Lao); a Medicinal and Food Plants Handbook for Dongsouth-Donglong forest area with Institute of Traditional Medicine; printing of a Medicinal Plants Manual Vol. 1 and with Pha Tat Ke Botanical Garden, Luang Prabang; an introduction brochure on Edible and Medicinal Wild Mushrooms in Lao PDR; Oyster Mushroom Production Steps - an Illustrative Guide for Farmers; a video uploaded to Youtube on how Lao farmers</p>
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						<p>can benefit from agro-biodiversity in the rice; a field study of "Matsutake - Het Wai/Paek - Value Chain Analysis in Xieng Khouang Province; printing of the Lao National Framework on the Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising from their Utilization; preparation of farmer booklet on how to grow Melientha; made a photo exhibition on production steps of Oyster Mushrooms; a success story of and Oyster Mushroom group (female) member widely published on central FAO and UNDP web sites: and a UNDP/BKK article on Nature count\$: Key Impacts of the project on Food Security and Nutrition (containing results of the projects activities).</p>
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							(under heading 6): Meetings promoting Agrobiodiversity and networking on promotion of agrobiodiversity including presentations at field during the visit of the UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, to project activities, which resulted significant attention (press releases, etc.). The close collaboration with the FAO IPM Programme, TABI and DARWIN has continued and regular informal meetings with LURAS and the ICBF projects have intensified in order to transfer knowledge and results to these new agro-biodiversity related projects.
		Number of strategic inputs to the policy and legislative process produced by the inter-sectoral working group, as demonstrated through policy papers or other forms	0	1		0 Strategic input to the NABP is expected during the second half of 2015.	1 The National Biodiversity Programme and Implementation Plan 2015-25 (NABP-II) prepared with

		<p>of strategic inputs to the development of policies such as the NABP-II [New]</p>				<p>technical support from the project contains a comprehensive presentation of existing agro-biodiversity, its eco-systems and landscapes, the trends, threads, and key stakeholders, documented 30 tables and annexes and by making reference to more than 100 documents and sources. Opportunities and strategic considerations are an integral part of the NABP-II, reflected in a log-frame containing one objective, three outcomes, 12 outputs, 42 activities and some 200 sub-activities. During the preparation various strategic inputs from the government, the development partners and FAO have been received and incorporated.</p>
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Outcome 2	Capacities and incentives to mainstream biodiversity, especially agro-biodiversity, at the Provincial, District and community levels	Number of farmers adopting skills and techniques promoted through FFS and farmer field days	Existing strategies and capacity building for 2 target provinces agriculture land use do not incorporate biodiversity conservation. Existing training and extension do not incorporate agro-biodiversity conservation issues .	1,000 farmers	76 farmers - 6 leader farmers (of a total of 36 trainees including extension workers and teachers) participated in TOT on Vegetables and ABD (Feb-Apr 2014) with topics related to facilitation skills and disseminating technical knowledge at village based FFS. 20 farmers as members of FFS. 50 additional Farmers participating in Farmer Field days (part of TOT and not including 20 farmers mentioned above). The farmers field day, is a well proven village level method for demonstrating ABD issues practiced during the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Training of Trainers. The results are disseminated to the local community,	562 farmers (accumulated) - 8 leader farmers of a total of 37 trainees completed TOT on Rice and Agrobiodiversity (Jul-Apr) with topics related to facilitation skills and disseminating technical knowledge at village based Farmer Field Schools (FFS). 105 rice farmers as members of FFS and as integral part of the TOT. 22 additional Farmers participating in Farmer Field Days (FFDs), (as part of TOT and not including farmers mentioned above). The FFD demonstrates ABD issues practiced during the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Training of Trainers. In this way the results are disseminated to the local	Level at 30 June 2015 981 farmers excluding 350 students (accumulated) Additional 620 farmers have graduated from 21 Rice Farmer Field Schools (FFS) in 20 villages, facilitated by 38 extension staff (4 females) and 4 leader farmers. The topics included agro-biodiversity analyses, organic fertilizers and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) usage of local herb extracts as bio-insecticides. The programme is continuing during the 2016 season on much less scale in five villages and 120 farmers, combining organic rice FFS with certification of (native) organic rice.
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					including neighbouring farmers, pupils, and government officers. The trained trainers will plan and start-up FFS at next cropping season.	community, including neighbouring farmers, pupils, and government officers. The trained trainers started-up FFS in 2014-2015 vegetable season and 2015 rice season. - 255 vegetable farmer graduates from intensive FFS/Integrated Pest Management (IPM) including usage of local herb extracts as bio-insecticides. - 66 Farmers at Farmer Field Days (Vegetable FFS).	
		Number of Technical Service Centers in cluster villages with agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable use activities	Existing strategies and capacity building for 2 target provinces; agriculture land use do not incorporate biodiversity.	4 TSCs	2 Through on-the-job training, prioritization & formulation of ABD related interventions and taking active part in planning and execution of Farmer Field Schools (FFS)/Integrated Pest Management	6 A total of 6 Technical Service Centers staff in Nambor, Donkham, Phongthong, Ladngai, Phengthong, and Phinglounag are actively participating in field activities (with delegated	6 The local implementation of project activities are led by district staff whereas day-to-day implementation is done by Technical Service Center staff in Nambor, Donkham, Phongthong, Ladngai, Phengthong, and

