



FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION

SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOUAPHANH PROVINCIAL BAMBOO SECTOR DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Houaphanh Province – Lao PDR

Final report

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*For Gret
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ACRONYMS

AFD	French Agency for Development
BBTF	Bamboo Task Force
BM	Business Model
BSA	Bamboo Service Association
BSDP	Bamboo Sector Development Project
BSHCG	Bamboo Shoots Harvesting and Commercialization Group
BHPG	Bamboo Handicraft Producers Groups
BVDP	Bamboo Village Development Plan
CLiPAD	Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation
CLRT	Communal Land Registration and Titling
CM	Combined Method
CRD	Cooperative for Rural Development of Tan Hoa – Vietnam
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DALaM	Department of Agriculture Land Management (MAF)
DIC	District Office of Industry and Commerce
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DOIC	Department of Industry and Commerce
DONRE	District Office of Natural Resource and Environment
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
E&D	Experiment and demonstration
EU	European Union
FE	Fondation Ensemble
FM	Forest Management
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FSRC/NAFRI	Forest Science Research Centre / National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GRET	Groupe de Recherche et d’Echanges Technologiques
HH	Household
HP	Houaphanh Province
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

ILT	Individual Land Titling
LEAF	Lowering Emissions of Asia's Forests
LIWG	Land Issue Working Group (iNGO network)
LWU	Lao Women Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources
NAPA	Houaphanh Provincial Political and Administration School
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Product
NU-IRDP	Northern Upland Integrated Rural Development Programme (GIZ)
NUPD	Northern Uplands Development Programme
ODOP	One district one product
PADSR	Programme de Promotion de l'Accès Durable aux Services et aux Revenus pour les populations défavorisées de 3 PMA à Etat fragile (Haiti, Laos, Mauritanie)
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PG	Producer Group
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PLMA	Provincial Land Management Authority
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Planning
POFA	Provincial Office of Foreign Affairs
PONRE	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment
PU	Processing Unit
R&R	Rules and Regulations
SB	Sobbao District
SN	Sam Neua District
SNV	Stichting Nederlands Vrijwilligers (Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers)
SSWG ABD	Sub-Sector Working Group – Agriculture and Bio Diversity
SUFORD	Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development
TABI	The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative
ToT	Training of Trainers
USD	US Dollar
VBC	Village Bamboo Committee

VBPT	Village Bamboo Plantation Technician
VBT	Village Bamboo Technician
VC	Value Chain
VFMT	Village Forest Monitoring Technicians
VSP	Village Service Provider
VV	Village Volunteer
VX	Viengxay District
WS	Workshop

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Executive summary

The “Support to the implementation of the Houaphanh Provincial Bamboo Sector Development Strategy” Project was implemented with the following overall objective: “the bamboo sector provides stable and sustainable incomes and employment, contributing to poverty alleviation and conserving forest functions and upland environment”.

The Bamboo Project referred to in this evaluation has a total **duration of 57 months**, from January 2011 until September 2015, with a financial support of **2 main donors**:

- The European Union (EU), through the funding of the Action ‘*Support to the implementation of the Huaphan Provincial Bamboo Sector Development Strategy*’ (53 months from January 2011 to May 2015) 1 million Euros
- The Fondation Ensemble (FE), through the funding of the Action ‘*Reconversion of bamboo value chains in mountainous area: towards a better respect of environment and a better remuneration of villagers producers*’ (48 month from October 2011 to September 2015). 200 000 Euros

The Bamboo Project has been implemented by Gret in partnership with SNV, in close partnership with the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), and in close cooperation with other provincial departments (PONRE, DIC) and district departments and authorities. Please note that SNV participated to the Project from 2011 to 2014 only (SNV did not participate to the Project in 2015).

The project team worked as a facilitator between the government (Houaphanh Province and districts authorities, in the three districts of Sam Neua, Viengxay and Sobbao), the villagers and the private sector, in order to reach three expected results:

- Result 1: Local authorities ensure land tenure rights for bamboo plantations and support market orientated natural forest management with delegation of forest plots to individual farmers.
- Result 2: Bamboo producer groups are able to take up responsibilities in managing forest sustainably, develop bamboo plantations, deliver extension services, initiate locally based handicraft and pre-processing units supplying markets and industry.
- Result 3: Effective coordination between state actors, producer groups and private sector supports the implementation of the provincial bamboo strategy and create opportunities to involve Lao scientists.

Four value chains are developed:

- Handicraft products for domestic market and export, using different species of bamboo.
- Slats and sticks for export to Vietnam.
- Fresh khom bamboo shoots for domestic market.
- Dried hok bamboo shoots for export to Vietnam and domestic market.

The combination of territorial and business approaches organized around the components of land management, forest management, plantations, business and trade, and enabling environment, in the frame of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2011-2015 with a participative and inclusive multi-stakeholders approach, ensured a **good relevance** to the project.

Though progress delayed in some areas due to difficulties in achieving decisions on policy matters by local authorities, high staff turnover among implementing NGOs and government, and the lack of inclusion of the Chamber of commerce and financial entities, the good overall project expenditure, the strong dialogue with all stakeholders and the very high of well focused activities with a limited team, resulted in a **good efficiency**, that materialized in a very good return of the financial resources invested with at least 1 M USD generated during 4 years.

The **very good effectiveness** is due to a good outcome delivery (despite the partial achievement on Communal Land Registration and Titling, sector association and plantations) with an excellent use of the collective learning process and numerous collaborations and exchanges with other projects and national fora, that resulted in significant increased income (average annual income of 166 USD per HH) and jobs creation from a side activity. The first steps for the bamboo sector structuring have been reached, through the increased sustainable management of the bamboo forest largely served by a mix of small-scale enterprise activity and a widespread growth of cottage industry.

The **positive impact** of the project materializes in increased villagers' livelihoods for almost 2400 HH; increased government revenues from taxes; forest protection and management by villagers; strong dynamism at village level (new village and producers organizations, improved skills, service providing to producers, emergence of spontaneous microcredit systems); increased trust among stakeholders; proved capacity of provincial authorities to adjust bamboo sector policies; and the will of central government to impulse and implement a National Bamboo Strategy in the near future.

The **promising durability** of the action rests on:

- The structures established at village level (Village Bamboo Committees and Producer Groups) effectively ensure the bamboo forest management on both technical and financial aspects thanks to skills to produce, process, trade and offer services.
- The villagers' ownership on the bamboo resource management through an increasing acceptance of rules and regulations.
- Good economic results in the 4 value chains.
- The capacity of the Houaphanh Province authorities to test policies for the bamboo sector activation.
- The validation of the new Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020.

Nevertheless the action still needs (i) consolidation, (ii) extension and (iii) further innovation to ensure long-term sustainability.

The evaluation formulates recommendations for each strategic component:

Bamboo resource management:

On the one hand, some results still need to be consolidated:

1. The Village Bamboo Committees must still be strengthened on the monitoring of rules and regulations, and reinforced on the use of the bamboo development funds and transparency of their management.
2. Forest monitoring must be systematized and its quality improved.

3. The preparation of manuals on the “Combined Method”, forest management and producers’ organization must be finalized.
4. Experiment and demonstration must be continued in order to integrate their conclusions into final recommendations for the improvement of forest management rules.
5. The plantation work should be reoriented and more focused on villages with very limited natural bamboo resource, particularly in handicraft villages.

On the other hand, some activities must be extended:

6. The bamboo forest identification and management planning should be applied to all villages where the project is already working, using the new method designed by the project for bamboo forest identification, inventory and management called the “Combined Method”.
7. To fully take advantage of the bamboo resource in the Houaphanh Province and develop its potential according to economies of scale, the evaluation recommends the mapping of the resource in the whole province.

Finally, considering the negative impact of the hok flowering on the results of the value chain, the growing importance of the bamboo in the economy and the lack of knowledge on the causes and mechanisms of bamboo flowering, the evaluation recommends:

8. To initiate research about the blossoming of bamboo with FSRC/NAFRI.

Business and trade:

To consolidate the results reached by the project:

9. Strengthen producer groups on their internal organization, fees collection, fund management and transparency, empowered on price and contract negotiation.
10. Deepen the exploration of domestic and export markets, particularly on expanding markets that use existing species of the HP: late sweet khom markets in other provinces, dried hok shoots in Vientiane and Vietnam as well as in China, handicraft for the tourism industry.
11. Put a priority to the development of increased added value products with a focus on:
 - The improvement of quality for handicraft products.
 - The production of high quality dried hok shoots, the improvement of ovens efficiency, the development of packaging for trade.
 - The Participatory Guarantee System certification.
 - The equipment of factories with machines for processed final products.
12. Elaborate consolidated accounts for each value chain, with the incorporation of taxes and the value added by trade, in order to more precisely quantify the real added value in each value chain and in this way help authorities to identify the priorities for further development of the bamboo sector.

To extend the activation of the present value chains:

13. Scale-up the organization of producer groups to face the market, by the setting up of second level organizations (central buying service for khom fresh shoots and handicraft products).

Taking into account the present development of the bamboo business and trade component¹, innovate by:

14. Setting scaled-up services through an independent organization that could be a Bamboo Service Association (BSA). This BSA would work in collaboration with province and districts authorities, as well as with Village Bamboo Committees in order to deliver extended services to producer groups and to higher level organizations (like a second level producer groups organization) and a Houaphanh Bamboo producer group organization, as well as to private sector and other projects. Special attention will have to be paid to its business model in order to ensure its sustainability.
15. Developing an information market system through local and national networking, with the support of DOIC, the Chamber of Commerce and the Bamboo Service Association.
16. Facilitating access to credit for operating capital to processing units, collectors and traders.
17. Developing new value chains, at least for may luang that will come from established plantations, but also for bamboo waste recovery (bio fuel).

Enabling environment:

To consolidate the results reached by the project, the evaluation recommends to:

18. Achieve the experiment and learning cycle on Communal Land Registration and Titling, and implement the lessons learned in all villages with good bamboo forest management, in order to complete the ensuring of communal land tenure rights.
19. Achieve the recognition and registration of the producer groups to consolidate their position in the value chains.
20. Simplify the procedures for registration of producer groups and traders.
21. Progressively unify the rules of operation of the private actors to avoid unequal competition between them while ensuring the durability of the sustainable forest management (collection of fees for the producer groups in the whole province; same conditions for all factories).

