

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

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**SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY FOR
RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

ETHNIC GROUP DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DRAFT

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

1. This Ethnic Group Development Plan (EGDP) lays out the development strategy and program for the involvement of different ethnic groups in the Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project (FORDEV, or the Project). It furthermore aims to ensure compliance with policies of the Lao People's Democratic Republic concerning ethnic groups, as well as the World Bank's Operational Directive 4.20 on Indigenous Peoples.

2. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is one of the poorest and least developed countries in East Asia. Rural poverty, found primarily among households who live at the subsistence level is a major concern. Forestry constitutes a key sector of the economy. The proposed Project has been designed as a program of investments and institutional capacity building needed to support sustainable management of natural production forests, and to contribute towards reduction of rural poverty. A strong emphasis on the involvement and participation of villagers living in and adjacent to these natural production forests is an integral feature of the proposed project.

3. FORDEV is anticipated to have primarily positive impacts for local villagers, including ethnic minorities. The villagers will be free to choose whether or not they wish to collaborate with the government in participatory management of the natural forests. If they choose to do so, then they will benefit in terms of sharing in the revenues from timber harvests, which they can use for village development projects, as well as having opportunities to earn wages for labor in forestry activities. Villagers will also benefit from improved management of the forests, which will assure sustainable production of forest resources and environmental services upon which rural livelihoods depend. As each village will decide itself upon its participation in forestry activities and prepare its own village development projects, their participation will reflect the needs and wishes of each village and thus the different ethnic groups.

4. FORDEV's negative social impacts will be minimal. As participation in the Project activities will require some commitment of time, primarily during the dry seasons, it could affect the time that villagers have to participate in other income-generating activities. As the project will assist villagers with village development projects, there is a small risk that some villagers could lose assets or access to resources. It is also recognized that bringing forests under sustainable management may mean restrictions being placed on certain uses that villagers have been making of the forests¹.

¹ The villagers' customary rights to use forest resources for their own subsistence purposes will continue to be respected. Villagers have, however, been engaging to varying degrees in other activities, not officially sanctioned, to earn income, such as cutting timber or harvesting wildlife and other NTFPs. Insofar as it is possible, the project will work with villagers to enable continuation of forestry-related income-generating activities on a sustainable basis, and/or work with villagers to develop alternative income-generating activities. The project will endeavor to minimize any loss of access to resources or adverse impacts on livelihoods, but should they occur, they will be dealt with in accordance with the Resettlement Policy Framework.

5. The adverse impacts from the Project on non-Lao ethnic groups, primarily those from the Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) ethnolinguistic family, are anticipated to be minimal. These ethnic groups are more numerous in the more remote, upland forest sites than in the lowland forests. These non-Lao ethnic groups already are disadvantaged in terms of greater poverty, less access to development (such as roads, schools, and health clinics), and have a lower literacy in the Lao language than do Lao and related Tai-Kadai ethnic groups. FORDEV has been designed, however, to take these differences into account in its extension and training strategies. In addition, the present Ethnic Group Development Plan provides additional measures and activities to support the participation of ethnic groups in ways that are deemed culturally appropriate.

6. The institutional arrangements include social and anthropological inputs. The Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs of the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC) will be included in the inter-ministerial Central Project Steering Committee as well as in the monitoring of the social impacts of the project.² In this respect they function as the social counterpart of STEA. Furthermore, the LFNC will be involved as appropriate at the province and district levels, especially in the implementation of the participatory processes of the project. Inclusion of the LFNC, the organization tasked with the implementation of Government of Lao's (GOL) Ethnic Minority Policy, will enhance the sustainability of the project by providing the requisite official social science inputs and safeguards for minorities as called for in the Ethnic Minority Policy and in the work plan of the LFNC.

Forestry Sector and Rural Development

7. Forest management in Lao PDR has been on an unsustainable track for many decades. The capacity of forests to provide benefits and services in a sustained manner has been reduced because of wasteful, unplanned logging practices and conversion of forests to other land uses. In 1940 the forest cover was about 70% (17 million ha) of the total area. Current forest cover estimates range from 40.6% (MRC) to 47% (NAFRI), depending on the forest classification criteria. Much of the remaining forest is degraded.

8. A wide range of factors contributes to deforestation and forest degradation. Direct causes are uncontrolled commercial logging, land conversion for agriculture and infrastructure, and unsustainable utilization of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Underlying main causes include population growth, absence of enabling frameworks, insufficient technological knowledge and management capacity, unclear forest land tenure arrangements, and lack of alternative livelihood opportunities. In many areas, traditional management systems have broken down because of outside disturbances and pressures as well as due to increasing population. Inadequate funds and low government salaries and per diems also do not provide adequate incentives to staff to efficiently control forest utilization.

² The exact involvement of, and consultation with, the Lao Front is still to be worked out.

9. Since the National Forestry Congress in 1989 the GOL has taken a number of important steps to promote sustainable forest management. A Tropical Forest Action Plan was prepared in 1991, a number of major projects and governments programs have been launched and completed, and Forest Law and selected implementing regulations have been introduced. With support from development partners, GOL has also undertaken a number of projects, which have piloted various approaches towards more sustainable and more participatory forest management. The recent (May 2002) Prime Ministerial Decree 59 on Sustainable Management of Production Forests presents a concrete step forward in making participatory forest management a dominant approach for bringing the country's production forests under sustainable management.

Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project

10. The Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project aims to promote participatory sustainable management of natural production forests in Laos PDR. It builds upon the experiences gained and "lessons learned" of previous pilot projects in Lao PDR and elsewhere, including the Village Forestry pilot of the Forest Management and Conservation Project (FOMACOP), which ran from 1996 to 2000, and the Joint Forest Management (JFM) pilot, supported by the Lao-Swedish Forestry Programme (LSFP), which operated from 1994 through 2000.

11. The overall *goal of the project* is to institute systematic forest management in natural production forests nation-wide to alleviate rural poverty, protect biological diversity and enhance the contribution of forestry to the development of national and local economies in a sustainable manner.

The *development objectives of the project* are to:

- improve the policy, legal and incentive framework enabling the expansion of sustainable, participatory forest management throughout the country;
- bring priority natural production forests under participatory, sustainable management (PSFM); and
- improve villagers' well-being and livelihoods through benefits from sustainable forestry, community development and development of viable livelihood systems.

12. FORDEV will encompass work on the national level, both in terms of promoting policy and regulatory reform, development of training materials and guidelines, and other national level support services, as well as sectoral monitoring and control. In Project field sites, FORDEV will support sustainable forest management and village development activities. The Project will have four components, dealing with: (1) Support Services for Sustainable Forest Management, (2) Sustainable Forest Management and Village Development, (3) Sectoral Monitoring and Control, and (4) Project Management.

13. Field implementation (Component 2) is proposed to cover 528,000 ha of natural forests in 18 districts in Khammouane, Savannakhet, Salavan and Champassak Provinces,

including 270,000 ha of old (former pilot) project sites. This area would contain about 290 villages and an estimated population of 100,000-105,000 villagers, many of whom will benefit either directly or indirectly from the project. Poverty is widespread throughout the Project sites. The four provinces all have significant populations of non-Lao ethnic groups, ranging from 15.2 % in Champassack to 42.5% in Savannakhet. Overall in the project areas, it is estimated that 40% of the villages may contain Mon-Khmer, or other non-Tai-Kadai ethnic groups.

14. During project preparation, as part of the Social Assessment and the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process,³ efforts have been taken to consult with a wide range of stakeholders, particularly villagers of different ethnic groups. In December 2001-January 2002, consultations were held with 15 out of 60 former FOMACOP pilot villages and 8 out of 15 former JFM villages. In February 2002, during a field trip to the Project provinces, 4 villages in Saravane and one in Khammaoune were visited, and meetings conducted with villagers. In March-April 2002, the first phase of ESIA consultations were conducted. Six group meetings were held for the 79 former FOMACOP and JFM pilot villages. Twenty-six “new” villages in Khammaoune, Saravane, and Champassack Provinces were visited: in most of these villages, village meetings were conducted, while in a few, interviews were held with the village chiefs. The final phase of the ESIA consultations included consultations with 25 villages in Saravane and Champassack with a focus on villages with non-Lao ethnic groups.