					(IPM) the capacity of Technical Service Centers in Phoukhout and Phonexay are steadily increasing.	implementation responsibilities) in conjunction other tasks given by district authorities)	Phinglounag in conjunction with other tasks given by district authorities. In the current period emphasis has been put on changing from implementing to sustaining successful activities.
		Number of cluster villages with approved pFLUP plans adapted and beginning implementation [Revised]	Existing area with participatory land use plans and participatory are low and do not include agro-biodiversity conservation.	8 cluster villages	0 Planned for 2013-2014 dry season, but with the option of following-up on earlier participatory Land and Forestry Land Use Plans done by TABI.	0 Verification of the pFLUP is ongoing for a full and comprehensive Village Forest and Land Use Management Plan for Phoukhout and Phonexai districts District (7 clusters) is expected to be approved during the second half of 2015, whereas important follow-up will take place in 2016.	7 Cluster villages (accumulated) ABP is continuing working closely with the TABI project in finalizing/validating the Land Use Plans in Phoukhout District (Kheung Long-Hang, Tai and Long Khang clusters) and in Phonexay District (Sopjia, Donekham and Chomjieng clusters). The local authorities have benefited from ABP funded satellite images (digital maps) to enable the verification work at 47 hamlets in Xieng Khouang and 21 hamlets in Phonexay District (Sopjia, Donekham and Chomjieng). TABI is

							the overall implementer including technical backstopping and covering other costs. By end of dry season a total of 36 villages based participatory land use planning (pLUP)/Forest and Agriculture Land Use Planning and Management (FALUPAM) have been formally approved by the district governors including the allocation of village conservation areas.
		Number of districts with in-situ agro-biodiversity conservation plans	Currently there is no formal allocation of land for in-situ conservation of agro-biodiversity .	8 districts	1 The project will follow-up on Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) which includes in-situ conservation and planning at district and provincial level.	2 Phonexay and Phoukhout districts through implementation of project agrobiodiversity activities	2 (accumulated) Phonexay and Phoukhout districts through implementation of project agrobiodiversity activities. No new core districts have been added, but both the Xieng Khouang and Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans do contain planned interventions in 17

							other provincial districts. Similarly, the 2nd National Agro-Biodiversity Programme and Action Plan 2015-2025 contains proposed national wide interventions.
		Number of male and female farmers graduated from FFS (at least 50% females) [Revised]	Existing training and extension do not incorporate agro-biodiversity conservation issues	1,000 pp 50% of women targeted	0 A total of 38 trainers (8 females) have been trained and another 37 (10 females) being trained – of which more than half will carry out Farmer Field Schools (FFS) next season. A part of the Training of Trainers was to demonstrate FFS with farmers, although these farmers did not formally graduate.	360 farmers - 76% females (accumulated) - 105 rice farmers (70% females) as members of FFS (as integral part of the TOT). - 255 vegetable farmer graduates (81% females) from intensive FFS/Integrated Pest Management (IPM) including usage of local herb extracts as bio-insecticides, which is an example of use of local biodiversity. The trained trainers will continue FFS/IPM in 2015/16.	981 Farmers - 46% females (accumulated) During the reporting period a total of 725 rice farmers (35% females) have participated in FFS of which some 20 % of the trained trainers will continue FFS/IPM in 2015/16. The facilitation and training included the identification of more than 200 animal and plant species used for various purposes. For example, in one village, rice straw was used to produce oyster mushrooms and bio-insecticides were made from various extracts of local plants. Additional 240

							farmers are being trained this wet season.
		Number of value added agro-biodiversity products promoted and marketed for local or international markets [Revised]	existing market for agro-biodiversity and biodiversity friendly products are ineffective.	8 products	0 Included in work plan for some of the ongoing field activities (e.g. wild tea and one local rice variety), but no specific results, yet.	1 The project has assisted the four group of villagers with market information, labels for sale bags (each village with specific logo), and a village sign board on oyster mushrooms.	5 products (accumulated) The project has assisted four group of villagers with market information, labels for sales (each village with specific logo) for both tea and oyster mushroom and wild tea growers. In addition guidelines and recommendations have been made for organic rice, wild mushroom, melientha and medicinal plants.
		Number of private-public sector agro-biodiversity agreements [Indicator deleted after MTR and consideration by project board and RTA]	Private and public sectors involvement and incentives for biodiversity conservation are extremely limited .	3	0 Facilitation of public-private agreements is an integral part of local interventions (e.g. on wild tea, local rice & oyster, local banana and mushrooms), but premature vis a vis current progress.	Indicator deleted	