In the medium term, innovations should be tested for the revision of quotas and tax policies in the HP, by:

22. Testing tax cuts to get a stronger activation of the value chains while getting increased total revenues for the government.
23. Establishing coherent regulations in the assignment of quotas (e.g. linking the quotas with the production capacities of the villagers in terms of labour force and forest capacities; giving priority quotas to certified organic products)

¹ The main features of this present development are: (1) 29 active service providers, (2) the growing demand on training and advice from other villages and projects, (3) the need for new services, (4) the relevance of structuring service delivery through an independent organization, on the model of the Phu Tho organization in Vietnam and other examples over the world (See Annex 3).

24. Establishing crossed controls between the quantities produced at village level (records of production and sales), production data provided by the processors and customs registers in order to limit tax avoidance.

The evaluation also strongly suggests to GRET and SNV to:

- Capitalize on the experience of the project and widely share the lessons learned.
- Pay more attention to the establishment of the baseline previous to launching new actions.
- Clearly define impact criteria and monitor them along the implementation.
- Define a strategy for a more proactive advocacy on key issues as for the empowerment of villagers on forest management, the securing of land tenure or quotas and tax policies.

Finally, the evaluation highly **recommends a second phase in order to consolidate, extend and deepen the bamboo sector development in the Houaphanh Province, according to the above recommendations.**

I. Presentation of the project

The “Support to the implementation of the Houaphanh Provincial Bamboo Sector Development Strategy” Project, hereafter named the Bamboo Project or the project, has the following overall objective: “the bamboo sector provides stable and sustainable incomes and employment, contributing to poverty alleviation and conserving forest functions and upland environment”.

It was implemented from January 2011 to December 2014 by GRET and SNV. The no cost extension phase that ends on September, 30th 2015 was carried out only by GRET, for a total duration of 57 months.

With a total cost of 1,600,000 euros the project was funded by EuropeAid under the thematic programme Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development (In Country Intervention – Lao PDR) with a total grant of 1,000,000 euros for the Action “*Support to the implementation of the Houaphanh Provincial Bamboo Sector Development Strategy*”, and by Fondation Ensemble for an amount of 200,000 euros for the Action “*Reconversion of bamboo value chains in mountainous area: towards a better respect of environment and a better remuneration of villagers producer*”. AFD contributed for the remaining amount of 400,000 euros.

Both actions are in line with the three strategic components of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2011-2015 formulated in 2010 by the Bamboo Task Force (BBTF) and validated by the Governor of the Houaphanh Province (HP):

- Sustainable Resource Management
- Bamboo Business Development
- Favourable Bamboo Policies to promote the development and growth of the Bamboo Sector.

The project document of the Action funded by EU defines 1 specific objective (hereafter named SO1) and 3 expected results (hereafter referred to as R1, R2 and R3), with the corresponding indicators:

- SO1: 'Improved capacity of provincial and district authorities and the emergence of local non-state actors create a sustainable ground for co-management and co-activation of the bamboo sector development strategy'
- R1: Local authorities ensure land tenure rights for bamboo plantations and support market orientated natural forest management with delegation of forest plots to individual farmers

R1 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
District regulation on forest management is approved by province and implemented at village level
60 village land Use Plans (including bamboo) are approved by district authorities by year 4
Allocation of forest land to villages is approved in 3 districts, for forest management
4 value chains are well channeled with appropriate trade procedures and resources allocations

- R2: Bamboo producer groups are able to take up responsibilities in managing forest sustainably, develop bamboo plantations, deliver extension services, initiate locally based handicraft and pre-processing units supplying markets and industry

R2 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
2400 households are members of bamboo producers' groups
60 villages are involved in the value chains
120 farmer leaders participate actively to bamboo sector development in 2014
30 farmers promoters develop and provide services to the bamboo sector
30 forest management plans (FMP) run by farmer groups are agreed by DAFO (1500 ha)
500 ha are allocated and planted with bamboo
30 producers groups are involved in the value chains
5 semi-industrial Pre-Processing Workshops are operating

- R3: Effective coordination between state actors, producer groups and private sector supports the implementation of the provincial bamboo strategy and create opportunities to involve Lao scientists

R3 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
6 multi-actors events are organized (seminars, outlook days...) by the Bamboo Task Force
PAFO, DPI and DoIC action plans are decided and implemented in coordination with others bamboo sector stakeholders by year 2

A 5-years multi-stakeholder provincial strategy is developed by state actors, producer groups and private actors by year 4 and means are secured
2 studies are implemented by Lao scientists
Status & by-law of a provincial Bamboo sector association are registered

The project document of the Action funded by FE defines 2 specific objectives (hereafter named SO2 and SO3 for the purpose of this final evaluation²) and 3 expected results (hereafter referred to as R4, R5 and R6 for the purpose of this final evaluation³), with the corresponding indicators⁴:

- SO2: 'Support the emergence and development of 'bamboo producers & pre-processing groups' generating additional income for villagers and added value in the villages'.
- SO3: 'Develop and adapt sustainable bamboo forest management for the development of bamboo value chains'.
- R4: '40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups are operational and make sustainable use and trade of village bamboo resource – with Forest Management Plans for bamboo shoots and bamboo slats value chains'

R4 Indicators (FE)
3 bamboo value chains are in development process, with adapted trading procedures and a sustainable allocation and use of bamboo resource
40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups are operational
4 bamboo pre-processing groups with collective equipment, paid workers and entrepreneurial management, are tested
The 40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups have contracts (oral or written) with traders
More than 800 households have an regular additional income of 100 Euro per year

- R5: 'Tools and mechanisms of vocational / professional training are defined or settled for strengthening the bamboo sector'

R5 Indicators (FE)
Tools and mechanisms of vocational / professional training are identified or prepared for strengthening the bamboo sector in the future
10 Villagers Technicians are able to provide services or organize trainings aimed at professionalizing the bamboo sector'

² In the Project Document of the Action funded by FE (French language), SO2 and SO3 correspond to Specific Objectives 1 and 2 of the Action

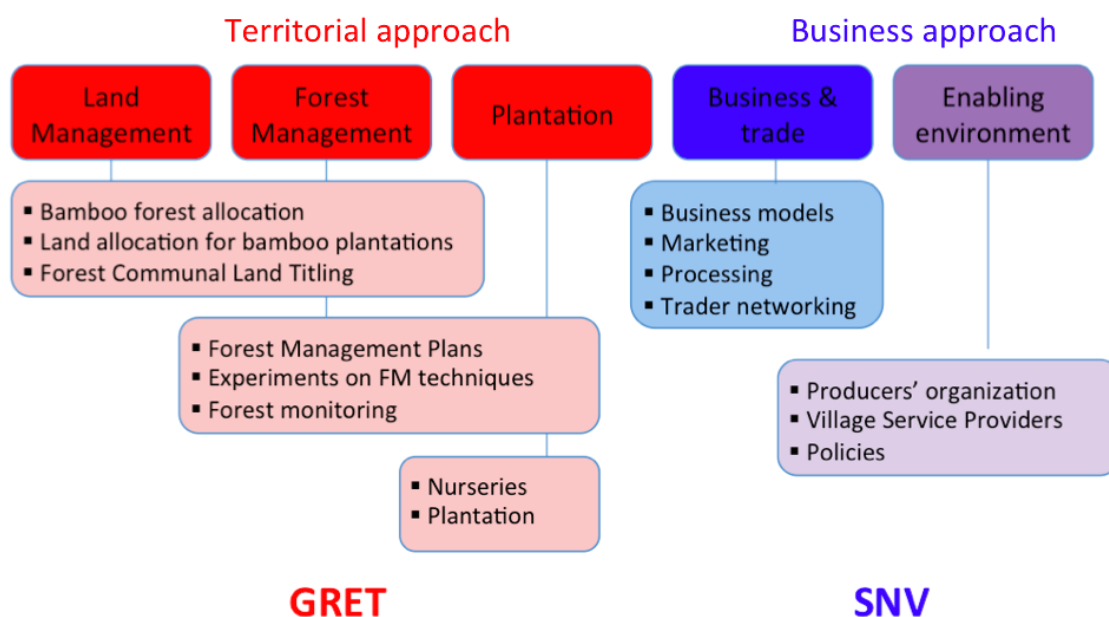
³ In the Project Document of the Action funded by FE (French language), R4, R5 and R6 correspond to Result 1.1. & 1.2, Result 1.3 and Result 2

⁴ Note that an updating of the initial indicators has been proposed by Gret and approved by FE, as described in the Narrative Report n°4 corresponding to the period April to September 2014

- R6: '20 approved and operational Forest Management Plans (FMP) supply the bamboo pre-processing groups involved in bamboo shoots and/or bamboo slats value chains'

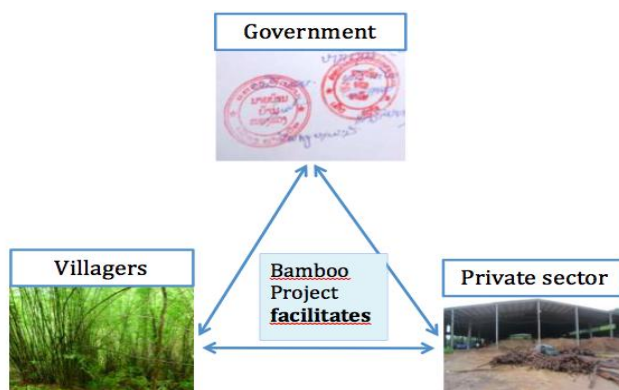
R6 Indicators (FE)
20 land use plans allocating bamboo forest plots to villagers (either through PLUP or Combined method) are approved by the Districts
20 Forest Management Plans are approved by the Districts
20 Forest Management Plans are actually implemented and the corresponding forest plots are monitored every year

Activities have been grouped in five components linking natural resource management through a territorial approach and economic development through a value chain approach: land management, forest management, plantation, business and trade, and enabling environment.



At all levels, the project team assumed not only the function of facilitator between the government (Houaphanh Province and districts authorities⁵, in the three districts of Sam Neua, Viengxay and Sobbao), the villagers and the private sector, but it also was a force for proposals of actions and arrangements between the different stakeholders.

⁵ PAFO, PONRE, DPI, DIC and their respective offices at district level, as well as LWU.



II. Presentation of the evaluation

The objective of the present evaluation is to assess how the Bamboo Project, through both EU and FE actions, has contributed to improve the poverty status and income generation in target communities, while assessing the efficiency of producers groups, according to the five OECD evaluation criteria (relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability).