15. In addition, at national and provincial workshops and other meetings conducted during project preparation, organizations such as the Lao National Front for Construction, Lao Women’s Union, and the Committee for Rural Development,⁴ participated in discussions of how to promote broad-based participation in, and sharing of benefits from, the Project.

16. This process has identified a number of issues relating to ethnic groups that will have to be assessed further and addressed in project design and implementation. It is vital to ensure that ethnic groups that may be vulnerable to the development process, due to their social and cultural identity distinct from the Lao ethnic group, do not suffer negative impacts from the Project and that they receive social and economic benefits that are appropriate to their particular cultures and circumstances. This aim is consistent with GOL national policies that promote a multi-ethnic society, and seek to ensure the full participation of ethnic minorities in the country’s development.

17. In view of these risks and challenges, and as required by the Bank’s social safeguards policies on Indigenous Peoples (OD 4.20) and Involuntary Resettlement (OP 4.12) an Ethnic Group Development Plan and a Resettlement Policy Framework have been prepared. These two instruments are inter-related and should be fully integrated

³ See “Participatory Forest Management, Village Development and Poverty Reduction: Social Feasibility and Assessment,” and “An Environmental and Social Impact Assessment and an Impact Monitoring Plan for the Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project.”

⁴ The Committee for Rural Development has since been dismantled.

into the general planning cycle of the project, particularly the Sustainable Forest Management and Village Development Component.

Ethnic Group Development Plan

18. The Project is anticipated to have a positive impact on ethnic groups living in the forest production areas. As some ethnic groups in the project areas are culturally, socially and economically distinct from more dominant groups, however, they are vulnerable to be disadvantaged in the development process. The government is thus required to prepare an Ethnic Group Development Plan (also referred to here as 'the Plan') to ensure that vulnerable ethnic groups do not suffer adverse impacts of the Project and that they receive benefits in a manner that is culturally appropriate to their particular circumstances as required by the Bank's safeguards policy on Indigenous Peoples (OD 4.20).

19. The present Ethnic Group Development Plan describes the legal, cultural and socio-economic context surrounding ethnic groups in Lao PDR, particularly pertaining to land tenure and natural resource use. The Plan describes measures, institutional arrangements and budgetary needs that addresses the particular needs and circumstances of ethnic groups that are vulnerable to the development process as defined below.

20. Finally, the Plan prescribes a process during project implementation that provides for:

- (a) collection of more site specific information on ethnic groups through participatory methods;
- (b) the informed participation of all members of ethnic groups covered by this Plan;
- (c) identification, in close cooperation with the given ethnic groups, of their specific needs and priorities to be incorporated into site specific community development activities and forest management agreements;
- (d) procedures for participatory monitoring and evaluation of project activities and their benefits and impacts on ethnic groups; and
- (e) complaint mechanisms.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ethnic Groups in Lao PDR

21. One of the main characteristics of the Lao PDR is its cultural diversity. Although there have been differing numbers given for the groups, specialists mostly agree on the ethnolinguistic classification of the ethnic groups.⁵ For the purposes of the 1995 census, GOL recognized 47 main ethnic groups or categories and 149 sub-groups, and the last revision of this list by the LFNC contained 49 categories, and over 160 subgroups (the forthcoming National Assembly will be asked to ratify this list in the near future).⁶

22. Thus, the official terminology for describing the diverse population of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is 'ethnic groups.' This terminology was introduced with the 1991 Constitution. The previous terminology is, however, still used by many Lao people. The term 'ethnic minorities' is used by some to classify the non-Lao ethnic groups while the term 'indigenous peoples' is not used by people in Lao PDR. The official terminology of the Lao Constitution is used in this Plan.

23. The ethnic groups of Lao PDR can be categorized in terms of four ethnolinguistic groups:

- the Lao-Tai (also referred to as 'Tai-Kadai'), which includes the dominant 'ethnic Lao' group (about 30 percent of the total population of Lao PDR) and lowland Tai speaking groups (about 35 percent);
- Austro-Asiatic, including the Mon-Khmer ethnic groups (about 23 percent);
- Hmong-Mien, including the Miao-Yao (about 7.4 percent);
- Chinese-Tibetan (also referred to as 'Sino-Tibetan'), which includes Chinese and Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups (about 2.7 percent).

GOL Policy and Legislative Framework Regarding Ethnic Groups

24. According to the 1991 Constitution, Lao PDR is defined as a multi-ethnic state, with "equality among all ethnic groups." Article 8 of the Constitution reads:

⁵ In the late 1950s, the former government had categorized the population into three major groups, the *Lao Loum* (lowlanders), *Lao Theung* (midlanders), and *Lao Soung* (highlanders). This classification was adopted for political purposes, to stress how all ethnic groups were part of the Lao nation and also to simplify a complex situation. It has been abandoned on a national level, i.e., in the 1991 constitution and 1995 census, but is still used by some provincial authorities. Chamberlain (1996) lists 236 ethnic groups that have tentatively been identified.

⁶ The important change in the new list is the classification by ethnolinguistic families (Lao-Tai, Mon-Khmer, Hmong-Mien, and Chinese-Tibetan) which agrees with the classifications of international specialists in each of these ethnolinguistic families. This is a major break with the Vietnamese system used in the past.

The State pursues the policy of promoting unity and equality among all ethnic groups. All ethnic groups have the rights to protect, preserve and promote the fine customs and cultures of their own tribes and of the nation. All acts of creating division and discrimination among ethnic groups are forbidden. The State implements every measure to gradually develop and upgrade the economic and social level of all ethnic groups.

25. The 1992 ethnic minority policy, *Resolution of the Party Central Organization Concerning Ethnic Minority Affairs in the New Era*, focuses on gradually improving the lives of ethnic minorities, while promoting their ethnic identity and cultural heritage. It is the cornerstone of current national ethnic minority policy. The general policy of the Party concerning ethnic minorities can be summarized as follows:

- Build national sentiment (national identity).
- Realize equality between ethnic minorities.
- Increase the level of solidarity among ethnic minorities as members of the greater Lao family.
- Resolve problems of inflexible and vengeful thinking, as well as economic and cultural inequality.
- Improve the living conditions of the ethnic minorities step by step.
- Expand, to the greatest extent possible, the good and beautiful heritage and ethnic identity of each group as well as their capacity to participate in the affairs of the nation.

26. The Ethnic Minorities Committee under the National Assembly is charged with the responsibility to draft and evaluate proposed legislation concerning ethnic minorities, lobby for its implementation as well as implementation of socioeconomic development plans. Ethnic minority research is the responsibility of the Institute for Cultural Research under the Ministry of Information and Culture. The lead institution for ethnic affairs is the mass (political) organization, the Lao National Front for Construction (LNFC), which has an Ethnic Affairs Department.

27. Despite these efforts, many ethnic groups lag significantly behind the ethnic Lao in virtually all measures of development, such as poverty rates, literacy, and health. Many ethnic groups are unable to speak the Lao language, and thus unable to effectively make use of schools and health clinics, whose staff are primarily Lao.

28. A 1996 LNFC seminar acknowledged that little had been done to implement the 1992 policy. Therefore, LNFC drew up a new work plan to more specifically address these issues. The 1996-2000 National Socio-Economic Development Plan had a primary objective of “poverty alleviation among ethnic populations in remote areas.” The current NSEDP (2001-05) does not specifically mention ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, it focuses on poverty reduction in the poorest areas, and links poverty reduction to stopping pioneering shifting cultivation – both of which affect ethnic minorities.⁷ An important

⁷ The 1996-2000 NSEDP, on which the 2001-2005 plan is based in fact focused on the reduction of poverty for “ethnic minorities in remote areas” as the main problem for development.

issue with respect to swidden cultivation is that the plan is aimed specifically at stopping “pioneering shifting cultivation” (*hay leuan loy*), not the rotational practice. This is an important distinction and needs to be emphasized since many provincial and district officials do not recognize the difference.

Other Relevant Policy and Legislation

29. The Government considers land to be national community property that is administered by the State for use in generating livelihoods and as a vehicle for socio-economic development, as specified in the Land Law. Moreover, the Government recognises that effective land use planning depends on the synthesis of macro-level planning based on national development goals and micro-level planning based on the needs for local area development. There is no personal ownership of land in the country. Land is owned by the state and the citizens are allowed to use it and its resources. Among the ethnic minorities, customary rights on land use are passed down from generation to generation. Traditionally, no titles were involved and no boundaries were officially demarcated.