		Number of FFS graduates with increased understanding and knowledge of farming practices that are supportive of agro-biodiversity [New]	0	2 per FFS		8 per FFS (Assessed by CTA and local extension officers)	8 per FFS (Assessed by CTA and local extension officers)
		Number of cluster villages with at least two demonstrated actions or activities representing implementation of pLUPS, or with actions covering at least 10% of the area under the pFLUP [New]	0	6		No pFLUPs yet finalized	3A huge majority of the villages in the four clusters in Phoukout District is following actions agreed in the new pLUPS and more that 10% of the village area is subject to improved practices. Detailed land allocation maps and village regulations have been made and agreed upon by the village committee. Five types of land classification zones are made per village: 1) forest land; 2) Non rice agricultural land; 3) upland rice, 4) paddy, and 5) home gardens. Maximum 3 ha of agricultural upland fields (shifting cultivation is allowed per family. Apart from upland rice, the farmers grow

							<p>cassava, groundnut, pumpkins, cac (Makkhao), fodder grass, wild tea, etc. The forest land is divided into zones for protection of water sources, village community forest (NTFPs incl. wild mushrooms), burial area and area for household use of timber. The most important feature of the pFLUP is that the villagers have agreed to allocate "grouped upland activities" such as common areas for shifting cultivation and cattle grassing and thereby reducing fencing expenses and reducing time to look after the upland rice fields and cattle. Examples are allocation of village conservation areas for collection of wild mushrooms and tea, measures for reduction of wild fires, and allocation of land for fodder cultivation. Specific</p>
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							family requirements and soil fertility/type are taking into consideration and it is agreed that minimum five years fallow is required. The verification work of land use planning in Phonxay District is still to be finalized.
		Number of publications disseminated analyzing economic forces and incentives influencing the status of at least one sub-group of Agro-biodiversity in NABP-II [New]		1		0	2 A value chain analysis on Matsutake mushroom and on wild tea have been carried out and will soon be published on Government and UN web-sites. The Matsutake mushroom is dominantly harvested from Xieng Khouang Province with an estimated total value of 4 billion kip equal to USD 0.5 million with options for further value addition. The wild Tea from Xieng Khouang Province is benefiting from high demand foreign demands with prices

							2-3 times higher than "normal tea".
Outcome 3	Effective project management	Number of strategic recommendations from the Agro-biodiversity Steering committee [Indicator deleted after MTR and project board consideration]	lack of programme management capacity in general and integrated programmatic approach in particular	6	0 A common Steering Committee with TABI has been established by a ministerial notice (February 2014), but the new Steering committee has not yet convened, partly due to the newly assignment of the National Project Coordinator (NPC) and partly due to the preference to present the findings for the Mid-term Review at the first meeting.	Indicator deleted	
		Number of meetings with TABI [Indicator deleted after MTR and consideration by project board and RTA] Number of MAF organized cross project meetings [Indicator deleted after MTR and consideration by project board and RTA]	programmatic approach not fully operational.	40 meetings with TABI 10 MAF organized cross project meetings 15 Provincial Steering Committee meeting	17 One of the meetings with TABI was to coordinate the implementation of a National project Coordinator for ABP Project who is the same person as TABI's NPD. This facilitates the coordination of TABI and ABP and	Indicator deleted	

					provides synergies of both projects. It will be discussed in regular monthly meetings of ABP Project, as well as the NPC, CTA and other ABP staff are meeting on a day-to-day basis.		
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E. Annual Project Quality Assurance Assessment

Project Governance	
Are at least 40 percent of the personnel hired by the project, regardless of contract type, female?	Y
Dates of Project Steering Committee/Board meetings during reporting period (30 June 2015 to 1 July 2016)	June 2015
Did the Project Board function as intended this reporting period?	Y
Please add any comments on project governance.	The project has been managed by NIM modality and in line with NIM Standard Operational Procedures. The reporting for each period has been documented and reported to UNDP CO, which shown accountability, transparency and compliance of the implementing agency in implementing the project activities.
Annual Work Planning	
Have project inputs been procured and delivered on time and budget this reporting period?	Y
Will the project be able to close on time as planned?	Y
Please add any comments on annual work planning.	Annual worplan/budget for 2016 will be revised, taking into considerations the 2015 financial statements and urgent needs.
Stakeholder engagement and target groups	

<p>Please discuss how stakeholders and target groups were directly engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project this reporting period.</p>	<p>The local provincial, government, district and village authorities have been initiating activities and taken part in implementation and monitoring. The PBSAP formulation has strong ownership of the Luang Prabang Province. Other local activities have in some cases been initiated by farmers themselves (farmer trainers in IPM and oyster mushrooms) and at central level the sector working group is lead by the Government appointed Chair Person. Further, the preparation, formulation of the NABP II has been directed by the head of the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute.</p>
<p>Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)</p>	
<p>Please discuss how the project M&E Plan was implemented and used to support effective project management this reporting period (e.g. please consider whether progress data against the indicators in the project results framework was reported using credible data sources and collected according to the M&E plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant; whether lesson learned were used to take corrective actions as necessary; whether evaluations were conducted following the UNDP-GEF guidance available at www.undp.erc.org; and other issues as relevant).</p>	<p>The overall evaluation and monitoring as per GEF and UNDP guidelines have been followed. However, when it comes to monitoring of field activities in remote villages this has proven to be more difficult than envisaged due to difficult passable roads during the rainy season. The indicator monitoring of local implanted initiatives, however, is going on as planned and a number of "reviews and sustainability meetings" are will take place during Q3.</p>
<p>Social & Environmental Standards</p>	
<p>Were any new social and environmental impacts and risks identified this reporting period?</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>Please discuss how social and environmental impacts and risks were managed this reporting period, as relevant.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