This evaluation also pays attention to the major innovations of the project in Lao context, particularly the multi-stakeholders learning process, the combination of the territorial approach and the market approach and the cooperation with other projects in the HP in order to highlight the lessons learnt for future interventions.

It is about both EU and FE Actions, but not on the Provincial Bamboo Sector Strategy itself though both actions take place in the frame of the strategy. Nevertheless this evaluation considers the indicators defined in both actions, which slightly differ from the indicators established by the strategy.

The comparison of the two planned actions shows that the expected results of the FE Action are included in the foreseen results of the EU Action with a quantitative broadening and a specific mention of the definition and settling of tools and mechanisms of vocational/professional training for strengthening the bamboo sector. The achievement of this additional result will be analysed in the Result 2 of the EU Action.

The evaluation took place in the Lao PDR between August, 20th and September, 10th with 7 days field work in the three districts of Sam Neua, Viengxay and Sobbao. After a previous project documents review and a briefing meeting with GRET and then SNV, exchanges took place with the project team members and interviews have been carried out with the main other partners (representatives of FSRC/NAFRI, GliPAD, TABI, SUFORD and LEAF projects) and with provincial and districts authorities. All stakeholders (government, villagers, processors and traders) have been met during the field visits which allowed to broach all project components (land management, forest management, plantations, business and trade, enabling environment) and the five value chains developed by the project:

- Handicraft products for domestic market and export, using different species of bamboo
- Slats and sticks for export to Vietnam, using Mai Kouane (*Dendrocalamus longifimbriatus*)
- Fresh bamboo shoots for domestic market, using Mai Khom (*Indosasa sinica*)
- Dried bamboo shoots for export to Vietnam (*Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*)
- Paper pulp made from Mai Xang⁶.



Three debriefing meetings have been carried out with the project team (09/04), the government (09/07) prior to the validation of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020 and with several projects and donors at the EU Delegation in Vientiane (09/10).

III. Findings

III.1 Relevance

A good diagnosis of the situation of bamboo in HP was established in 2010 prior to the project design through the definition by the BBTF of the Houaphanh Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2011-2015. This strategy demonstrates the interest of the Provincial government for developing the sector based on the following considerations:

- An abundant and underexploited natural bamboo forest resources;
- The need for reducing the unsustainable bamboo forest management based on slash and burn practices and clear cuts;
- An expanding bamboo global markets, with a growing cross-border bamboo market with Vietnam but with a limited Lao market development particularly in terms on limited availability of elaborated bamboo products;
- A weak industry base with low technology and processing level;
- A high community interest for land use and bamboo forest allocation though bamboo was still a side economic activity;
- The lack of market information;
- A scattered value chains structuration;
- Vague policies supportive of bamboo development with a negative taxation policy, complex procedures for obtaining quotas and no clear investment policy.

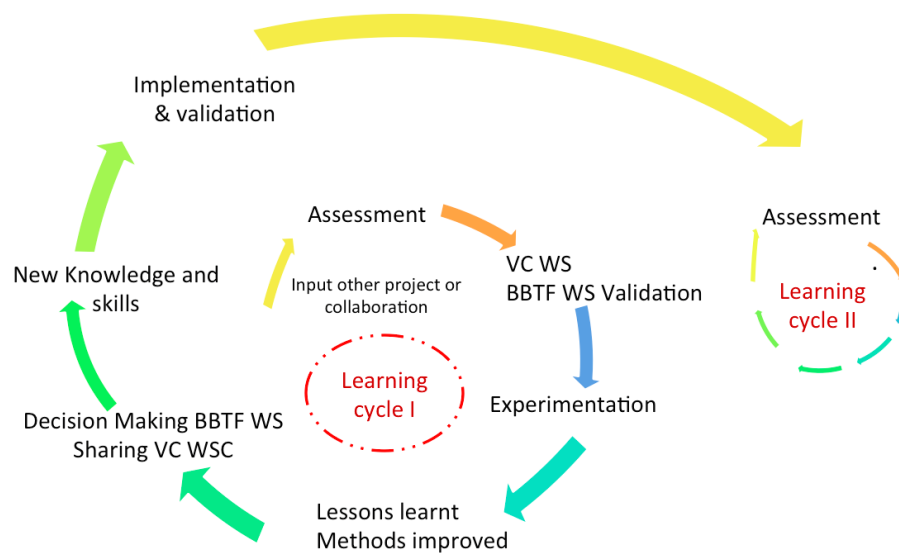
The objectives of project directly address all key strategic components of the Houaphanh Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2011-2015. The project fully addresses the objectives of the EC Call for Proposals to build capacity in local authorities and Non-State Actors (NSA) and in contributing to the reduction of poverty levels as it combines territorial approach and

⁶ The development of this value chain has been stopped after the province authorities decided to close the paper pulp factory, due to unsolved problems of water contamination.

economic development through the activation of value chains with creating an enabling policy environment for commercial, yet sustainable bamboo sector development.

The strong commitment of the project team allowed to fully develop a participative multi-stakeholders approach since the design phase, though some potentially important actors have not been included (e.g. the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and credit institutions). This approach resulted in a collective learning gained from in-depth exchanges between provincial and district authorities, villagers, producers groups and private sector, on the experiments tested by the project and their results. The use of this method starts with the assessment of one specific situation and the input of previous work developed by other partners or projects. It continues with the validation of the conclusions of the assessment by the different stakeholders during a yearly value chain workshop and a BBTF workshop, opening the way to an experiment. The lessons learnt are used to improve the method of the experiment, before an adjusted method is newly submitted to the stakeholders and the BBTF for decision making for its validation and implementation at a larger scale, which closes the learning cycle. The newly created situation is then assessed and leads the way for another learning cycle on the basis of new knowledge and skills.

Chart 1: The learning process cycle



After the multi-department Bamboo Task Force at the Provincial level has been weakened by change of key staff in 2011 and little interaction took place among the various departments, the BBTF grasped again the interest of this learning process for proposing to provincial authorities adjustments to bamboo development policies.

The time frame (4 years) seemed realistic for the respective activities though the team was conscious that more time is needed to come to full fruition and ensure the command of villagers on the bamboo resource management and the consolidated functioning of the value chains, being the project part of a long-term process. This is the main reason why no

exit strategy once the project is ended has been developed. In these conditions the scale of the activities was estimated at a too high level particularly in terms of the number of village land use plans, bamboo plantations and land titles.

Though the project did not develop a specific strategy to achieve targets of involvement of vulnerable groups, the villagers largely participated to the project.

In conclusion the project had a good relevance due to the combination of a resource management approach and a business approach as well as to its multi stakeholders dimension.

III.2 Efficiency

The project was initially planned for a duration of 4 years and a total budget of 1 600 000 euros. The EU agreed on a no cost extension till May 31st 2015 in order to consolidate the results achieved and on this basis formulate the Provincial Bamboo Development Strategy for 2016-2020.

The good coordination between GRET and SNV and the fulfilment of all foreseen activities resulted in an excellent overall project expenditure and it is foreseen that 100% of the budget will be executed at the end of the project.

With a limited team⁷ that though consumed close to 68% of the total budget, the project succeeded in carrying out activities in 70 villages on five value chains and in delivering planned outputs.

Nevertheless the implementation of the activities suffered from an important turnover of project staff, the remoteness of the HP and the general issue of technical skills in the Lao PDR, which obliged the project to constantly renew the training of its staff. Provincial and district authorities and technicians experimented as well a high turnover that obliged the project team to keep the new staff informed about past and upcoming activities.

Progress has also been delayed in the areas of the establishment of recognized associations, the individual and communal land titling and the management of quotas and taxes due to difficulties in achieving decisions on policy matters by local and national authorities.

The fall on the euro currency in 2015 also reduced the number of villages where forest monitoring was implemented.

Though each learning cycle was relatively long (two years duration), the strong dialogue with all the stakeholders and the close relationship with the target groups allowed to implement a very high quantity of well focused activities that resulted in collective learning through systematic annual workshops. Consequently the activation of the four running value chains was successful and generated in almost five years an estimate of one million dollars added value (see effectiveness below), which amounts to a **very good return of more than 50%**.

⁷ 2 Project coordinators, 1 Strategy advisor, 2 Foresters, 1 Land management expert, 1 Plantation expert, 1 E&D forester linked with FSRC, 3 Value chain and policy advisors, 1 Trade consultant, 1 Driver, Administration support.

III.3 Effectiveness

III.3.1. Expected result 1: Local authorities ensure land tenure rights for bamboo plantations and support market orientated natural forest management with delegation of forest plots to individual farmers.

Four main indicators have been formulated to check the achievement of this result (See Table 1):

- District regulation on forest management approved by province and implemented at village level.
- 60 villages LUP/BDP (including bamboo) approved by district authorities by year 4.
- Allocation of forest land to villages approved in 3 districts, for forest management.
- 4 value chains are well channeled with appropriate trade procedures and resources allocations.