30. The Government has developed a *land and forest allocation programme*, which assists villagers with boundary demarcation of villages, land use planning, and allocation of land to individuals, organisations, and villages. This programme is undertaken by the Government with the aim of addressing important forestry issues, such as stopping deforestation, stabilisation of shifting cultivation, improving land productivity, rural livelihood improvement, diversification of agricultural production and solving other related social problems. Although the policy is well-intentioned, land allocation has not been well implemented and has had the result of shortening swidden rotational cycles to a degree where they are not sustainable and are therefore causing poverty. The Government has recognized this and is in the process of reviewing the entire process.

31. Families may be allocated use rights to agricultural land. Once allocated agricultural land, families are then liable to pay taxes on their use of it. In many areas, families have been allocated three parcels, to permit them to rotate cultivation among the parcels. Many households do not have adequate land allocated to cultivate enough to meet their subsistence needs. The insufficient allocation is due to problems in application of the national land allocation programme, as well as the reluctance of many families to apply for more land (given the tax liability). According to findings reported in the *Participatory Poverty Assessment*, many villagers believe that the land allocation programme and other national programmes, such as relocation of villages, have contributed to the impoverishment of many rural households. Individuals and households may also be allocated “degraded” forest land on which they can plant trees, and have rights to the planted trees.

32. In 1996, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry issued Decree No. 54 (Approval/Decision on Customary Rights and the Use of Forest Resources No. 0054/MAF), recognizing the customary rights of the Lao people to forest resources for their own household subsistence needs (as opposed to cash sale). This document provides guidance on the interpretation of Prime Minister’s Decree No. 169 of 3

November 1993, on the Management and Use of Forests and Forest Land, which stipulates in Article 4, paragraph 3, that “the State recognizes the right to use forests, forest land and forest produce in accordance with the custom of villagers.” In Article 10, the MAF Decree No. 0054 specifies that villagers have the rights to harvest forest products for household use, the right to harvest for sale certain forest products “as specified in the District forest management contract, which are abundant in the area in volumes sustainable for the area,” the right to hunt and fish in accordance with legal requirements, and the right to use degraded or barren forest land in accordance with the land use planning and land allocation process. Article 11 mentions that the village authorities can adopt village regulations in accordance with the decree.

33. More recent decrees and regulations, however, have limited these rights insofar as they conflict with measures taken by government to promote sustainable forest management. Irrespective of customary rights, for example, no hunting of endangered wildlife species is allowed.

34. Traditionally, most ethnic groups in Lao PDR have engaged in rotational shifting cultivation in the forests, and relied upon forests as important sources of food, fuelwood, timber, materials for tools and handicrafts, traditional medicines, and other resources. In the past, some ethnic groups lived primarily by hunting and gathering in the forest, but such groups are relatively rare and small in number today, and are not present in the project areas. Most villagers, however, still rely upon natural forests for their vital elements in their daily subsistence and livelihood strategies, and as important income sources. In recent decades, in many areas some villagers have worked as casual labour for logging operations in the forests near their villages.

35. Throughout Laos, villagers recognize traditional boundaries for village territories. In addition, many ethnic groups have traditionally recognized certain areas of the forest as sacred forest sites. In addition, among most groups, traditionally individuals or households were considered to be the owners of specific trees, such as those used for resin-tapping or that may have ancestral spiritual significance. These are important aspects of village cultural and economic life that need to be investigated and respected in each village.

36. Ethnic groups vary in their farming practices, use of the forest, gender issues, and other cultural practices that shape their overall worldview. Unfortunately, relatively few full ethnographies exist to document this cultural diversity.⁸ It should also be

⁸ Notable exceptions are the ethnographic study of the Kmhmu ethnic group, *Kmhmu Livelihood – Farming the Forest* (S. Simana and E. Presig, Ministry of Information and Culture, Institute of Cultural Research, Vientiane, 1997); Izikowitz, Karl Gustav. 1951. *Lamet: Hill Peasants in French Indochina*. Göteborg: Ethnografiska Musset. [Reprinted in 2001 Bangkok, White Lotus]; Lemoine, Jacques. 1972. *Un Village Hmong Vert du Haut Laos: Milieu Technique et Organisation Sociale*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; Lemoine, Jacques. 2002. *Social Fabric, Education, and HIV Vulnerability Among the Lanten Yao of Muang Long, Luang Namtha Province, Lao PDR*. Bangkok: UNESCO; Vargyas, Gabor. 2001. *A La Recherche Des Brous Perdus: Population Montagnarde Du Centre Indochinois*. Paris: Scripta Editions; and Wall, Babara. 1975. *Les Nya Hön: Etude ethnographique d'une population du Plateau des Bolovens (Sud-Laos)*. Vientiane: Vitagna.

remembered that these different ethnic groups are not all practicing traditional lifestyles or necessarily living in isolation in the forest. But the study of what changes and what does not is a complex issue. We are as yet incapable of adequately describing the patterns of changes and non-changes in any comprehensive way, or of discerning the sets of rules that govern and explain such patterns. Societies, however, are dynamic, responding to changes in their overall environment, whether brought on by past, ongoing, or future logging operations or government programs. The proposed project will work with minority villagers to define the parameters of changes, and to provide them the opportunities to decide about their involvement in participatory forest management activities, and the use of timber revenues for development according to village priorities.

World Bank policy Application

37. The World Bank's policy on Indigenous Peoples provides policy guidance to ensure that indigenous groups benefit from development projects, and that adverse impacts are either avoided, or if unavoidable, are mitigated. The policy further requires special action in situations where Bank investments affect indigenous peoples, whose social and economic status restrict their capacity to assert their interests and rights in land and other productive resources.

38. Because of the varied and changing contexts in which indigenous peoples are found, no single definition can capture their diversity. In particular geographical areas, indigenous peoples can be identified by the presence in varying degrees of the following characteristics:

- a close attachment to their ancestral territories and the natural resources in these areas;
- self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group;
- an indigenous language, often different from the national language;
- presence of customary social and political institutions; and,
- primarily subsistence-oriented production.

39. Using these characteristics it has been determined that the World Bank's policy will apply to ethnic groups belonging to the Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien ethno-linguistic groups present in the project areas, including the Makong, Katang, Tri, Suoay, Ta Oy, Lavé and the Pacoh (other Mon-Khmer and Hmong-Mien ethnic groups may be present in the project areas and will be identified during project implementation). The policy does not apply to Lao-Tai ethnic groups. However, traditional practices and customary rights of Lao-Tai ethnic groups (e.g. the Phou Thay ethnic group as well as the Lao ethnic group) will also be incorporated into project implementation, but they will not be receiving additional support as described in this Plan.

Ethnic Groups in the Project Areas

40. More than one-third of the population in the four project provinces belongs to non-Lao ethnic groups. In three of the four provinces, they comprise 40 percent or more of the total population (Tables 1-3).

Table 1. Population in the Four Project Provinces by Ethnic Groups

Province	1995 Census Data	1997 Population Estimates	
		Total	% Ethnic Minorities
Khammaoune	273,779	288,600	134,500 (46.6%)
Savannekhet	671,581	711,500	302,400 (42.5%)
Saravane	256,550	271,400	108,600 (40.0%)
Champassak	501,387	531,100	80,727 (15.2%)
4 provinces	1,703,297	1,802,600	626,227 (34.7%)
LAOS	4,581,258	4,904,900	3,020,160 (61.6 %)

Sources: 1995 National Census, Lao PDR;

1997 Data excerpted from Table 1 (pages 4-5) in: Chamberlain, James R. 1999.

Ethnic Minorities in Rural Development. Working Paper 4. Improving Management and Implementation of the National Rural Development Programme. LAO/98/551. Bangkok. International Labour Organization.

Table 2. Major Ethnic Groups in Project Provinces

Province	Population 1995 census [2000 headcount]	Ethnic groups in province (out of 47 groups in 1995 census)	Ethnic groups with 100 or more persons	Non- Lao Ethnic Groups	Major Ethnic Groups (comprising 2% or more of the provincial population)
Khammouane	273 779 [297 866]	42	17	40.6 %	Lao (59.4%) Phou Thai (21.7%) Makong (13.4%)
Savannakhet	671 581 [754 777]	42	23	42.5 %	Lao (57.5%) Phou Thai (18.9%) Katang (8.7%) Makong (8.2%) Tri (2.7%) Lavé (2.4%)
Saravane	256 550 [287 818]	39	11	40.0 %	Lao (60.0%) Katang (13.3%) Souay (8.1%) Ta Oy (6.5%) Pacoh (4.9%) Lavé (3.3%)
Champassack	501 387			15.2%	

Table 3. Distribution of Main Ethnic Groups by Province (National Statistics Centre, 1995 census).