F. Ratings and Comments on Project Progress

Project Progress toward Development Objective

Role	2016 Rating	2016 Comments
Project Manager/Coordinator	Satisfactory	<p>After a difficult period during the first half of project period, a number of good results have been achieved both at central and local levels. A milestone document by the project, the National Agrobiodiversity Programme and Action Plan 2015-2025 (NABP II), was finalized and presented in June to the Sub-sector Working group on Agrobiodiversity and well received by all stakeholders including representatives from the development partners. At local level, the interventions have continued with rice (IPM/FFSs), NTFPs (Melienta and wild Mushrooms), wild tea, oyster mushrooms, and fish conservation and now subject to sustainability considerations with none to very limited external assistance. The oyster mushroom groups are now expanded to five villages and some 10 tons of mushrooms have been produced as result of project support and sold at local markets and steps have been made for grower groups can produce own spawning material. Also the wild tea farmers are expanding their areas with higher rate than expected i.e. increased number of families (up from planned 13 to 62) and transplanted seedlings (up 50,000 to 96,000) and planted area (up from planned 30 ha to 50 ha). The medicinal plants survey in Donglong-Dongsouth forest (323 ha) has resulted in identification of 107 medicinal plants (one new species for Laos) and 157 wild food plants. A book covering 141 medicinal plants used by local healers for various ailments and diseases has been produced by the project in close collaboration with the Institute of Traditional Medicine (ITM). However, due to different ecology and soil conditions around the surrounding villages, farmers have not been keen to take-up the recommendation for domestications of medicinal plants put forwards by the ITM. The Melienta interventions has gained significant momentum and resulted in production and transplanting of some 4,000 seedlings and a draft farmer manual. One neighboring villagers have joined the original four villages. Unfortunately, the vegetable IPM was not continued as planned in 20015/2016, although the overall target of 1,000 trained farmers will be achieved. The fish conservation activities in the two districts have continued and resulted in establishing 20 conservation zones in two rivers. The impact study is still to be completed. Collaboration with the DARWIN project has continued with identification and database will be completed during the second half of 2016 in close collaboration with Biotechnology and Environment Institute of the Ministry of Science and Environment. A booklet on wild edible and poisonous species is also under preparation. The project has made additional awareness and information material of which some still need to the posted on official web-sites and some technical reports still need to the finalized. An additional information and awareness activity has been completed by establishment of four ethno-botanical plots at the Luang Prabang Botanical Garden and now studied by local students and will soon open for the public.</p>
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Satisfactory	<p>Although one target at the objective level is not fully reach target at the end of the project, other two targets were fully achieved. In addition, at the outcome, output and activities levels progress made were on track and achieved. Therefore, Satisfactory rating is given for this reporting period. The objective of the ABP Project is to provide farmers with the necessary incentives, capabilities and supporting institutional framework to conserve agro-biodiversity within the farming systems of Lao PDR. The target to be achieved is an increase in the area for agrobiodiversity conservation up to 100,000 ha. Progress in this reporting period has been increased from 300 ha to 97,300 ha, which almost reach the target. The factors influence this included priority changed in the government in land use planning, limitation of the verification of baseline data onof land availability for in-situ conservation during the inception phase. Other two targets set at the objective level were achieved. Four agro-biodiversity</p>