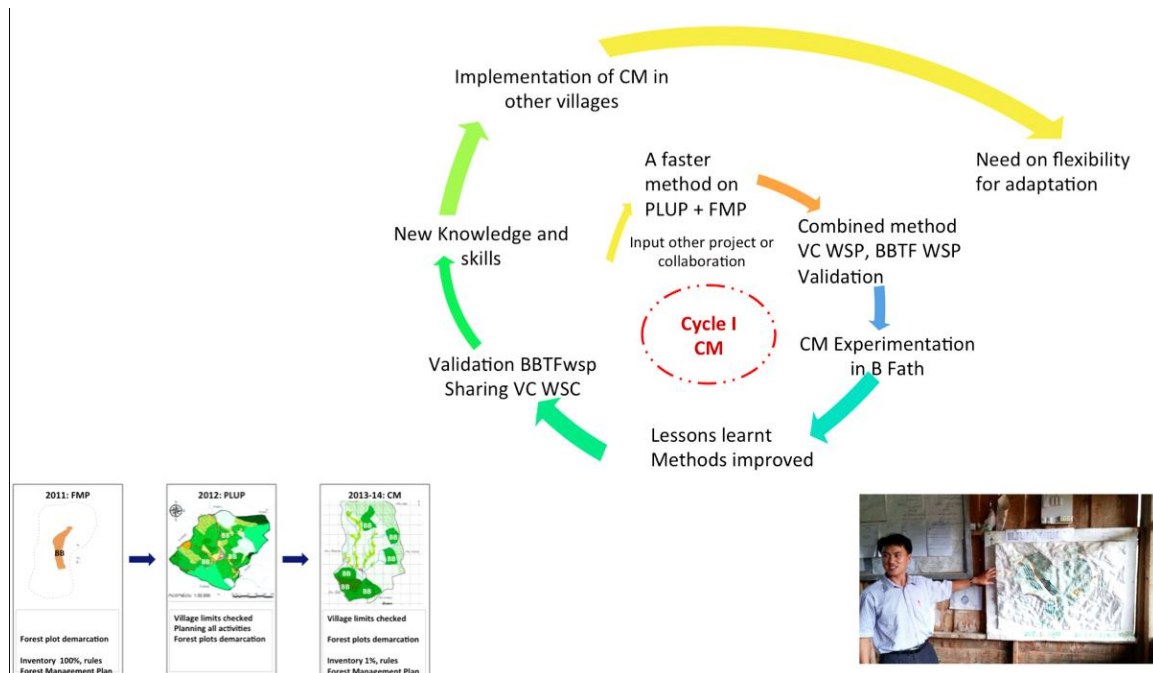
Table 1: Progress against the logical framework for expected result 1

Indicators logframe	Progress to August 2015
District regulation on forest management approved by province and implemented at village level	Combined Method tested and approved Forest monitoring method approved Communal Land Titling: experimented in collaboration with NUIRDP/GIZ DOL/MONRE in 2014. Value chains: test of direct export of pre-processed slats (khouane) 17 producers groups registered
60 village LUP/BDP (including bamboo) approved by district authorities by year 4	5 villages with comprehensive PLUP achieved in 2012 12 additional villages with Combined Method achieved in 2014/15
Allocation of forest land to villages approved in 3 districts, for forest management	4 411 ha allocated for Forest Management in 26 villages (in total)
4 value chains are well channeled with appropriate trade procedures and resources allocations	Handicraft & furniture: 34 villages, 519 HH, 2,3 M kip/HH Khom bamboo shoots: 12 villages, 870 HH, 1 M kip/HH Hok bamboo shoots: 10 villages, 528 HH, 0,7 M kip/HH Khouane Slats & sticks factory: 21 villages, 825 HH, 1,1 M kip/HH Xang Paper pulp factory: no activity in 2014 15 Luang Plantation: future value chain

Progress toward the intention of this result is better than the indicators show on land use planning and forest management. The number of villages with land use planning and forest management is far away from foreseen due to a change of strategy during the project implementation. In point of fact, during 2012 PLUP implementation and FMP elaboration were done separately and resulted in a very time consuming and slow process meanwhile processors and traders already developed economic activities in villages that still did not have FMP, which put at risk the bamboo resource and the sustainability of the bamboo

sector. Consequently the need for faster results led the project team to propose a faster and improved method for bamboo forest identification, inventory and management, called “Combined method”, that has been tested and implemented from 2013 (See Chart n°2).

Chart 2: The first learning process cycle applied to forest management: a faster method to answer market development



On this basis local authorities matched a right to villagers to use natural bamboo forest plots through the official allocation of 4 411 ha of communal forest in 26 villages and a right to harvest for trade purpose through agreements for sustainable forest management and use by the villagers (See Table 2).



Table 2: Detailed information on bamboo forest allocation

	Bamboo forests & plantations in 2014	Handicraft (khouane, hok)	Slats & Sticks (Khouane)	Fresh bitter shoots (khom)	Dried shoots (hok)	pulp factory (xang)	Total from forests
Forest allocation	Villages with allocation	5	10	10	9	4	26
	Plots	9	19	34	22	13	97
	Hectares	108	1,637	1,311	1,081	274	4,411
Forest management plan	Villages with FMP	1	9	9	6	3	19
	Plots	1	14	33	15	3	66
	Hectares	26	1,479	1,272	589	28	3,394
	Number of forest monitoring	-	17	14	9	-	40

The participation of villagers in the definition and implementation of the rules and regulations to monitor the use of the bamboo forest (post-harvest monitoring in 28 villages and pre-harvest monitoring on hok carrying out 40 Forest monitoring) using the inputs delivered by E&D led to an effective use and management of the forest. In this way it largely contributed to establish an additional layer for ensuring tenure rights of the population on the bamboo plots (See chart 3) and the development of ownership on the forest use.

To ensure long terms exclusive rights an experiment is being conducted in the village of Ban Eurn together with the NU-IRDP/GiZ (See chart n°4). Both projects are communicating about this experiment at national level and bringing elements to the current national level debate (central government and National Assembly). A positive resolution of these official bodies would open the opportunity of radically change the approach of natural forest management in the Lao PDR.



Chart 3: The second learning process cycle applied to forest management: flexibility on the rules and regulations of the FMP

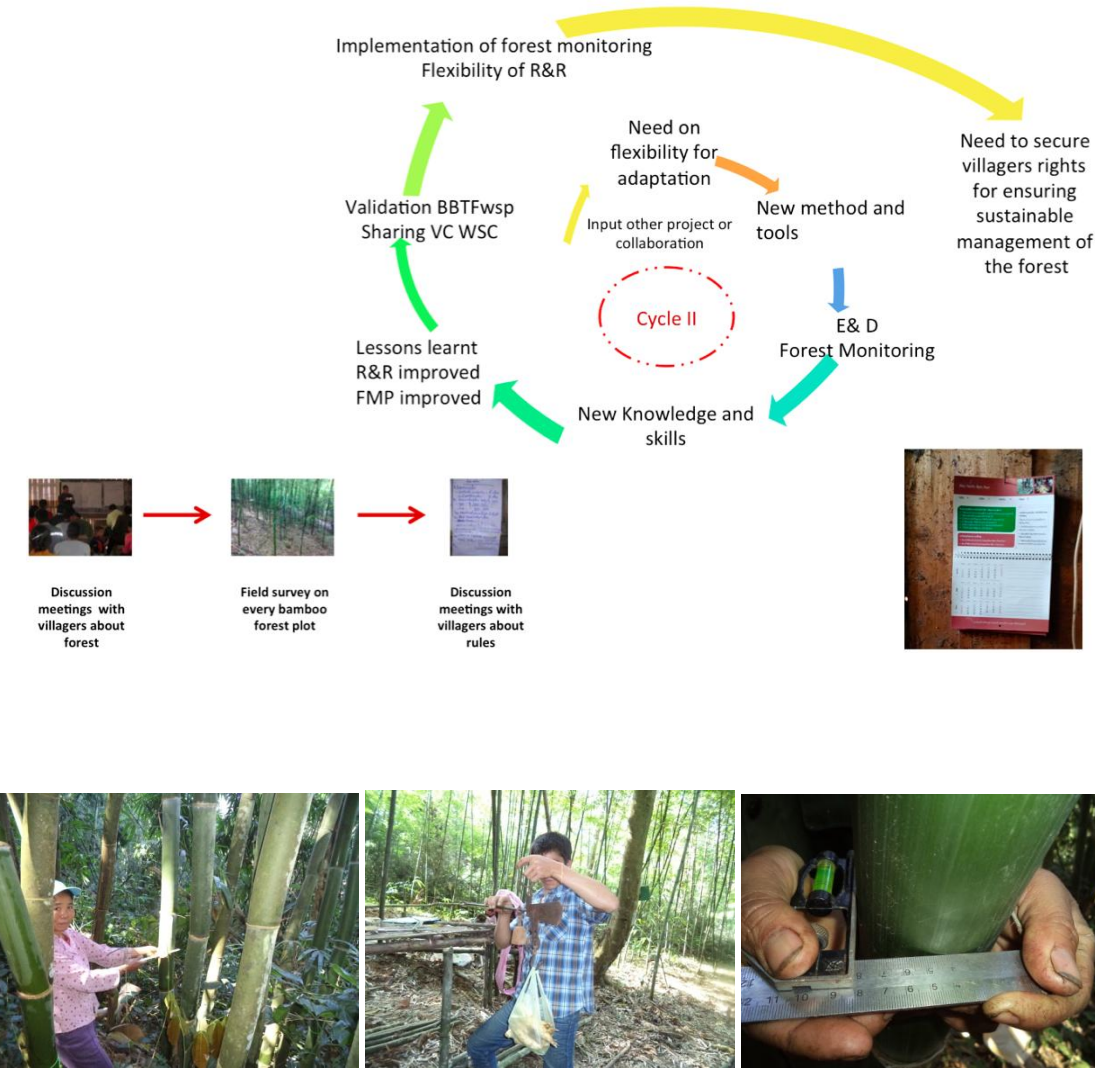
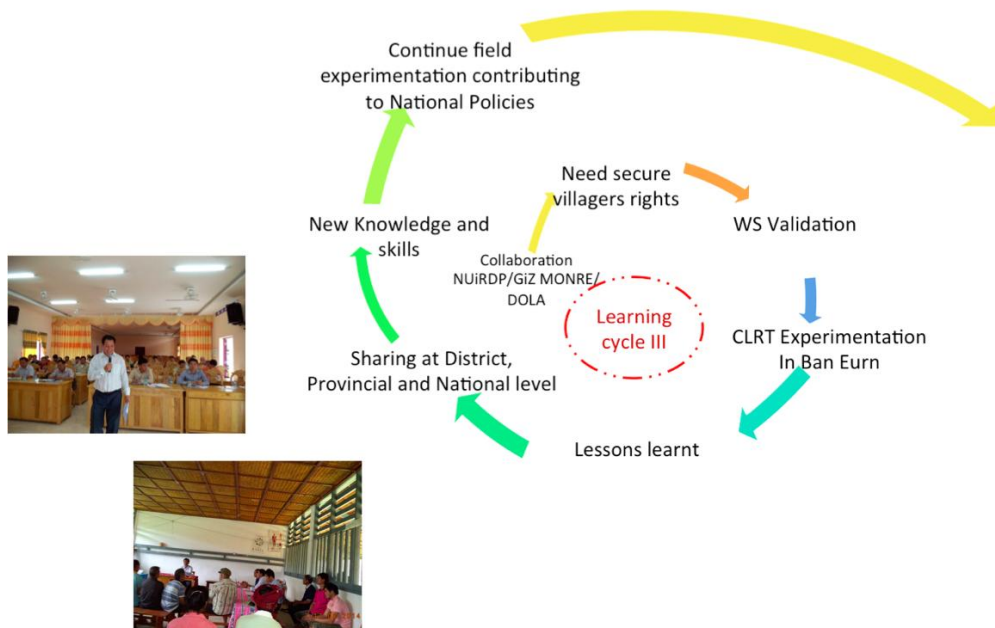


Chart 4: The third learning process cycle applied to forest management: securing villagers' rights on the bamboo forest



A deciding factor of the force of the project resides on the association of land and forest management with the activation of four well channeled value chains that brought concrete and positive results in terms of creation of wellness for villagers, processors, traders and the government itself through the payment of taxes.