Ethnic Groups		Language group				Khammaoune		Savannakhet		Saravan		Champassack	
1995 Census	Translated from Lao ⁹	T K	M K	H M	ST	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Lao	Lao	X				161 883	59.4	386 294	57.5	153 776	60.0		
Phou Thay	Phu Thai	X				59 101	21.7	12 6990	18.9	4 235	1.7		
Katang	Katang		X			525	0.2	58 169	8.7	33 962	13.3		
Makong	Mang Kong					34 412	13.4	54 806	8.2				
Tri	Try					2 657	1.0	18 040	2.7				
Xouay	Souay					706	0.3	9048	1.3	20 793	8.1		
Laven	La Ven							512	0.1	8 549	3.3		
??	Kaleung							5 812	0.7				
Taliang	Ta Liang		X										
??	La Va							18 190	2.4				
Katou	Katu									1 068	0.4		
Alak	Arlak		X					3 170	0.4	397	0.2		
Ta Ooy	Oy, Taidam		X			147	0.1	3 333	0.5	16 753	6.5		
??	Ngae		?							2 759	1.1		
Pacoh	Pa Koh							388	0.1	12 667	4.9		
Kammou	Khamu		X			224	0.1	422	0.1				
Mong	Mong			X		549	0.2						
Lue	Leua	X				485	0.2						
Ko	Koo					483	0.2						
Phou Noy	Phou Noy				X	157	0.1						
Xek ?	Saik	?				2070	0.8						
Sing Moun	Singmoun					353	0.1						
Phong	Phong												
Lavè	Lavae												
Jeh ?	Yae			?									
Lavi	Lavi												
Thin	Thine							5 768	0.9				

⁹ Translated by Viloune Soybara from Lao provincial documents. At the time this analysis was done, Champassack was not under consideration, so no data was obtained. Language families: TK= Tai Kadai; MK=Mon Khmer; HM=Hmong-Mien; ST=Sino-Tibetan.

41. The project provinces and districts vary in social characteristics. In general, in the districts close to the Mekong, the ethnic composition of the population is predominantly Lao, who engage in irrigated (dry-season) rice cultivation and other activities. As one moves eastward in each province, the amount of irrigated rice cultivation decreases, whereas the amount of shifting cultivation increases, and the population of non-Lao ethnic groups increases, as does the relative degree of poverty and illiteracy. Some of the poorest villages are located in remote upland locations, including those with a high degree of forest cover.

42. The proposed Project will be in 18 districts, out of a total of 42 districts in all four provinces. Most of the project forest sites and hence districts are located in the lowland areas. The one upland forest site, Phou Talava, involves the districts of Ta Oi and Toomlarn in Saravane Province.

43. The published 1995 census data does not provide breakdowns of ethnic groups by district, but it does indicate ethno-linguistic categories, i.e., Mon-Khmer (Austro-asiatic), Tai-Kadai (Lao-Tai), etc. Project Districts where the Mon-Khmer (Austroasiatic) ethnic groups outnumber the Tai-Kadai ethnic groups include: Boualapha, Mahaxay, Phin, Ta Oi, Toumlane, Saravanh, and Lao Ngam.

44. This data, along with other socio-economic data (see Table 4), clearly illustrates the development challenges in more remote districts with higher proportions of non-Lao ethnic groups. These districts have higher levels of poverty, lower levels of literacy, lower levels of development, and distinct differences in agricultural practices. Many Mon-Khmer ethnic groups practice swidden and shifting cultivation. In Ta Oi and Lao Ngam Districts, swidden cultivation comprises the majority (81.9 percent or more) of all rice cultivation. In Bachiangcaleunsom and Mahaxay, swidden is also the dominant rice cultivation system (58.0 – 80.0 percent).

45. As the recent national *Participatory Poverty Assessment* study argues, poverty in Lao PDR is primarily faced by the rural non-Lao ethnic groups, who comprise 93 percent of the country's poor. They face problems of poverty on household, village, and district levels, in terms of food security and limited access to public resources, infrastructure and services such as all-season roads, education, clean potable water and health services. Even where ethnic groups have a school or health clinic in their village, often they do not make much use of it, if the government staff cannot speak the local ethnic languages.

46. In general, throughout Lao PDR, villages are organized along ethnic lines, i.e., typically all the village members belong to one ethnic group and speak their own ethnic language. In some cases, larger villages may be comprised of two or more ethnic groups, who then usually inhabit different hamlets or neighborhoods (*nouay*) of the village. The general socio-economic situation for the villagers in the project areas, in terms of limited literacy, and lack of access to infrastructure and government services, is discussed in more detail in the working report on *Participatory Forest Management, Village Development and Poverty Reduction* (Volume III, Section E).

Table 4. Selected Key Socio-economic Indices for Project Districts.

Province / District	Total Population (2000)	Total Villages	Educational Levels (Literacy in Lao)			Dominant Ethno-linguistic Family	Swidden rice (% total rice area)	Poverty ranking
			Literacy Rate(%): Men	Literacy Rate (%): Women	Population without primary education (% aged 6 & older)			
Khammaoune	297 866	801						
Xebangfai	22 316	50	68.1-80.3	37.5-52.6	34.4-50.3	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Mahaxai	25 692	90	54.0-67.7	20.4-31.5	50.3-66.3	TK-MK	58.0-80.0	1
Xaybuathong	17 102	65	35.4-52.9	0-19.9	66.3-90.9	TK	0.0-10.6	2
Boualapha	20 926	81	35.4-52.9	0.0-19.9	66.3-90.9	TK-MK	0.0-10.6	2
Savannakhet	754 777	1500						
Thapangthong	28 595	76	68.1-80.3	20.4-31.5	50.3-66.3	TK-MK	0.0-10.6	1
Songkhone	81 511	143	81.1-95.4	54.3-69.2	17.6-34.4	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Phine	46 088	116	68.1-80.3	20.4-31.5	50.3-66.3	MK-TK	0.0-10.6	2
Phalanxay	27 713	78	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0
Xonbuly	21 866	107	68.1-80.3	20.4-31.5	50.3-66.3	TK-MK	0.0-10.6	0
Saravane	287 818	728						
Ta Oi	9 338	56	35.4-52.9	0.0-19.9	66.3-90.9	MK-TK	81.9-98.5	3
Toomlarn	8 706	67	35.4-52.9	0.0-19.9	66.3-90.9	MK-TK	0.0-10.6	3
Saravane	35 490	164	68.1-80.3	37.5-52.6	50.3-66.3	MK-TK	0.0-10.6	0
Lao Ngam	21 687	111	54.0-67.7	20.4-35.1	50.3-66.3	MK-TK	81.9-98.5	0
Vapy	14 174	65	68.1-80.3	37.5-52.6	34.4-50.3	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Khongxedone	52 013	107	68.1-80.3	37.5-52.6	34.4-50.3	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Champassack								
Sanasomboon			81.1-95.4	37.5-52.6	34.3-50.3	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Bachiangchaleunsom			68.1-80.3	20.4-35.1	34.3-50.3	TK-MK	58.0-80.0	0
Phatumphone			81.1-95.4	37.5-52.6	17.6-34.3	TK	0.0-10.6	0
Source of Information	NSC: 2000 headcount		NCS,1995 (Lao Atlas,2000)	NCS,1995 (Lao Atlas, 2000)	NCS,1995 (Lao Atlas, 2000)	NCS,2000 (Lao Atlas,2000)	NCS,2000 (Lao Atlas,2000)	WFP, 2000

Notes: 1. Ethnolinguistic families: TK (Tai-Kadar); MK (Mon-Khmer)

2. Poverty ranking: composite index based on (1) provincial ranking, (2) Lao Expenditure & Consumption Survey (LECS) ranking, and (3) World Food Programme "poverty vulnerability" ranking. A score of 3 indicates that the district was ranked as a "poor" district according to all three ratings.