		<p>taxonomic groups were improved in the two target districts: Phoukout and Phonexay districts. The score for policy and regulatory frameworks for agriculture, forestry and fishery were increased from level 2 to level 3, as the strategy with action plan that integrated agro-biodiversity were available. Some action plans have been implemented as part of the ongoing activities of the development programme support by several development partners. Three targets and indicators were defined and they were fully achieved at the Outcome 1. National plans, policies and guidelines with agro-biodiversity were developed and finalized, led by the government, with supported from the development programmes, including supported from this project. These key documents were: (1) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan II (NBSAP II), (2) Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP) for Xiengkhoung, (3) PBSAP for Attapeu; (4) PBSAP for Laungpraban province (ongoing development), (5) National Nutrition Strategy and Environment Strategy 2020, (6) Upland Development Strategy, (7) National Agro-Biodiversity Programme (NABP); (8) National CBD Report. About 995 government officials were activity participating in meetings and training workshop and on-the-job training related to agro-biodiversity conservation, friendly farming technical application, which were organized by the project. More than 8 agro-biodiversity conservation, information and awareness raising materials were developed to support and enhance incorporation of agro-biodiversity into national and institutional frameworks such as PBASP reports, report on 95 edible and medicinal plants and animals in upland paddy rice based ecosystems, handbook for training of trainers on agro-biodiversity related laws, general awareness and information materials, and other technical reports. Under Outcome 2: The target for this output is to increase capacity of 1,000 farmers and progress was fully achieved. Capacity building and incentives were provided to local government and community to mainstream agro-biodiversity at the provincial and district and community levels. These included ABDI (sub-project), Farmer Field School training that capture several topics such as organic fertilizers, integrated pest management usage of local herb extraction as bio-insecticides and growing techniques for typical rice spicy, organic vegetation, oyster mushroom, wide tea, medicinal plants and fish farming. Six technical service centers in cluster villages were fully capable to implement capacity building and service on agro-biodiversity promotion. Participatory forest land use planning were developed and finalize for seven cluster villages, which enable the project to increase number of hectare for agro-biodiversity conservation at the objective level as well. Value added for fives agro-biodiversity products were help to promoted by the project as well including- wild tea, oyster mushroom, melientha, organic native rice, and medicinal plants.</p>
Project Implementing Partner		
GEF Operational Focal point		
Other Partners	Satisfactory	<p>As per project document, and effective from mid of 2014, FAO was given the core technical implementation role of providing long and short term consultancy inputs and technical backstopping from FAO staff. For this reporting period, the rating has been increased to the "Satisfactory" level, due the high level of activities and achievements on multiple fronts. At the national policy level, the National Agro-biodiversity Programme (NABP-II) has been finalized after extensive rounds of consultation, and it has been submitted for final approval by the Ministry leadership. The NABP-II has also been presented for information at the Sector Working Group on Agricultural and Rural Development that convenes the government and the development partners. The project has been supporting the work related to "Access and Benefit Sharing" (ABS) with documents and inputs at an international meeting under the leadership of the Ministry of Science and Technology's Biotechnology and Environment Institute, with the technical support</p>

		<p>of FAO. Furthermore, Agro-Biodiversity inputs have been provided to the Government's report to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) secretariat, and the final draft of the 2nd National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) for 2015-2025 has been prepared and the PBSAP for Luang Prabang is under development. At field level, the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) /Farmer Field Schools (FFS) programme has made significant progress with more than 500 farmers graduated at the end of the 2015 season-long (seed to harvest) training and field demonstrations. The FFS/IPM activities have provided the farmer graduates with skills and technical knowledge related to the role of agro-biodiversity in paddy rice production, including pest management, application of organic fertilizers, and use of bio-insecticide extracts made from local plants. A short film of the experiences of a rice farmer in the FFS has been finalized and provided to MAF, and has been uploaded on YouTube. In other small-scale investments in enhancing production systems, a key achievement has the production of nearly ten tons of Oyster Mushrooms by women's groups in five villages in Luang Prabang Province. The success of this activity has been highlighted by the Government to national agencies, and UNDP/FAO has promoted the efforts to development partners, including arranging a visit by the UNDP Administrator to the project site. The sub-project activities on fish conservation and medicinal plants are nearly completed, whereas the wild tea and Melientha sub-projects are expected to continue through 2016 with local support. The ABP has fostered collaboration at the field level with other FAO projects, and with the UK- Government DARWIN initiative with which the project staff have been conducting joint field survey work so that the ABP contributed more than half of the 1,500 entries/accessions to the newly established Lao national database on wild mushrooms. A considerable variety of information and communication material has been prepared including success stories (2), fact sheets (5), brochures (2), technical reports and papers (4), technical book (1), videos (1), photo exhibitions (2), and press releases(2) which all have contributed to increasing the knowledge and awareness of the importance of conservation and sustainable use of Agro-Biodiversity. The ABP project team presented key achievements at the World Food Day on 16 October 2015. Special presentations were also made to a delegation of Rome-based FAO Ambassadors, and to the leader of the FAO Strategic Programme on Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In this way, the project has significantly contributed to highlighting Agro-Biodiversity to wide range of stakeholders in Lao PDR from the national to local level, as well as putting Lao PDR on the "Agro-Biodiversity map" of the world.</p>
UNDP Technical Advisor	Moderately Satisfactory	<p>Agro-biodiversity is the foundation of food security. Protecting the multiplicity of wild relatives and landraces of commercially cultivated crops safeguards genetic diversity that can lead to crop improvement, such as pest or disease resistance, drought tolerance, and salt tolerance, all of which grow increasingly important as climate change progresses. The "Mainstreaming biodiversity in Lao PDR's agricultural and land management policies, plans and programmes" project seeks to provide the support necessary for farmers to maintain this vital resource and the global benefits that agro-biodiversity provides. Poor progress in the first half of project implementation necessitated significant restructuring following the Mid-Term Review. After redoubling their efforts, the project team has now made remarkable progress toward achieving the project's development objectives in the final years of the project. A majority of end-of-project targets have now been reached, but with several significant shortcomings as described below. Due to the nature of these shortcomings, it remains unclear if the impact of project activities will result in widespread or lasting change. For this reason, despite the outstanding performance of the project in the past year, I prefer to assign a DO rating of (MS) Moderately Satisfactory. To date, no critical risks have been identified for this project. Efforts to promote agro-biodiversity (ABD) in policy led to the creation of the National Agro-biodiversity Programme and Implementation Plan, 2015-2025; as well as the inclusion of ABD related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2016-2025; the draft Agricultural Development Strategy, 2020; the</p>