With a multi-stakeholders approach the project succeeded in activating the fresh khom shoots and the handicraft value chains for domestic market, and the dried hok shoots and the khouane slats and sticks value chains for the Vietnamese market and the dried hok shoots for both domestic and Vietnamese markets. The HP government took decisions to facilitate this activation. It put an end to the ban on hok forest and gave the authorization for hok trade in 2011. He also made more flexible the application of the law with regard to export of raw material and allowed investors to operate six new slats and sticks factories with the obligation to elevate the percentage of pre-processed and processed products in the next years.

After four years the economic results are impressive. In 63 villages 2382 HH involved generated an average of 1,35 million kips per HH (166 USD/HH/year) with a total GDP of 400 000 USD in 2014 and more than a million dollars since the beginning of the project (See Table 3).



Table 3: Results of the activation of the four value chains

Value chain	Number of villages	Number of HH	Added value 2014
Fresh khom shoots	12	870	1,0 M kip/HH
Dried hok shoots	10	528	0,7 M kip/HH ⁸
Khouane slats and sticks	21	825	1,1 M kip/HH
Handicraft and furniture	34	519	2,3 M kip/HH

Despite no baseline was established at the beginning of the project and consequently the initial value of the production at this time was not assessed, most of this added value is likely to be due to the project as the fresh khom shoots value chain was not organized, the hok VC was inexistent, only one factory of slats and sticks was operating and the handicraft VC experimented notable development (See section III.3.2.) with quality and prices improvement, and new shops and traders registration.

Unfortunately these economic results do not include the value mobilized in the Village Bamboo Development Funds nor the value added outside the villages, which means that trade is not included neither taxes⁹, which underestimates the real economic results.

Finally plantations have been established in 26 villages with 496 HH involved on 331 ha namely less than the planned 500 ha¹⁰. This is due on the one hand to the fact that plantations do not represent a short-term income for villagers but a medium-term investment as time is needed for the plantations to be producing. Consequently plantations appear above all as a way to secure land access for the less poor villagers. On the other hand the focus given to luang plantations (at least till 2014) tallies with the future development of a new value chain oriented to the Vietnamese market and not with a need for present uses.

The activation two of the four value chains (hok and kouane) depends on the allocation of a global quota by the national level¹¹, which is further distributed among the economic actors. Particularly in the case of the slats and sticks VC, this situation led into the allocation of specific villages to each factory with inadequate mechanisms of control. The project demonstrated that the level of taxes for registration and operation of the factories can be a limitation for the bamboo sector development.



⁸ In 2013 one of the two hok sub-species began flowering which caused a decrease of the production.

⁹ An estimate of the taxes, calculated by the project, shows that taxes could represent 50% of the total value.

¹⁰ During the first three years, these plantations were established with may luang, before a change of strategy occurred in 2014 with the experiment of plantations with 14 different species and 4 plantations techniques

¹¹ The government agreed that khome and handicraft would not be subject to quotas and taxes.

III.3.2. Expected result 2: Bamboo producer groups are able to take up responsibilities in managing forest sustainably, develop bamboo plantations, deliver extension services, initiate locally based handicraft and pre-processing units supplying markets and industry

To reach the goals of the bamboo sector development (See Table n°4) it was necessary to build on a large participation and organization of villagers to ensure the sustainability of the forest management, its self-governance and the link with business development.

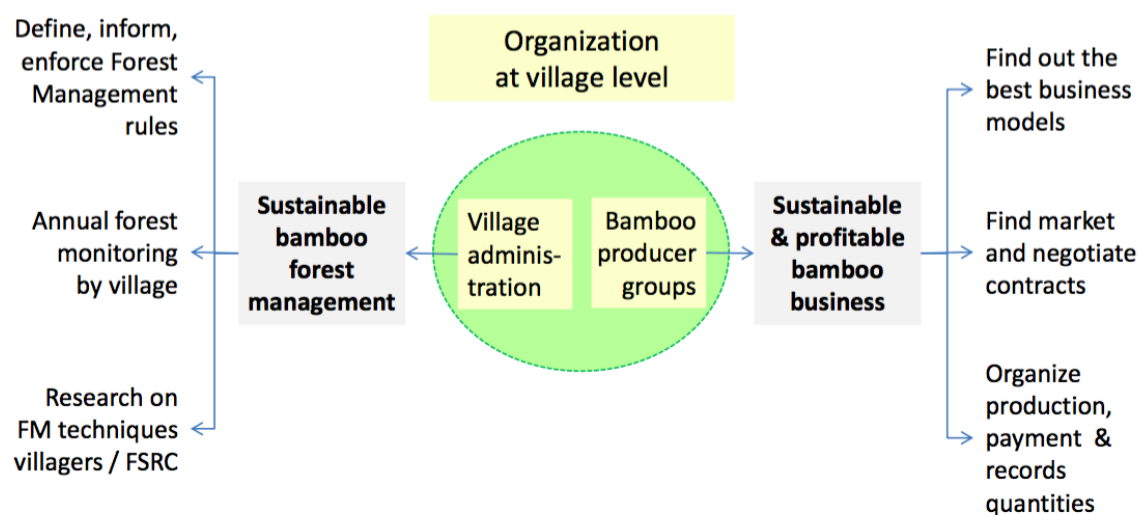
Table 4: Progress against the logical framework for expected result 2

Indicators logframe	Progress to August 2015
2400 households (HH) are members of bamboo producers' groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 519 HH members of BB handicraft Producers Groups - 1000 HH members of BB Shoots Harvesting & Commercialization Groups - 825 HH members of Supply Groups for stick factory - \$95 HH members of "plantation groups" <p>Total: around 1 800 households (without overlapping)</p>
60 villages	70 villages
120 farmer leaders participate actively to bamboo sector development in 2014	180 to 270 leaders involved
30 farmers promoters develop and provide services	<p>60 actives service providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 "active" service providers have skills to set up bamboo nurseries, they produce when they have order. - 8 Active villagers trained and provided services to 84 farmers on planting bamboo. They have skills to train 4 bamboo plantation techniques with 14 bamboo species. 21 Village Volunteers actually engaged in the management and data collection from E&D plots on forest management. Within 8 VV have skills to disseminate the methodology on E&D. - 9 Village Service Providers specialized in training on handicraft & furniture (+ 6 junior Village Service Providers identified) - 7 Village Forest Management Technicians selected by VBC have skills to train on forest monitoring and forest inventory
30 FMP run by farmer groups are agreed by DAFO (1500 ha)	3 400 ha with 40 FMP approved (or about to be approved) in 19 villages
500 ha plantation	331 ha allocated and started planted
30 producers groups	- 31 Bamboo Handicraft Producers Groups - BHPG (46% of all HH in villages concerned)

	- 12 Bamboo Shoot Harvesting and Commercialization Groups - BSHCG (94% of all HH in villages concerned) including 4 groups managing processing units (dryers) with 100% of HH in villages concerned - 21 Bamboo Supply Groups for stick factory with Village Bamboo Committee - VBC (67% of all HH in villages concerned) - 26 Bamboo Plantation Groups <i>(4 Xang BB Supply Groups / VBC for paper pulp factory. Not active)</i>
5 semi-industrial Pre-Processing Workshops operate	7 Semi Processed Unit of Khouane slats & sticks 4 Processing unit of Hok shoots

Specific social set-up has been developed to reach this purpose after trainings were carried out to sensitize villagers and Government staff on the importance of structuring Village Bamboo Committees and Producer Groups. It has been accurately decided that the village administration (VBC) would be responsible for the sustainable bamboo forest management with the functions of (i) defining, informing, enforcing forest management rules, (ii) implementing the annual forest monitoring and (iii) implementing the collection of data for the research on FM techniques led by FSRC, and the producers groups would be responsible for the implementation of sustainable and profitable bamboo business, with the functions of (i) finding out the most appropriate business models, (ii) finding markets and negotiate contracts with other economic actors, and (iii) organizing the production, the payments to villagers and service providers, and the records of production and payments (See Chart 5).

Chart 5: Organization scheme at village level



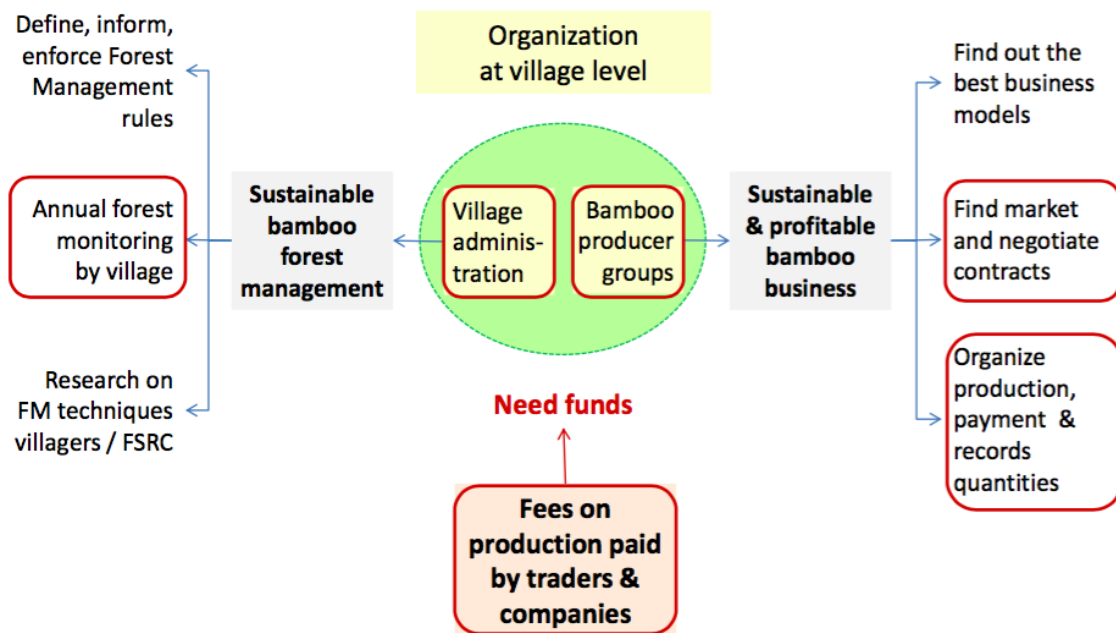
In this way most indicators exceeded the expectations. Village bamboo committees have been working in 70 villages (against 60 planned). 2382 HH have been involved (almost 1800 HH without overlapping, which represents almost 70% of the total HH in the villages) in 94 producers groups (against respectively 2400 HH and 30 PG initially planned). 180 to 270 farmer leaders have been involved (compared with 120 foreseen). FMP have been approved or about to be approved on 3400 ha in 19 villages, against 1500 ha and 30 FMP

foreseen. Seven semi processed units of khouane slats and sticks and four small village enterprises drying hok shoots are now operating (against a total of 5 semi-industrial pre-processing workshops foreseen). As mentioned above, only the indicators on plantations established have not been reached.