3. Phalanxay District was created recently, so is not included in some of the breakdowns of 1995 data by district.

Particular risks and issues concerning ethnic groups and the Project

47. Communities within the project areas vary in terms of social organization, culture, land use practices, food security, Lao language abilities, access to resources, gender roles and participation in local development planning processes. Some communities, in particular vulnerable and marginalized ethnic groups, pose particular challenges and risks in relation to the proposed project. These challenges and risks include, but are not limited to:

- Potential changes to traditional and current land use practices, including harvesting of NTFPs and upland rice cultivation (shifting cultivation or rotational agriculture), that might affect local communities adversely;
- Cultural practices, e.g. spirit forests—which need to be recognized in preparation of forest management plans and their implementation;
- Varying level of Lao language ability (both written and spoken) among villagers, including women and other groups within a given village, effect the level of participation in development processes among non-Lao speaking villagers;
- Weaker capacity of particular local communities (e.g. vulnerable ethnic groups) to participate in development activities, which may require additional project assistance to provide for equal participation and project benefits among different communities or among villagers within a particular village;
- Weak capacity of PAFO and DAFO staff to work with vulnerable ethnic groups, including lack of local language skills and gender and cultural sensitivity;
- Government programs that do not pay sufficient attention to the traditional – often environmentally sustainable – practices of ethnic communities, particularly the land allocation program that aims to stabilize or minimize shifting cultivation.

48. The major challenges for the Project in working in these areas will relate to lower levels of development, and language and communication issues, as non-Lao ethnic groups, and women within all groups, have significantly lower rates of fluency in both spoken and written Lao.

49. In some ethnic minority villages, the level of poverty is quite acute. During project preparation, some ethnic group villages were visited where villagers spend most of their time focusing on obtaining enough food to eat, as their annual rice crops only produce enough to feed the family for 3 months.¹⁰ In such cases, the project will need to make arrangements so that villagers engaging in forestry activities can be paid for their

¹⁰ In a couple of hamlets visited in Ta Oi District of Saravane Province, the villagers were in obviously poor health and many were ill. They anticipated finishing eating their rice November harvests during the month of February. The villagers were spending time in the forest, looking for other foods (i.e., forest tubers, wildlife, fish). These hamlets consisted of villagers who had been encouraged by the government to relocate their settlements adjacent to the road, and thus had been established in the past 3-7 years. In one hamlet, few families had given up on the new site, and moved back to their former location. In such situations, unless the villagers can be assisted to meet their daily food needs, they will not be able to participate in the project's training, forestry work, and other activities.

labor, either in cash or through food-for-work, as the work is done, rather than waiting until after the timber is harvested and sold.

49. Gender issues are intimately related to ethnic issues, as the cultural definitions of gender roles, rights and responsibilities vary from one ethnic group to another. According to the 1991 Constitution and various laws, women and men have equal rights in Lao society. Nonetheless, many rural people have limited knowledge of women's legal rights. Typically, for example, when land allocation certificates are issued in the name of the "male household head." The rates for women and girls' participation in, and benefit from, development activities is substantially less than those for men and boys. Throughout the country, and across all ethnic groups, women's literacy rates are substantially lower than those of men.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR ETHNIC GROUPS

50. The *overall objective* for the Ethnic Group Development Plan is to build on the relative advantages and potentials of the different ethnic groups and to ensure that vulnerable ethnic groups do not suffer adverse impacts of the Project and that they receive benefits in a manner that is culturally appropriate to their particular circumstances. This Plan provides an overall framework of the policy, strategy, and process to be followed. It does not spell out in detail what will be activities with each individual ethnic group or village, since such details will be worked out during project implementation, through the participatory processes for land use, forest management, and village development planning. Thus, the individual land use, forest management and village development plans can be seen as the detailed “action plans” whereby the results of the participatory planning with the concerned ethnic groups will be materialized. However, to provide the foundation for all ensuing planning and project development a few key actions and implementation arrangements have been identified to be implemented specifically under the Ethnic Group Development Plan; primarily short ethnographies, training activities and the involvement of the Lao Front for National Construction (at national level, its Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs).

51. *The concerns of different ethnic groups are primarily met through the design of the project itself.* The project design elements that define the strategy to address ethnic group concerns, include participation in sustainable forest management and forest production activities, resource agreements that recognize traditional practices and customary rights of ethnic groups, and village development activities, to be based upon the villagers’ own needs and priorities.

52. The project design builds upon the lessons learned during the previous pilot project, the Forest Management and Conservation Project (FOMACOP), which worked with 60 villages in Savannakhet and Khammaoune Provinces. FOMACOP worked with villages that contained a variety of ethnic groups, over half of which were non-Lao-Tai ethnic groups.¹¹ Evaluations of FOMACOP found that the training program had worked well, but relatively few women participated in the training or the leadership of the VFAs.

Language

53. During the project preparation for FORDEV, it was apparent that in some villages very few villagers, primarily men, were fluent in spoken Lao.¹² In many other villages,

¹¹ The FOMACOP project database, however, did not provide data by ethnic group, but rather categorized each village, or village forestry association (VFA), as Lao Loum or Lau Theung. For the 49 VFAs (57 villages) in the database, 18 were classified as Lao Loum, 22 as Lao Theung, 1 as mixed (both Lao Loum & Lao Theung), and 8 had no information on ethnicity in database. For more information, see Annex 1.

¹² Of the 30 new villages visited between February and April 2002, 10 contained ethnic groups classified under the Mon-Khmer ethno-linguistic group (see Annex 2). Often several villagers could not

although villagers claim that most villagers can speak Lao, relatively few can read and write it, particularly older women.¹³ During the post-FOMACOP expansion of activities into new villages in Khammouane, the training approach has been modified to provide more “learning-by-doing” training in the villages and/or forests, as opposed to in a training center, to accommodate this language issue (Xébangfay DAFO, personal communication, February 2002).

54. FORDEV will more explicitly address this language issue, through:

- Generating audio-visual materials in local languages. This is the most effective way of creating understanding of the project among ethnic minority villagers;
- Adapting training, to provide more learning-by-doing training in the field and the village;
- Providing support, where needed, for functional literacy and numeracy training for villagers; and
- Using government and collaborator staff members who are fluent in ethnic group languages in villages where relatively few villagers are fluent in Lao. Where GOL staff available are not fluent in the local languages, either GOL will recruit other staff with the appropriate language capabilities, and/or the project will work with NGOs or other collaborators who have such language skills. If neither approach is feasible, then the Project will hire competent local people to serve as interpreters with non-Lao speaking villagers.

Baseline Information

55. To ensure appropriate implementation based on a good understanding of the different issues pertaining to particular ethnic groups and particular areas, baseline information will be collected on ethnic groups, which precedes the general data collection activities during project implementation, such as socio-economic surveys, PRAs, and land use and village development planning. The initial information collection will include the following:

- 1) A detailed ethnic survey and mapping of the project areas;

speak, let alone read, the Lao language. In every village, however, at least a few villagers, usually men, speak Lao. Village chiefs in this part of Laos usually speak Lao. However care must be taken because even when villagers do speak some Lao, they speak it with different underlying worldviews, and different lexical associations.

¹³ In the fieldwork it was apparent that if the village leaders or spokespersons were asked if the villagers spoke and understood spoken Lao, they will usually reply that all the villagers do. In the pilot (pre-test) visits in February, however, when this issue was discussed in more depth with villagers, they would often admit that many villagers have little or no understanding of spoken Lao – especially older women, and also children in villages lacking schools.

- 2) acquisition of relevant studies that have already been carried out for those ethnic groups in the project areas;¹⁴
- 3) short-term ethnographies prepared on each ethnic group by an experienced anthropologist together with a Lao counterpart.¹⁵ The ethnographies will identify issues of general cultural, social and economic relevance as well as particular issues relating to forest practices, such as ethno-forestry and ethno-ecology, that is, local taxonomies and classification systems of forests and the environment. The ethnographies will also identify relative strengths and potentials of the ethnic minorities, especially indigenous knowledge, which will feed into the FMA and VD plans;

56. The baseline information and ethnographies will provide specific recommendations and material for participatory project planning, training exercises and further site-specific data collection needs, to inform sustainable forest management (particularly the Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) and sub-FMAs) as well as village development activities to be carried out with villages and particular capacity building activities for members of ethnic groups). More specifically, the following outcomes are expected:

- 1) a set of recommendations for ensuring that the participatory planning process deals appropriately with issues relating to ethnic groups who may otherwise be excluded or marginalized from the process and project activities;
- 2) a training plan (and materials) for project staff concerning ethnic minorities and gender¹⁶ (e.g. cultural awareness and sensitivity raising, understanding of ethnic group issues related to forest management and village development); and
- 3) a set of recommendations of how to address varying ethnic group issues in sustainable forest management activities (e.g. Forest Management Agreements), including traditional knowledge and practices that may enhance sustainable forest management.