		<p>Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Luang Prabang Province; and the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) has added ABD to its technical program covering agriculture. These major achievements contributed to an increased score according to the GEF SP-2 Tracking Tool for policy and regulatory frameworks, but the project has not met its end-of-project target. This is an extremely promising start, but further work will be necessary to fully mainstream ABD into policy and strategy at multiple government levels. One important function of national level policy is to create an enabling environment for sub-national governments to take action. Recognizing this, the project also set a target for district-level authorities to formally allocate land for in-situ conservation of ABD. The project was only able to reach two districts over the course of the project, out of a target of eight districts. Without significant awareness and capacity at the lower government levels, it may be a lengthy process for the new national level policy to trickle down into on-the-ground action that actually results in real hectares conserved and managed for ABD. The project has also made a strong push toward mainstreaming ABD in the policy arena by building institutional and staff capacity within government agencies. To measure this, the project chose to count the number of officials who have participated in meetings or trainings. By this metric, the project achieved twice the end-of-project target, with 995 government participants over the course of the project involved in seminars, presentation, workshops, working group meetings, etc. However, there has been no evaluation to measure improvement in capacity of these participants. In similar fashion, the project carried out spectacular capacity building work at sub-government levels, training 981 farmers on sustainable practices for ABD conservation through Farmer Field Schools and other extension activities. However, there is no evaluation of skills acquired or level of uptake once the farmers return home. Without this data, there is uncertainty as to the true impact of project activities and the likelihood of sustaining these impacts over the long term. Progress in the last year is highly commendable and the project is undoubtedly on a positive trajectory, having achieved many significant milestones in a short period of time. The project is recommended to spend the final months focused on building stakeholder capacity to carry on the excellent work that is in progress, for even greater benefit and lasting protection of Lao PDR's globally significant agro-biodiversity.</p>
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Project Progress in Project Implementation

Role	2015 Rating	2016 Rating	2016 Comments
Project Manager/Coordinator	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Most of the planned activities have been carried out, albeit some have been delayed (e.g. PBSAPs) and some outside the control of project. Extra resources were allocated to prepare for the successful visit of the UNDP administrator. During the remaining period emphasis will be put on finalizing and reporting on core activities. Discussions will be made with other local partners and farmer groups on how to sustain successful interventions. Please also refer to comments made on the "objective rating" section.
UNDP Country Office Programme Officer	Moderately Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Progress made by the project team in this reporting period is Satisfactory. This rating is based on the progress made moving toward the outcomes, project governance, and quality of adaptive project management, monitoring of field work of the project. Activities under Outcome 1 are achieved. Coordination on agro-biodiversity has been promoted though supported and participating in the SWG and SSWG. The National Agro- biodiversity Programme II (NABP II) was finalized and translated from English to Lao. It was

			<p>present to the Subsector Working Group on Agro-Biodiversity and it was accepted by the meeting. It also presented to the Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development for dissemination. Technical comments were provided to MONRE to guide the improvement of the 2nd NABP and the National CBD report. The kick-off meeting for the PBSAP Luangprabang province was organized, which lead by the local government with support from IUCN and ABP team. In term of enhancing institutional capacity for agro-biodiversity and increased understanding among key stakeholders of agro-biodiversity and its significance, several communication and awareness materials were developed. The success story on the Oyster Mushroom as an "International Success Story" by both FAO and UNDP has resulted that the UNDP Regional Office in Bangkok has written an article on Nature Counts in close collaboration with the project. The article highlights the positive economic and nutritional effect of the oyster mushroom production and rice-fish, supported by the project. The factsheets (English and Lao) on Fish Conservation, Wild Tea, Melientha Conservation and Oyster Mushrooms, ethno-botanical plots were developed and disseminated. These products were shown at the exhibition booth during the project annual review meeting. Progresses of activities under Outcome 2 are on track to be achieved as well. The strengthening of the capacity of PAFO and DAFO to facilitate agro-biodiversity management is fully achieved. Currently the six training service center in the target districts are actively involved in the project implementation to promote the agro-biodiversity at the provincial, district and community levels. The activities at the district and communities level were implemented and lead by the district authorities and full participation from the communities. As a results, the promotion of biodiversity-friendly farming approaches in two targets provinces (Xiengkoung and Luangprabang) though implementing ABDI Project is also on track for the fish conservation, oyster mushroom cultivation, wild tea, melientha conservation and domestication, medicinal plants, organic rice and wide mushrooms. All ABDI projects will be finished in early Q4, 2016. Market support related activities to promote value added to the agro-biodiversity production have been implemented as part of the farmer field school and ABDI implementation. The participatory Land Use Planning for natural resources management at village level was up to speed and completed village land use plans for 36 villages, pending approval by the government. This activity was implementing in partnership with the ABI Project. The result of this activity was enabling ABP to increase the agrobiodiversity conservation area in target districts (Xiengkoung and Luangprabang provinces) to 97,300 ha. To sum up, the effectiveness of coordination and partnership development were progressing well; it results to completion of the land use planning, NABP, NBASP, and PBSAP development. The project continues to engage in discussions of Sector and Sub Sector Working Groups to mainstream agro-biodiversity into national and local policies. Monitoring of the overall budget and expenditure as well as progress of the activities was improved and enables to capture detail information and progress made in each quarter.</p>
Project Implementing Partner	Satisfactory		