Though no formal vocational training has been developed due to the fact that the project was not prepared to work on a vocational training center during this experiment phase and also to the lack of such institution in the Lao PDR¹², technical skills have been developed among 60 active village service providers (against 30 foreseen) who now deliver paying services in the 70 villages and other surrounding villages on nursery and plantations techniques, improved handicraft techniques, dryers operation and forest monitoring and inventory.

Beyond these realizations the project has been worrying about the need for sustainable funding of the social set-up and the organization at village level. Annual forest monitoring, finding markets and negotiate contracts as well as the organization of production, payment and the record of quantities produced and sold, indeed imply that the people in charge of these functions are paid for this work. This is the reason why the project proposed to put in place, with the agreement of all project stakeholders, the collection of fees on production paid by traders and companies by the PG (See Chart 6).

Chart 6: Sustainable funding for the organization at village level



The funds collected supply bamboo development funds managed by the PG under the supervision of the village administration.

¹² A private vocational training school began operating in VX district in 2014 but the bamboo sector was still not a priority by the end of the project.

Advocacy work has been carried out at provincial and national level for legal recognition of these farmer groups as new and autonomous economic organizations at village level, particularly through exchanges and study tours. Sixteen PG have been registered (9 handicraft PG and 7 dried hok PG).

In this way villagers are taking up full responsibility in managing forest sustainability, delivering extension services to producers groups and other villages and operate processing and trade of their bamboo production showing ownership on the actions launched by the project.

III.3.3. Expected result 3: Effective coordination between state actors, producer groups and private sector supports the implementation of the provincial bamboo strategy and create opportunities to involve Lao scientists

To measure the effectiveness on this result, 5 indicators have been defined (See Table 5).

Table 5: Progress against the logical framework for expected result 3

Indicators logframe	Progress to August 2015
6 multi-actors events organized (seminars, outlook days...) by the task force	1 "Bamboo value chain workshop" organized (1 for each value chain and 1 synthesis for all value chains) 1 Bamboo strategy Workshop
PAFO, DPI and DoIC action plans are decided and implemented in coordination with others BB stakeholders by year 2	Quarterly District meetings for reporting and planning, with DAFO, DIC, DPI, DONRE Annual action plan has been done based on multi stakeholders value chains workshops
A 5-years multi-stakeholder provincial strategy developed by state actors, producer groups and private actors by year 4 and means secured	Provincial strategy 2016-2020 is drafted in 2014/ 15
2 studies implemented by Lao scientists	1 annual study on FM techniques (E&D plots) with FRC/NAFRI
Registration of status & by-law for the provincial Bamboo sector association	Discussion started with farmers and concerned departments

The project supported and facilitated discussions and interactions in multi-stakeholder events where actors aim to reach a common understanding to develop the bamboo sector and overcome value chains constraints through a learning process. In this manner actions have been tested, evaluated and validated before decisions were made with a strong involvement of all stakeholders.

Several tools have been used for a continuous dialogue among stakeholders:

- District quarterly meetings for reporting and planning with representatives of the district governor, DAFO, DONRE, DPI, DOIC, PAFO and LWU.
- Annual bamboo value chain workshops for each value chain plus one to establish a

- synthesis for all value chains and in this manner establish the annual action plan. Dialogue and agreements were established between economic actors (villagers and private sector) through these workshops.
- Provincial annual BBTF workshops with PAFO, DPI, DIC, DoIC, DoPI, LWU, and PONRE to present and discuss the results, difficulties and challenges faced during the past year and on this basis make decisions on enabling environment and policies at province level.

Through these workshops the BBTF became supportive to the project, approved annual action plans and took important decisions on provincial specific policies (e.g. the opening of the hok market; changes on trade policies for slats; approval of the experiment on CLRT; tax exemption for equipment imports; registration of PG).

The involvement of the scientist community through (i) the design and implementation of forestry experiments and demonstrations led by FSRC/NAFRI as well as through (ii) plantation experiments on intercropping, species and planting techniques, and (iii) the participation of the National University of Laos in the design, testing and operation of 6 dryers for hok shoots in 4 villages, allowed to refine the techniques of the bamboo resource management and business development proposed to villagers.

In addition the project presented and published the results of this action to raise awareness of Lao society on ongoing developments between civil society and local authority associations¹³.

The goal of register a provincial bamboo sector association could not be reached because the sector is still not enough consolidated. The attempt to activate a traders association stroke against the predominance of traders' private interests. Nevertheless discussion started with farmers and concerned departments for future development.

In 2015 an intensive process of consultation has been carried out with all stakeholders to prepare and draft the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020, that has been discussed and validated by the Vice Governor of the HP after the presentation of the results of the present evaluation and of the new strategy, with a large participation of governmental staff (See Annex 3).



¹³ Several communications and reports have been shared: 5 presentations of the Bamboo Project; 1 report on bamboo plantation and organization; 6 reports on research on bamboo forest management for each species (E&D); 5 communications on bamboo forest post-harvest monitoring; 6 references on bamboo value chain workshops; 1 bamboo calendar for Village Bamboo Committees and villagers; 1 reference for tax and organization for bamboo value chains at the SSW ABD; 4 papers on land titling. One handicraft leader became also part of the Lao Farmer Network.

III.3.4. Progress against the objectives

In regard to the objectives (See Table 6) the project largely contributed to an impressive bamboo sector development though all indicators are not formally met or properly informed, even although most of them have been overpassed.

The project generated an average additional income of 166 USD to almost 2400 HH. Though no baseline was established and no specific strategy was designed to target as a priority poor families, it seems that the economic effects of the action reached mostly the poorest, taking into account the high degree of participation in the villages and the fact that only families that made use of their own labour force were involved in the bamboo harvest.

The number of jobs created has not been formally assessed, but jobs creation concerns all levels of value chains through mainly (i) increased mobilization of labour force of villagers during harvest time, pre-processing of slats at village level, drying of hok shoots and handicraft manufacturing; and (ii) pre-processing of slats and sticks, and in a lesser extent through (iii) increased number of handicraft shops and handicraft and fresh shoots traders; and (iv) transportation of raw material. At factory level, permanent jobs equivalent created can be estimated between 66 and 86¹⁴.

Among the 400,000 US\$ created in 2014, supply contracts have been approved and signed only with slats and sticks factories (110,000 US\$) and with dried hok shoots traders (44,000 US\$ in 2014¹⁵).

The mechanism for realizing the goal of improving livelihoods while increasing the sustainable management of bamboo forest has been largely served by a mix of small-scale enterprise activity and a widespread growth of cottage industry.

Table 6: Progress against the objectives

General objective	Indicators
The bamboo sector provides stable and sustainable incomes and employment, contributing to poverty alleviation and conserving forest functions and upland environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,400 households earn US\$ 50 (or 20 %) more by year 2015 in Sobbao and Viengxay district• Over 100 jobs created in Bamboo processing• Supply contracts approved for a total value of 500,000 US\$ in year 4
Specific objectives	Indicators
Improved capacity of provincial and district authorities and the emergence of local non-state actors create a sustainable ground for co-management and co-activation of the bamboo sector development strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 20 new villages and one districts willing to be part of bamboo sectors development in year 4.• At least 20 non-governmental

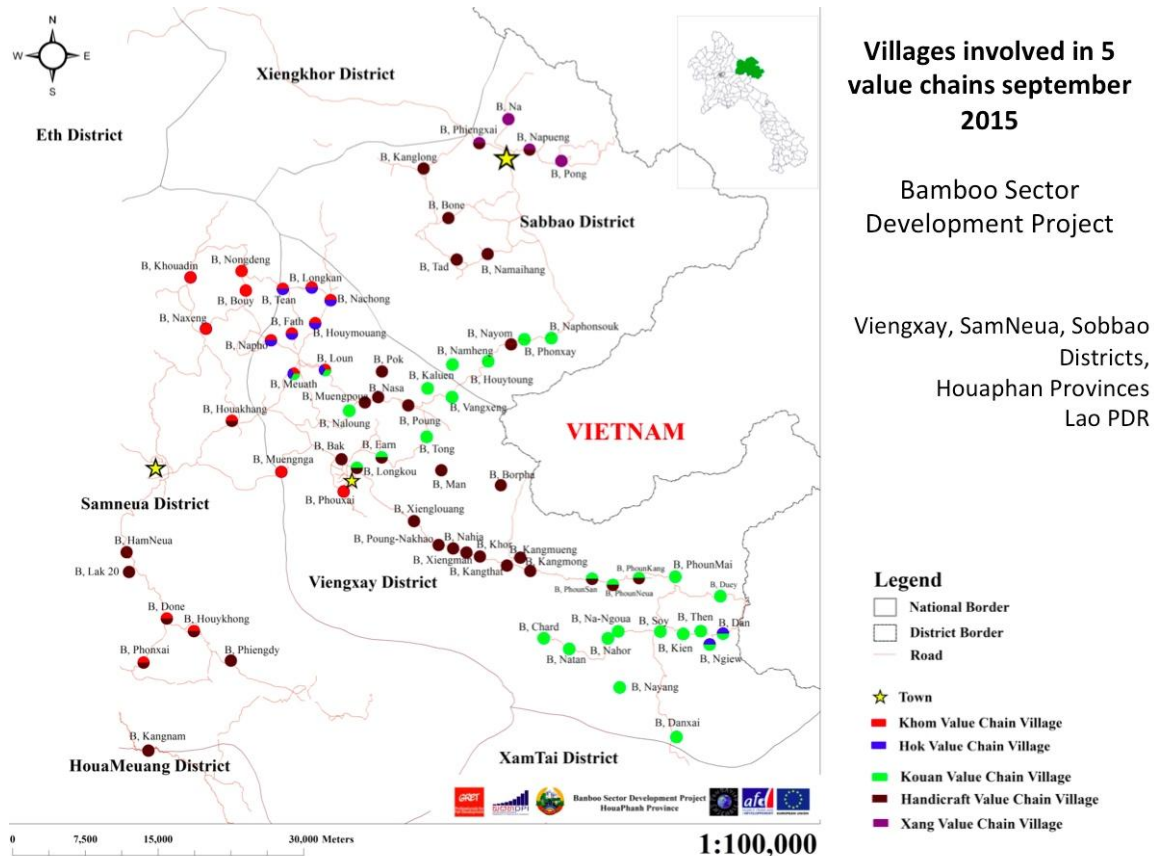
¹⁴ Thongvixay Factory employs 20 to 25 workers a day during 7 days a week and during 8 months, which represents an equivalent of 13 to 17 permanent jobs for 750 tons. The projection for the 3800 tons produced in 2014 gives a total of 66 to 86 permanent jobs equivalent.