Participatory Approach

57. The Project has been designed in such a way as to provide opportunities for full participation by beneficiaries. Villagers will participate in identifying the problems they face, through an appraisal and participatory planning process, leading to the preparation of Village Development projects. Initially, some of the VD projects will be funded by FORDEV through VD grants. As villages obtain a share of the forest revenues, however,

¹⁴ E.g. Vargyas articles and book (cited above) on the Brou (which can be applied to the Tri, Makong, and several other groups).

¹⁵ Preferably the counterpart should come from either the Institute for Cultural Research, and/or the Department of Ethnic Minorities Affairs of the Lao Front for National Construction. See TOR in Annex 3.

¹⁶ Issues pertaining to ethnic groups and gender are interrelated and should be dealt with in a combined fashion as gender relations vary significantly among different ethnic groups.

these revenues will fund VD projects. FORDEV will require participatory identification of village conditions and needs. The information from the village development planning process will be the basis for the villagers to prioritize their Village Development projects and for the FORDEV to ensure that they are culturally and socially compatible with the needs and priorities of the ethnic groups.¹⁷ In addition to the ethnographic studies described above, the Project will make provision for special studies, if needed, to enhance the participation of particularly vulnerable ethnic groups or villages or otherwise inform the project implementation.

58. Participatory planning approaches will also be utilized in the activities of the Participatory Sustainable Forest Management sub-component, including the land use and forest management planning and implementation processes. The villagers will work with project and district staff to develop land use maps and future land use plans, and collaborate with the Forest Management Technical Units to develop forest management plans taking into account the current practices of the local communities, including rotational cultivation. These land use and forest management plans will take into consideration the local cultural values of each village and each ethnic group. Thus, areas that are important to local people, such as sacred forest areas, burial grounds, or spirit trees, will be designated in the plans, and will be managed as protected areas (i.e., harvesting of timber and other resources will not be permitted). The villagers may develop local (village) by-laws to govern how such areas will be managed.

59. The participatory planning methodology will build upon the approaches piloted in the previous project, FOMACOP. The issues to be documented will include, but not be limited to:

- ethnic and socio-economic profile, including household wealth ranking;
- land and resource use;
- land tenure, including any conflicts;
- risks and possible project impacts on ethnic groups to be mitigated; and
- needs and priorities of the community as a whole as well as specific needs and priorities of groups within the community, such as ethnic groups, women, youth, and poorer households.

60. Simple guidelines including simplified participatory methods and tools will be developed for the above purposes, guided by the specific issues pertaining to ethnic groups as identified in the ethnographic surveys and studies described above. Guidance and training from the Project will be provided to villagers so that they can prepare and implement effective demand-driven village development plans and projects. Local and regional community development specialists will be hired to help implement the program and to provide capacity building assistance to the district government staff and the villagers. Several qualified people in the country are familiar with the cultivation practices and other issues of ethnic groups; their expertise will also be tapped for this program.

¹⁷ See Operational Manual for the Village Development Component for more details on the planning process.

Consultation and Information Dissemination

61. A strong information dissemination program will be established for the Project to provide project information as well as to promote transparency in available resources and costs of various project activities. The information will be disseminated first orally in the languages of the villages by ethnic minority staff. The media used will be a combination of modern and traditional sources depending on the access to such sources and the literacy level of the communities. Written extension materials to be developed by the project will be multi-purpose, i.e., to provide materials that cover the technical issues, but can also be used as additional reading material in the functional literacy and numeracy courses. In addition to text and speech, alternative medium such as pictures, visual aids, radio, video and other appropriate methods will be used, such as AV materials in local languages. The efforts will be carried out during a time and space convenient to the villagers.

62. In the unlikely situation that a village chooses not to participate in the project, the forest within the village territory will not be included in the forest management plan. Such villagers will, however, be consulted prior to development of the forest management plan, to ensure that the plan does not have any adverse impact on their use of resources from that forest. If it is not possible to avoid adverse impacts, the affected persons and/or communities are entitled to compensation as set forth in the Resettlement Policy Framework.

Land Tenure

63. The Project is not in a position to directly establish land titles for ethnic groups. As discussed earlier, there is no personal ownership of land in Laos. Land use rights are allocated under the mandate of the *land and forest allocation program*, which has shown to have adverse impacts on ethnic minorities, particularly in regards to its emphasis of stabilizing or eradicating shifting cultivation. Instead, the Project will assist in enhancing land tenure security for local communities by establishing land use plans that recognize traditional practices such as shifting cultivation (rotational), that are environmentally sustainable.

64. FORDEV will support collaboration between government staff and villagers to prepare land use plans and forest management plans, as well as village development plans and projects. The land use plans will be based upon the recognition of customary rights, including village boundaries. Similarly, the forest management plans and agreements will take local customs into account, and will make provision for local uses, such as shifting cultivation (rotational), sacred forests, burial grounds (cemeteries), spirit trees, and other culturally important sites and resources within the forest (e.g. NTFP). Forest management planning will ensure that sufficient land is available to allow appropriate fallow periods for shifting cultivation that is sustainable based on real appreciation of soil

capability; i.e. 7-12 years of fallow, rather than the unsustainable periods of 3-4 years being promoted in some locations.

Community Resource Rights (CRR)

65. If in the VD plans there is exploitation of indigenous or traditional knowledge (IK, TK) of medicines or other genetic resources, measures will need to be put in place should these develop into major pharmaceutical or other commercial uses. The project will insure that should the need arise, the rights of villagers will be protected from bio-piracy and that they will share significantly in any benefits that could result from patenting by non-villagers protecting their Community Resource Rights or Tribal Resource Rights as recognized by international agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Intellectual Property Organisation and World Trade Organization, e.g. as with respect to the Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS).

66. In addition, the project will preserve indigenous knowledge from the loss of the ethnic minorities' territorial base through the destruction of the forests or ecological systems or their displacement by government projects or through commercial utilization of natural resources that would affect minority communities' ability to sustain their knowledge.

Capacity Building

67. The Village Development Plans and VD Projects will be based upon local needs and priorities. FORDEV will assist villagers to address problems of household- and village-level poverty, by focusing first on food security issues, followed by other income-generating needs, and then by village infrastructure. An important aspect of addressing rural poverty will also be to empower the villagers, through building their skills for village-level organization and management, and participatory planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of development efforts. For ethnic groups with limited fluency in spoken and/or written Lao, efforts will be made to provide training in functional literacy and numeracy.

68. In early phases of the Project, all field staff will receive social sensitivity training, to address issues of working with different ethnic groups, and addressing gender and poverty issues. This training will be based on the advice from the anthropologist TA and ethnographic studies, and will be provided in parallel with the overall training program for the Project. However, given its particular nature, the training will be provided by experts outside MAF all the way down to the district level. The entity for providing this training will be identified by the anthropologist TA.¹⁸

¹⁸ Two Lao institutions with experience with ethnic minority issues and capacity to carry out this training are the Institute for Cultural Research (at the Ministry of Information and Culture) and the LFNC, Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs. To build national capacity the Project should aim at the

69. The Project will ensure that, in areas with ethnic minority communities, the local and district units working on these components will have ethnic minority staff and/or ethnic minority representatives to help in the implementation. Appropriate local institutions will be used to assist the implementation of project activities as identified in the baseline information collection process. In most cases, this is most likely to be the representatives of the Lao Front for National Construction. NGOs may also be utilized as needed.