GEF Operational Focal point	Moderately Satisfactory		
Other Partners	Satisfactory		
UNDP Technical Advisor	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	<p>The new project team for "Mainstreaming biodiversity in Lao PDR's agricultural and land management policies, plans and programmes" finished this reporting period on a high note, having made excellent implementation progress following extremely low performance by previous staff in earlier project years. Based on efficiency of outputs, quality of governance and project management, quality of risk management, quality of adaptive management and quality of monitoring and evaluation, the overall rating for Implementation Progress is (S) Satisfactory. Notable achievements during this period include: -- Project contributions to land use plans covering 97,000 ha. -- Sub-projects supporting cultivation of oyster mushrooms, Melientha, wild tea and Matsutake mushrooms providing economic benefit to local farmers. -- Promoting the mainstreaming of agro-biodiversity into two national, one provincial and two district level policy, plans and strategy documents. -- Participation of 505 government officials in agro-biodiversity related meetings, seminars, working groups and capacity building trainings. -- Publication of a number of education and awareness tools, including technical reports on aquatic organisms, mushroom cultivation and wild tea, project intervention fact sheets, two medicinal plant publications, a brochure on edible and medicinal wild mushrooms, an illustrated farmer's guide to mushroom cultivation, Melientha cultivation information, a video, photo exhibition, and more. -- 419 farmers trained in sustainable agro-biodiversity conservation techniques through Farmer Field Schools and other extension activities. -- Development of participatory Forest Land Use Plans (pFLUP) in seven village clusters in collaboration with TABI. Efficiency in delivery of outputs is acceptable, with 80% of the cumulative budget delivered heading into the final period of the project. Delivery in 2015 totaled 102%, with the slight over-spending justified by the vast acceleration of project delivery after years of poor performance. For the first half of 2016, delivery stands at 35%, with the majority of project expenses to be paid out in the final half of the year. Therefore, the rating for efficiency in delivery of outputs is (S) Satisfactory. Based on the strong level of outputs during this implementation period, there can be no doubt of the satisfactory performance of the team charged with governance and management of the project. A Project Steering Committee provided oversight, reviewing progress and work plans and serving as key decision-makers for high-level issues. The Project Management Unit was active in executing the project as scheduled in the Annual Work Plan in consultation with the implementing agencies and with strong stakeholder participation. Therefore, quality of project governance and project management is rated (S) Satisfactory. Since the project restructuring following the Mid-Term Review, the new project management team has been pro-active in addressing small risks as they arise, such that no critical risks have arisen to date. Additional staff were brought on board to handle the work load of accelerated implementation, further improving the team's capacity to deal with potential problems in a timely manner. In a similar manner, the new team has been able to adapt to conditions on the ground and continue to deliver outputs at an</p>

			accelerated rate despite minor setbacks. Currently the team is placing added effort to determine steps for project sustainability, now that outputs have been achieved at this late stage in the project cycle. Therefore, quality of risk management and quality of adaptive management are both rated (S) Satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of the project conforms to established UNDP and GEF procedures and is included in the project timeline and budgets accordingly. Ongoing monitoring is conducted by the Project Manager, comparing implementation progress to the Annual Work Plan and associated indicators, as well as conducting field visits, writing and reviewing progress reports. Therefore, quality of monitoring and evaluation is rated (S) Satisfactory.
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G. Project Planning

Key project milestone	Status	Original Planned Date (Month/Year)	Actual or Expected Date (Month/Year)	Comments
Inception Workshop	delayed/completed	October - 2011	November - 2011	
Mid-term Review	on schedule	6 - 2014	6 - 2014	
Terminal Evaluation	on schedule	September - 2016	September - 2016	
Project Closure	delayed/pending	May - 2016	December - 2016	

H. Critical Risk Management

Critical Risks Type(s)	Critical Risk Management Measures Undertaken in 2016
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I. Environmental and Social Grievances

Related environmental or social issue	
Status	
Significance	
Detailed description	

J. Communicating Impact

Tell us the story of the project focusing on how the project has helped to improve people's lives.
Ms. Vieng, 32, can now proudly say that she is a mushroom farmer of Luang Prabang Province. A smile appears on her face when showing an oyster mushroom fruiting body from a bag she learned to prepare after participating in a training on mushroom cultivation with her group in Huayman, her native village in Phonexay District. Together with three other village groups, she and other seven villagers from Huayman joined the cultivation group at the first stages in October 2014. From the onset, they learned how to prepare raw material with guidance of the Technical Service Center located in the neighboring village of Nambor. She immediately felt very motivated to take part in this new opportunity for her and her village. Farmers in the area have a long tradition of collecting wild mushrooms for consumption, but they knew little about