¹⁵ This total value began decreasing in 2013 because of the flowering of hok bamboo.

	<p>organizations, farmers' groups and companies, are members of the provincial bamboo development Task Force by year 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 5 new investors are involved in bamboo business by year 4, <p>Over 500 hectares of land allocated to bamboo plantation, 1,500 hectares for natural forest management and over 4000 land-titles delivered by end of year 4</p>
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As mentioned above all indicators defined for the specific objective (except on plantations) have been met or overpassed, which shows that the co-management and co-activation of the bamboo sector development strategy has been successful in the targeted villages (See Map 1)

Map 1: Villages involved in the project value chains activities



III.4 Impact

The method used by the project in terms of the multi-stakeholders approach, the constant dialogue among local authorities, villagers and economic actors, and the consequent collective learning process resulted in an increased trust among stakeholders and significant progress in the field of adjustment on the HP policies for the activation of the bamboo sector.

The organization of the bamboo forest management through a specific social organization scheme at village level combined with the activation and structuring of 4 value chains led to a strong dynamism at village level. This dynamism manifests itself in a stronger ownership of villagers on their territory and the forest protection and management, in villagers' mastery on rules and regulations on forest management and in the spontaneous simplification of management rules by the Village Bamboo Committees, as well as in improved villagers' skills and the professionalization of the bamboo sector. Service providers developed abilities to attend requests from other villages.

As the impact assessment survey carried out in 2014 in 15 villages highlighted it, the additional income available at family level resulted in livelihood improvement through its investment mostly in alimentation, health and education but also in the purchase of livestock and oil for lawn tractor. It also helps the poor families to overcome the period of rice shortage. It is also visible –but not assessed– in almost all villages visited during the evaluation that housing conditions are being improved (building permanent structures, construction of latrines).

In some villages bamboo funds gave rise to spontaneous microcredit systems used as a financial support to the poorest families, after services to support the village organizations are paid.

The activation of the handicraft and slats and sticks value chains generated local and foreign investments in the construction of new shops and factories. But it also caused more finely-shaded impacts on the pressure on the bamboo resource and its management. In a few villages conflicts emerged during the definition of the territorial limits in order to access the bamboo resource; they have been solved through agreements between the chiefs of villages with the mediation of the chief of village cluster. In other cases the development of new factories created conflicts between them and the villagers about the conditions for the amortization of the cost of maintenance of access roads. This specific issue is still not solved. In addition slats and sticks factories are putting an external pressure on the bamboo resource itself: in order to recover the high cost of licenses and taxes and to compensate the seasonality of the activity (due to the regulations for the sustainable restoring of the bamboo forest), factories are putting pressure on the villages to bring external labour force for harvest. This issue is being stopped by the villagers themselves, who refuse to allow the factories to do so, which demonstrates the ownership they gained on their territorial resources. Great expectations of villagers are now rising on CLRT.

For the HP government, the activation of the value chains also represented increased income through the payment of licenses and taxes, contributing to the public finances.

The methods developed by the project, particularly the “Combined Method” called the attention of several projects in the HP and nationwide, that now want to incorporate them in their own actions related with natural resource management.

The spectacular development of the bamboo sector in the HP aroused the interest of the Lao PDR government for the development and implementation of a National Bamboo Strategy, which has been expressed by MAF.

III.5 Durability

The durability of the action is well engaged and promising.

At village level the bamboo forest management has been tested and is now established thanks to the support of villages authorities and the existence of producer groups that acquired skills for management, producing, processing and trading. The increasing acceptance of rules and regulations and the expectations on CLRT are illustrations of the ownership of villagers on the bamboo resource management established by the project. Service providers have the know-how to operate at technical level and meet the growing demands for services from other villages and projects. The bamboo development funds give some financial durability to cover the costs of forest management and trading. Nevertheless on the one hand producer groups still need enforcement, particularly on forest monitoring, governance, records and financial management, negotiation skills as well as on transparency. On the other hand the economic durability of the PG is threatened by the existing gap on rules and current running between villages attended by the project and other villages. Indeed the collection of fees, established to ensure the financial durability of forest management and business activity, pushes the traders to reorient their purchase in villages where fees are not collected. Particularly in the handicraft value chain, where there is a high competition of traders, villagers face difficulties in collecting the fees from non-registered traders.

Despite activation of business activity in 4 value chains gave good economic results, access to market is still fragile. The dried hok shoots market in Vietnam is not well known and the access to it, as well as the access to the Chinese market, suffers from the operation of Chinese traders who still impose to the producers techniques of drying that use sulfur, which presents a high risk on public health in the export markets with potential negative effects on the value chain in the HP. Domestic market outside the HP for this product is still not much developed. The started experimentation of Participatory Guarantee System –PGS – with several hok shoots producer groups, with the support of IFOAM, seems a good option to ensure the market access.

The capacity of provincial authorities of testing policies for the bamboo sector activation is also an important factor for durability of the action. The revision of quotas and taxes policy is still a challenge for future development of the bamboo sector (as well as for other sectors).

The validation of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020 bodes well for the future.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

IV.1 Conclusions on the evaluation criteria

The combination of territorial and business approaches organized around the five components of land management, forest management, plantations, business and trade, and enabling environment, in the frame of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2011-2015 with a participative and inclusive multi-stakeholders approach, ensured a **good relevance** to the project.

Though progress delayed in some areas due to difficulties in achieving decisions on policy matters by local authorities, high staff turnover among implementing NGOs and government, and the lack of inclusion of the Chamber of commerce and financial entities, the good overall project expenditure, the strong dialogue with all stakeholders and the very high of well focused activities with a limited team, resulted in a **good efficiency**, that materialized in a very good return of the financial resources invested with at least 1 M USD generated from a total cost of 1,6 M euros.

The **very good effectiveness** is due to a good outcome delivery (despite the partial achievement on CLRT, sector association and plantations) with an excellent use of the collective learning process and numerous collaborations and exchanges with other projects and national fora, that resulted in significant increased income (average of 166 USD per HH per year) and jobs creation from a side activity. The first steps for the bamboo sector structuring have been reached.

The **good impact** of the project materializes in increased villagers' livelihoods for almost 2400 HH; increased government revenues from taxes; forest protection and management by villagers; strong dynamism at village level (new village and producers organizations, improved skills, service providing to producers, emergence of spontaneous microcredit systems); increased trust among stakeholders; proved capacity of provincial authorities to adjust bamboo sector policies); and the will of central government to impulse and implement a National Bamboo Strategy in the near future.

The **promising durability** of the action rests on:

- The structures established at village level (Village Bamboo Committees and Producer Groups) effectively ensure the bamboo forest management on both technical and financial aspects thanks to skills to produce, process, trade and offer services.
- The villagers' ownership on the bamboo resource management through an increasing acceptance of rules and regulations.
- Good economic results in the 4 value chains.
- The capacity of the HP authorities to test policies for the bamboo sector activation.
- The validation of the new Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020.

Nevertheless the action still needs (i) consolidation, (ii) extension and (iii) further innovation to ensure long-term sustainability.

IV.2 Operational and strategic recommendations

Bamboo resource management:

On the one hand, some results still need to be consolidated:

1. The Village Bamboo Committees must still be strengthened on the monitoring of rules and regulations, and reinforced on the use of the bamboo development funds and transparency of their management.
2. Forest monitoring must be systematized and its quality improved.
3. The preparation of manuals on the “Combined Method”, forest management and producers’ organization must be finalized.
4. Experiment and demonstration must be continued in order to integrate their conclusions into final recommendations for the improvement of forest management rules.
5. The plantation work should be reoriented and more focused on villages with very limited natural bamboo resource, particularly in handicraft villages.

On the other hand, some activities must be extended:

6. The bamboo forest identification and management planning should be applied to all villages where the project is already working, using the new method designed by the project for bamboo forest identification, inventory and management called the “Combined Method”.
7. To fully take advantage of the bamboo resource in the Houaphanh Province and develop its potential according to economies of scale, the evaluation recommends the mapping of the resource in the whole province.

Finally, considering the negative impact of the hok flowering on the results of the value chain, the growing importance of the bamboo in the economy and the lack of knowledge on the causes and mechanisms of bamboo flowering, the evaluation recommends:

8. To initiate research about the blossoming of bamboo with FSRC/NAFRI.

Business and trade:

To consolidate the results reached by the project:

9. Strengthen producer groups on their internal organization, fees collection, fund management and transparency, empowered on price and contract negotiation.
10. Deepen the exploration of domestic and export markets, particularly on expanding markets that use existing species of the HP: late sweet khom markets in other provinces, dried hok shoots in Vientiane and Vietnam as well as in China, handicraft for the tourism industry.
11. Put a priority to the development of increased added value products with a focus on:
 - The improvement of quality for handicraft products.
 - The production of high quality dried hok shoots, the improvement of ovens efficiency, the development of packaging for trade.
 - The Participatory Guarantee System certification.

- The equipment of factories with machines for processed final products.
- 12. Elaborate consolidated accounts for each value chain, with the incorporation of taxes and the value added by trade, in order to more precisely quantify the real added value in each value chain and in this way help authorities to identify the priorities for further development of the bamboo sector.