Institutional Arrangements

70. District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) staff members will be working with villagers on participatory sustainable forest management (PSFM) and village development (VD) activities. In areas with ethnic groups covered by this Plan, they will work with traditional leaders representing the particular ethnic groups. In addition, they will involve the district and village representatives of the LFNC where appropriate (in some cases these may be the selected representatives of ethnic groups). In mixed villages DAFO staff will insure involvement of representatives of all ethnic groups. Some DAFO forestry staff will be assigned to the Forest Management Technical Units (FMTUs), which will work with villagers on the participatory forest management activities. Other DAFO staff will be assigned to the new integrated extension teams, to be called Farming Systems Extension Workers (FSEW), under the new District Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service (DAFES). One FSEW will have the lead responsibility for working with a particular village. Other District staff, such as from Education, Health, and Planning, will also be involved in working with villagers to facilitate preparation of the Village Development Plans. These District staff will be supported by provincial staff, as well as the Project's technical advisors (national, regional, and international) working on PSFM and VD. The Lao Front will, as appropriate, be involved to provide social inputs concerning ethnic groups at all levels.

71. The Project's technical assistance team will have responsibility for working with GOL counterparts and villagers to implement the EGDP. The National Project Director and Chief Technical Advisor will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the EGDP is implemented. More specific responsibility for day-to-day activities will lie with the Village Development Advisor, the Participatory Forestry Advisor, and the Provincial Village Development Coordinators, and Provincial Participatory Forestry Advisors. The Village Development Advisor will lead the field team efforts in this regard.

72. The Lao Front for National Construction will sit on the inter-ministerial Central Project Steering Committee. The Front will also be involved in provincial, district and village level committees and working groups as appropriate. The detailed arrangements for the Front's involvement in the project will be worked out during the first phase of implementation under the guidance of the National Project Director.

participation of these, however, external, non-Lao, resources may be needed to assist in undertaking these training exercises, e.g. consultants from Thailand or foreign-based NGOs present in Laos

Implementation Schedule

73. The overall implementation schedules for activities in the Sustainable Forestry and Village Development Component are provided in the Annexes to the Main Report. Activities will be implemented on a staggered schedule, beginning first with the former pilot villages, then expanding into new areas. As activities in Phou Talava (the pilot upland forest) are to be piloted, they will be starting later to allow time for additional preparatory studies and modification of the existing approaches and training programs.

74. At project start a short-term consultant (anthropologist) will be recruited to coordinate, under the guidance of the TA team, the initial ethnic group survey and ethnographic studies (see TOR in Annex 3). Also at project start, a research institute, preferably Lao, will be recruited to undertake, together with the anthropologist, the initial survey and studies. Following these activities, an institute/organization will be recruited to undertake the ethnic group training program. The recruitment for the survey/studies and the training may be lumped together as one contract.

75. The general implementation schedule for Village Development specifies during the first year a baseline socio-economic study will be conducted for all project sites, and a more in-depth socio-economic study will be conducted for the Phou Talava area, to look in particular at ethnic group issues and how the project approach may need to be adapted for upland sites. This study will require short-term technical assistance from an anthropologist or other specialist with expertise in the ethnic groups of the region.

Financing

76. The overall cost of the Sustainable Forestry and Village Development Component is estimated to be USD 9.808 million, amounting to 69.1 % of the total project cost of USD 14.2 million. The funds will support: (1) the participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of both participatory forest management and village development; (2) Village Development grants for VD projects; (3) villager training; (4) technical assistance; (5) information dissemination program; (6) staff costs at the provincial and district levels; and (7) staff training.

77. Since the participating villages will only be selected during project implementation, it is not known how many ethnic groups will participate. However, it is estimated that approximately 40 percent of the 290 villages to participate in FORDEV will be ethnic groups covered by this Plan. Thus, approximately 40% of the Component 2 budget, or **USD 3.9 million**, will be going to support activities with such ethnic groups. Provisions for funding the general implementation of this Plan, such as additional attention to ethnic groups issues in TA, socio-economic surveys, participatory processes, monitoring and evaluation, NTFPs, training and staffing needs, are included in the general budget.

78. Additional budget support to implement the EGDP will be as follows:

Activity	Duration	Cost
Short-term technical assistance (anthropologist) to coordinate the initial survey and ethnographic studies	4 months	\$ 60,000
Short term research institute to undertake initial survey and ethnographic studies	6 months	\$ 40,000
Short term institute to undertake training program for ethnic group issues (including materials)	3 months	\$ 20,000
Special study for pilot upland forest site	4 months	\$ 60,000
Other studies or activities, as identified during implementation	6 months	\$ 80,000
TOTAL		\$ 260,000

79. During Project Supervision Missions and the Mid-Term Evaluation, the level of budgetary support required to effectively implement the EGDP will be reviewed, and if needed, adjusted.

Complaint monitoring and conflict resolution mechanisms

80. Complaint mechanisms should be patterned after traditional institutions for conflict resolution. These exist in varying degrees and may differ considerably, especially between the Katuic and Bahnaric groups in the project areas. The description of traditional legal systems will be a part of the initial ethnographic studies.

81. It is possible, and indeed likely, that problems, complaints, and/or conflicts may arise with respect to the project as a whole, and village development activities, in particular. Certain issues, such as the compliance with national law, regulations, and forest management agreements, are to be addressed through legal and regulatory provisions. Prime Ministerial Decree No. 59 specifies in Article 15 provisions for resolution of disputes. Further clarification of the procedures to be followed will be specified in the forthcoming implementing regulations.

82. In the case of disputes at a village level, normally it will be the responsibility of Village Administration officials to solve the issue, but if satisfactory resolution is not obtained, then the parties can appeal to district and/or provincial authorities for assistance. If a problem occurs between villages, such as a dispute over village boundaries, then normally the district authorities would mediate a resolution. In the case where a problem arises between the villagers and government, such as between one or more VFCs/VFAs and the Forest Management Technical Unit, then the parties should have the right to mediation by a neutral third party, such as the provincial court or the Lao Front for National Construction.

83. With respect to village development, the project management will develop specific sanctions to be applied in case of corruption, collusion, or other mismanagement of VD grant funds. Any existing Lao legislation or regulations concerning financial mismanagement may also enter into force.

84. Regarding the project's implementation procedures, and environmental and social safeguards (including ethnic minority and resettlement issues), complaints will be handled as follows:

- (i) As a first stage, affected or concerned persons will present, verbally or in writing, their complaints to provincial project staff or advisors, who will have to provide a documented response to the claimants within fifteen days. Reports on each complaint and subsequent measures taken must be given to the Provincial VD Advisor, with routine summaries sent to the National Project Management Office (NPMO) as attachment to regular/monthly reports.
- (ii) If the claimants are not satisfied with the decision, the case may be submitted to the National Project Office in Vientiane, as well as to local authorities (e.g. the Provincial Assembly or the Lao Front). Specified authorities should record receipt of complaints and reply to the claimants within fifteen days.

85. Claimants will be exempted from any administrative or legal charges associated with pursuing complaints. The national project management team must record reports on each complaint and subsequent measures taken.

Monitoring and Evaluation

86. The Project will have a monitoring and evaluation system. It will include participatory monitoring and evaluation (PAME), which will include village self monitoring of its own village development projects. Villagers will also be involved in monitoring of the forest management activities. In addition, these participatory monitoring efforts will be linked to the overall Project's monitoring and evaluation program. Capacity will be an issue here and will need to be built up through training and experience. The system will need to get villager inputs on causation and solutions to problems, and the systems will need to learn how to learn from villagers in this respect.

87. The monitoring which follows will be at two levels: a) one at the program level; and b) the other at the village level which will be a participatory monitoring and evaluation (PAME) system by beneficiary groups. The PAME monitoring will be developed with the help of an expert who is knowledgeable with M&E in societies with low literacy where alternatives to the text and national language will be included. Monitoring of participation data will, where relevant, be disaggregated by ethnic group, gender, and socio-economic (household) status (wealth groups), so that the project's impacts on ethnic groups, women, and the poor can be easily monitored.

88. The Project will commission two external evaluations—one at mid-term and one at the end of the Project. These evaluations will include a section on the effectiveness of the ethnic group development strategy. External monitoring of ethnic issues will also be undertaken during the periodic Supervision Missions of the Project. NGOs, the Lao Front, Institute for Cultural Research or other relevant organizations may also be involved in supervision and M&E activities. Feedback from the regular monitoring and mid-term evaluation will be used to improve the program.

Annex 1. Ethnic Groups in Pilot FOMACOP Village Forestry Associations (VFAs).