how to cultivate them. Organized by the Nambor Technical Center, the newly formed mushroom groups went on a study trip to learn from two other successful mushroom farmers in Luang Prabang. They quickly realized that oyster mushrooms are easily sold in the Luang Prabang markets at a price of 20-25,000 Kip per kg. So when the Technical Service Center facilitators, in partnership with Ms. Viengkham, an expert from the Department of Agriculture of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Vientiane, suggested offering training to the villagers to cultivate oyster mushrooms, they all agreed. It has been one year since Ms. Vieng joined the group. "As a result of the training her group has produced 1.5 tons of oyster mushrooms and now she spends less time in surrounding forests areas looking after food." said Ms. Viengkham. The group has sold mushrooms totaling 20 million kip (USD 2,500) of which 60% is deposited in a local bank. Many villagers, like Ms. Vieng, now have an extra income to better support their children. Ms. Vieng's group has prepared the second round of bags and has begun to harvest them. This time the villagers are paying most of the production costs, but still each member is expected to earn two million kip. Although the oyster mushroom is an easy species to cultivate, much attention needs to be paid to avoid contamination at every step in the preparation, from sterilization of bagged raw material and inoculation, to keeping the houses clean. This is also the key message that Ms. Viengkham repeats at her regular visits to the four villages. Huayman village displays a good performance, because the people well understood the simple sanitary rules like how to maintain optimal humidity through regular watering in the growing house. This has been key to success for the Huayman families, Ms. Viengkham says. "They were also very dedicated and interested and there is a good group solidarity. They even constructed a new growing house from their savings." She added. The oyster mushroom cultivation groups in Phonexay District have sparked interest and motivation of other villagers in the area. Mr. Hounpheng is a farmer that lives in Panma village, around 18 kilometers from the Nambor Technical Service Center. "When I learned about the groups, I asked the organizers to let me join and attend one training session and now I know how to cultivate them" he said, although he still needs money to buy equipment and a proper place to cultivate the mushrooms. "I would like to have a group organized in my village." he commented. The mushroom cultivation groups will have a third harvest in 2016 and thereafter they are expected to produce without technical assistance from Ms. Viengkham. Ms. Vieng feels that oyster mushroom cultivation has helped her a lot. She smiles and says: "I want to continue in the group, and from the earnings I also want to raise livestock.(added to FAO and UNDP web-sites).

What is the most significant change that has resulted from the project this reporting period?

During the project period, the National Agro-biodiversity Programme and Action Plan (2015-2015), through a series of consultation meetings, has been finalized and presented by the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) to the Government Leadership and Development partners. One of the events was covered by national TV and Vientiane Times.

Describe how the project supported South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation efforts in the reporting year.

The project invited two Chinese Tea experts, Professor Dr. Liang Chen, Tea Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Hangzhou and Dr. Shi Xiong Yang, Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences to provide inputs to one project activity. The visit resulted in identification of wild tea species in the nearby forest as well as a series of technical recommendations to new wild tea growers, targeted by the project. The visit also facilitated entry points for future collaboration on tea between the National Agricultural Research Institute and the Chinese counterparts.

K. Partnerships

Partners	Innovation and Work with Partners
Civil Society Organisations/NGOs	Partner with IUCN to support the development of Provincial Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Luang Prabang Province
Indigenous Peoples	The field activities cover three ethnic groups, the Phuen, the Khmu and the Hmong. In some cases they join activities, but normally they prefer to be separated due to different cultures and traditions. The project hired facilitators speak at least two of the required languages. Reading ability is limited and only Lao letters are used.
Private Sector	none
GEF Small Grants Programme	none

Other Partners	Partner with The Agro-biodiversity Initiative Project (TABI) to implement the pFLUP activities. The Project team also receives support from CO Public Information Unit and FAO Communication Officers to review publications of the project such as brochure, fact sheet, books, news, and receiving the visited of UNDP high-level management during the Round Table Meeting in Vientiane, November 2015.
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L. Progress toward Gender Equality

Has a gender or social assessment been carried out this reporting period?	No
If a gender or social assessment has been carried out what where the findings?	NIL
Does this project specifically target woman or girls as direct beneficiaries?	No
Please specify results achieved this reporting period that focus on increasing gender equality and improving the empowerment of women.	More than 90% of the oyster mushroom growers from five supported villages are female farmers of which one of them is now a mushroom grower trainer and capable of producing mushroom spawns. In this sense she takes a leading role and has become known for her expertise outside the focus area. The good progress of the female mushroom growers has been covered in newspapers and put on FAO and UNDP websites as a success story. The "mushroom female group" was also visited by the UNDP New York Administrator, Ms. Helen Clark, who praised the project result including the significant social and economic empowerment of women and immediately put the visit in her twitter account. Also the national technical support to this sub-activity is a female specialist.

M. Annex 1 - Ratings Definitions

Development Objective Progress Ratings Definitions

Highly Satisfactory (HS): Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as 'good practice'.

Satisfactory (S): Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.

Unsatisfactory (U): Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

Implementation Progress Ratings Definitions

Highly Satisfactory (HS): Implementation of all components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be presented as 'good practice'.

Satisfactory (S): Implementation of most components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only few that are subject to remedial action.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Implementation of some components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Implementation of some components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action.

Unsatisfactory (U): Implementation of most components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.