Village Name(s)	District		Ethnic Grouping		
			VFA Batch	Lao Loum	Lao Theung
Savannakhet Province	Thapanthong	Songkhone			
Banhkkoumkham	X		1	X	
Donkhao	X		2	X	
Donnyai		X	2		
Donsahd	X				
Donsahd		X			X
Hinthangkhek, Hinthangkang, Nakayom	X		1		X
Houaykhai		X	2		X
Houaykhaw		X	2		X
Houaypian		X		X	
Kengping	X		2		X
Kengsakou	X				
Khoktahleu, Napheu, Nalavieng, Najanthang	X		1		X
Lak 11		X	2		
Lavanoi-Tangalai	X				X
Nabong-Napeuk	X				X
Nachaleun		X			
Nahangkhe		X	2		
Nahouaylai	X		2		X
Nakhaleung		X	2	X	
Nakham		X	2	X	
Naoudom		X			
Napaneiad	X				X
Napho	X		2	X	
Nasano		X		X	
Nasano (TPT)	X		2		X
Natangkang	X		2		X
Natangtai	X		2		X
Nathamam	X				X
Nathamou, Nathangneua	X		1	X	X
Naxeng	X			X	
Naxeuk	X		2	X	
Nongkhon, Nonsombat, Nonbokeo		X	1	X	
Nongmek	X				X
Nonsaht	X				
Nonsapang	X		2		X
Nonsavang	X		1		X
Nonsomboun-Nalavey	X				X
Patoytai-Patoyneua	X				X
Thapi	X		1	X	

(Table continues on next page)

Annex 1. Ethnic Groups in Pilot FOMACOP Village Forestry Associations (VFAs).
(Continued)

Village Name(s)	District	Ethnic Grouping		
		VFA Batch	'Lao Loum'	'Lao Theung'
Khammaoune Province	Xebangfai District			
Hathpek	X			X
Kengkasi	X		X	
Kengkhen	X			X
Kengpe	X	2	X	
Khokthong	X	2	X	
Nathan	X		X	
Som	X	2	X	
Thahad	X			X
Thamlai	X	2	X	
Venusanan	X		X	

Note: Information in the FOMACOP Village Forestry Database as of May 2000 (database was not subsequently updated or maintained). Information extracted from database in 2002 for FORDEV project preparation.

Some village names are repeated, as the same name is used for different villages (in different districts).

Villages not marked Batch "1" or "2" were those villages in the second batch that did not have harvesting plans as of May 2000.

For some villages or VFAs, the information on ethnic grouping was missing from the database.

The previous designation of Lao Loum and Lao Theung was used in the FOMACOP database. Lao Loum generally correspond to Lao-Tai (Tai-Kadai) ethnolinguistic grouping, whereas the Lao Theung designation was used for many of the Mon-Khmer ethnic groups.

Annex 2. Villages Visited in ESIA Phase I.

Province	District	Forest	Village	Date of Visit	Only met village chief	Village meeting held	Length of meeting	Participants (M=men, W=women, C=children)	Ethnic Group
Villages visited during exploratory field work (pre-test) in February 2002:									
Salavan	Lao Ngam .	Lao Ngam	Kan	9/2 - 10/2		3 mtgs. Focus groups	1.5hr; 1hr; 1hr.	12M; 11W; 8 Poor HHs	Ta Oy
Salavan	Ta Oi	Ta Oi	Loy and Paloy*	11/2		2 mtgs.	1hr; 1 hr	3M,3W,15C; 5 M, 1W, 6C	Ta Oy, Katang
Salavan	Toomlarn	Phou Talava	Thong Kaikong	11/3		X	1hr20mn	10M,5W, 20C; later 60 people	Lao and Ta Oy (ethnic groups in own hamlets)
Villages visited during ESIA Phase I consultations, 17-22 March and 11-13 April 2002:									
Salavan	Salavan	Phou Talava	Taleo	17/3		X	1hr45mn	22M,10W,25C	Ta Oy
Salavan	Taoi	Phou Talava	Houayngua	18/3		X	1hr50mn	35M, 8W,10C	Katang
Salavan	Toumlam	Phou Talava	Katao	?		X	2hr	12M, 15W, 8C	Ta Oy
Salavan	Lao Ngam	Lao Ngam	Naxe	20/3		X	1hr30mn	42M,30W,25C	'Lao Loum' (?)
Salavan	Lao Ngam	Lao Ngam	Keppheung	19/3		X	1hr20mn	15M, 21W, 35C	Souay
Salavan	Lao Ngam	Lao Ngam	Namineua	19/3		X	2hr	20M, 10W, 8C	Katang
Salavan	Salavan	Lao Ngam	Naxay	21/3		X	2hr10mn	18M, 14W, 16C	Souay
Salavan	Lao Ngam	Lao Ngam	Nateuam	21/3		X	2hr	22M, 11W, 20C	'Lao Loum' (?)
Salavan	Khonxedon	Lao Ngam	Nathanhdong	11/4	X ?	?	1hr20mn	15M, 5W	Souay
Salavan	Vapi	Lao Ngam	Nongpho	22/3		X	1hr40mn	19M,10W,18C	'Lao Loum' (?)
Champassack	Bachiang	Sirivangveun (Xilivang)	Kouangsi	11/4	X		1 hr		??
Champassack	Xanasomboun	Sirivangveun (Xilivang)	Vangveunnoi	11/4	X		1 hr		??
Champassack	Pathoumphon	Huaytomo (Phatumphon)	Thahou	11/4	X		2 hr		'Lao Loum' (?)
Villages visited during ESIA Phase I consultations, March-April 2002 – but will not be in forthcoming project:									
Champassack	Soukhouma	Banhiang ??	Hiang	12/4	X ?	?	2hr	35M,20W,30C	'Lao Loum' (?)
Champassack	Mounlapamok	Dong Khantung	Nongnga	12/4		X	2hr30mn	30M, 10W, 15C	'Lao Loum' (?)

* Loy and Paloy are two out of three hamlets that comprise one village.

Annex 2. Villages Visited in ESIA Phase I (continued).

Province	District	Forest	Village	Date of Visit	Only met village chief	Village meeting held	Length of meeting	Participants (M=men, W=women, C=children)	Ethnic Group
<i>Villages visited during exploratory field work (pre-test) in February 2002:</i>									
Khammaoune	Boualapha	Naphakeaw	Napeng	4-5/2		X	2hr	7M, 4W, 6C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Xebangfai	Dong Phou Xoi	Kengkhen*	14/2		X	1hr45mn	10M, 12W, 10C	Phou Thai, Lao, Souay
<i>Villages visited during ESIA Phase I consultations, 17-22 March and 11-13 April 2002:</i>									
Khammaoune	Xaybouathong	Dong Kating-Nongkapat	Laou	10/3		X	1 hr 55	14M, 6W, 2C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Xaybouathong	Dong Kating-Nongkapat	Nakathing	9/3		X	1 hr 50	10M, 5W, 3C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Boualapha	Dong Kating-Nongkapat	Nasalon	12/3		X	1 hr 50	8M, 15W, 19C	Chahi (?)
Khammaoune	Boualapha	Dong Kating-Nongkapat	Lart	11/3		X	1 hr 35	30M, 2W	Chahi (?), Makong
Khammaoune	Mahaxay	Phoudinso	Kouantan	13/3		X	1 hr 45	19M, 7W, 6C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Mahaxay	Naphkeo/Khamkeaw	Phondaeng	14/3		X	2 hr 45	30M, 25W, 11C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Xebangfai	Dong Khamkeaw	Vangdeuaneha	7/3		X	2 hr	31M, 8W, 15C	'Lao Theung' (?), Salu (?)
Khammaoune	Mahaxay	Khamkeaw	Khamphaedong	14/3		X	1 hr 40	30M, 10W, 4C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Xaybouathong	Dong Phousoi Khamkeaw	Nakhamphan	8/3		X	1 hr 30	18M, 6W, 5C	Phou Thai
Khammaoune	Xaybouathong	Dong Phousoi Khamkeaw	Nongthat	9/3		X	1 hr 25	24M, 12W, 10C	Phou Thai
<i>Villages visited during ESIA Phase I consultations, March-April 2002 – but will not be in forthcoming project:</i>									
Khammaoune	Nhommalat	Hongkhiou-Hartxon	NongKhieu	15/3		X	2 hr 30	30M, 19W, 20C	Kaleung (Lao)

Note: * Kengkhen Village was a FOMACOP pilot village. The reported ethnicity during the recent field visit differs from that reported in the Village Forestry database and illustrates the complexity of ethnic groups in Laos.