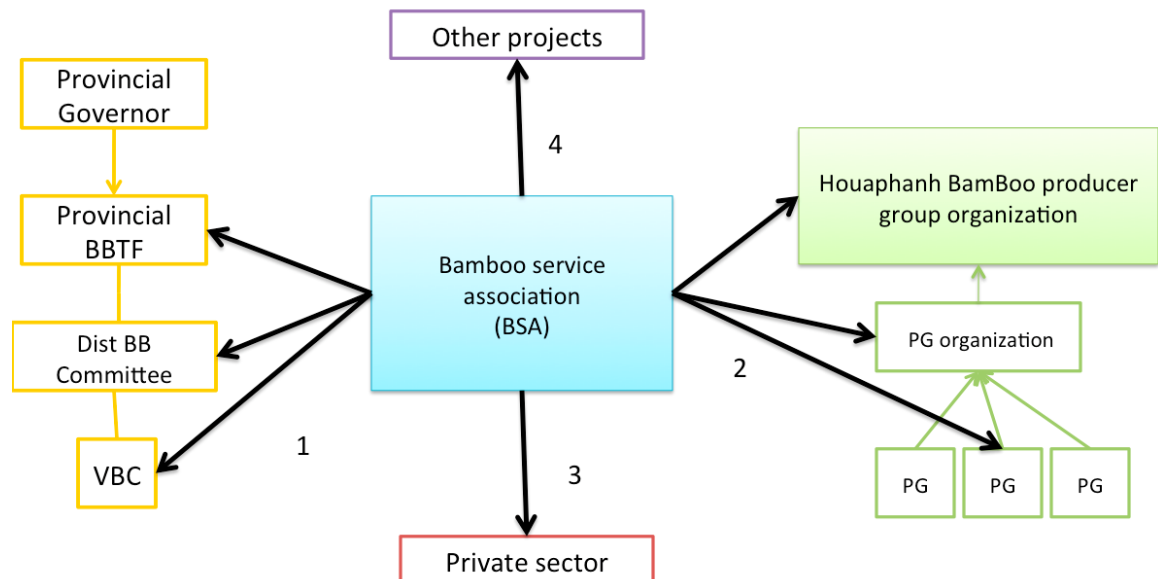
To extend the activation of the present value chains:

- 13. Scale-up the organization of producer groups to face the market, by the setting up of second level organizations (central buying service for khom fresh shoots and handicraft products).

Taking into account the present development of the bamboo business and trade component¹⁶, innovate by:

- 14. Setting scaled-up services through an independent organization that could be a Bamboo Service Association (BSA). This BSA would work in collaboration with province and districts authorities including the BBTF, as well as with Village Bamboo Committees in order to deliver extended services to producer groups and to higher level organizations (like a PG organization and a Houaphanh Bamboo producer group organization, as well as to private sector and other projects (See Chart 7). Special attention will have to be paid to its business model in order to ensure its sustainability.

Chart 7: Organization of the Bamboo Service Association



¹⁶ The main features of this present development are: (1) 29 active service providers, (2) the growing demand on training and advice from other villages and projects, (3) the need for new services, (4) the relevance of structuring service delivery through an independent organization, on the model of the Phu Tho organization in Vietnam and other examples over the world (See Annex 3).

15. Developing an information market system through local and national networking, with the support of DOIC, the Chamber of Commerce and the Bamboo Service Association.
16. Facilitating access to credit for operating capital to processing units, collectors and traders.
17. Developing new value chains, at least for luang that will come from established plantations, but also for bamboo waste recovery (bio fuel).

Enabling environment:

To consolidate the results reached by the project, the evaluation recommends to:

18. Achieve the experiment and learning cycle on CLRT, and implement the lessons learned in all villages with good bamboo forest management, in order to complete the ensuring of communal land tenure rights.
19. Achieve the recognition and registration of the producer groups to consolidate their position in the value chains.
20. Simplify the procedures for registration of producer groups and traders.
21. Progressively unify the rules of operation of the private actors to avoid unequal competition between them while ensuring the durability of the sustainable forest management (collection of fees for the PG in the whole province; same conditions for all factories).

In the medium term, innovations should be tested for the revision of quotas and tax policies in the HP, by:

22. Testing tax cuts to get a stronger activation of the value chains while getting increased total revenues for the government.
23. Establishing coherent regulations in the assignment of quotas (e.g. giving priority quotas to certified organic products)
24. Establishing crossed controls between the quantities produced at village level (records of production and sales), production data provided by the processors and customs registers in order to limit tax avoidance.

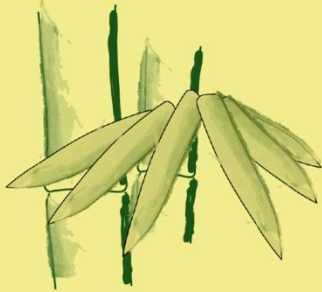
The evaluation also strongly suggests to GRET and SNV to:

- Capitalize on the experience of the project and widely share the lessons learned.
- Pay more attention to the establishment of the baseline previous to launching new actions.
- Clearly define impact criteria and monitor them along the implementation.
- Define a strategy for a more proactive advocacy on key issues as for the empowerment of villagers on forest management, the securing of land tenure or quotas and tax policies.

Finally, the evaluation highly recommends a second phase in order to consolidate, extend and deepen the bamboo sector development in the Houaphanh Province.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of reference of the evaluation



BAMBOO SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT HOUAPHANH PROVINCE

SARA MELKI
PROJECT COORDINATOR
020 58 72 06 70

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE BAMBOO PROJECT HUAPHAN PROVINCE - LAOS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

THE BAMBOO PROJECT

SCOPE OF THE FINAL EVALUATION: THE BAMBOO PROJECT

The **overall objective of the Bamboo Project** is to that “the bamboo sector provides stable and sustainable incomes and employment, contributing to poverty alleviation and conserving forest functions and upland environment”.

The Bamboo Project referred to in this evaluation has a total **duration of 57 months**, from January 2011 until September 2015, with a financial support of **2 main donors** for the purpose of this final evaluation¹⁷:

- The European Union (EU), through the funding of the Action ‘*Support to the implementation of the Huaphan Provincial Bamboo Sector Development Strategy*’ (53 months from January 2011 to May 2015)
- The Fondation Ensemble (FE), through the funding of the Action ‘*Reconversion of bamboo value chains in mountainous area: towards a better respect of environment and a better remuneration of villagers producers*’ (48 month from October 2011 to September 2015).

¹⁷ A third financial support has been provided from January 2010 to December 2013 by the French Agency for Development (AFD), the evaluation of which has been carried out in July 2014.

The **total financial contribution** of the two main donors concerned with this final evaluation is 1,2 Million Euros for the period of 57 months¹⁸:

- EU: 1 000 000 Euros
- FE: 200 000 Euros

The Bamboo Project has been implemented by Gret in partnership with SNV, in close partnership with the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), and in close cooperation with other provincial departments (PONRE, DIC) and district departments and authorities. Please note that SNV participated to the Project from 2011 to 2014 only (SNV did not participate to the Project in 2015).

The Bamboo Project has been the object of Four external evaluations in the referred period:

- A monitoring mission carried out for the FE by Mr. Braunsteffer (Director FE) in November 2012¹⁹
- A mid-term evaluation carried out for the EU and FE by Mr. Michael Jones (external consultant) in July 2013²⁰.
- A Final evaluation carried out for AFD by Clémentine Tribouillard and Sofiane Karroume (external consultants) in July 2014²¹.
- A final evaluation carried out by the Provincial Government (Bamboo Task Force) in July to September 2014.

All evaluations acknowledged significant achievements and results, both in term of methods and tools (e.g. for implementing forest management...) and in terms of impact and coverage (e.g.: hectares, households, GDP...).

The final evaluation, object of this TOR, will complement the above mentioned evaluations and will refer to the Bamboo project combining both complementary Actions funded by the EU and the FE (both donors agreed that the Final Evaluation being done in the same time).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS OF THE BAMBOO PROJECT

The project document of the Action funded by EU defines 1 specific objective (hereafter named S01) and 3 expected results (hereafter referred to as R1, R2 and R3), with the corresponding indicators:

- S01: 'Improved capacity of provincial and district authorities and the emergence of local non-state actors create a sustainable ground for co-management and co-activation of the bamboo sector development strategy'

¹⁸ Contribution of AFD during the referred period of 57 months is 400 000 Euros

¹⁹ See : 'rapport de mission Laos, Novembre 2012, Olivier Braunsteffer'

²⁰ See : 'Mid-term Evaluation of the project Support to the implementation of the Huaphan Province bamboo Sector Development Strategy, Michael Jones, August 2013'

²¹ See : 'Evaluation finale du Programme de Promotion de l'accès durable aux services et aux revenus pour les populations défavorisées de 3 PMA à état fragile (Haiti, Laos, Mauritanie), PADSR, Août 2014

- R1: Local authorities ensure land tenure rights for bamboo plantations and support market orientated natural forest management with delegation of forest plots to individual farmers

R1 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
District regulation on forest management is approved by province and implemented at village level
60 village land Use Plans (including bamboo) are approved by district authorities by year 4
Allocation of forest land to villages is approved in 3 districts, for forest management
4 value chains are well channeled with appropriate trade procedures and resources allocations

- R2: Bamboo producer groups are able to take up responsibilities in managing forest sustainably, develop bamboo plantations, deliver extension services, initiate locally based handicraft and pre-processing units supplying markets and industry

R2 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
2400 households are members of bamboo producers' groups
60 villages are involved in the value chains
120 farmer leaders participate actively to bamboo sector development in 2014
30 farmers promoters develop and provide services to the bamboo sector
30 forest management plans (FMP) run by farmer groups are agreed by DAFO (1500 ha)
500 ha are allocated and planted with bamboo
30 producers groups are involved in the value chains
5 semi-industrial Pre-Processing Workshops are operating

- R3: Effective coordination between state actors, producer groups and private sector supports the implementation of the provincial bamboo strategy and create opportunities to involve Lao scientists

R3 Indicators (Logical Framework EU)
6 multi-actors events are organized (seminars, outlook days...) by the Bamboo Task Force
PAFO, DPI and DoIC action plans are decided and implemented in coordination with others bamboo sector stakeholders by year 2
A 5-years multi-stakeholder provincial strategy is developed by state actors, producer groups and private actors by year 4 and means are secured
2 studies are implemented by Lao scientists

Status & by-law of a provincial Bamboo sector association are registered
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The project document of the Action funded by FE defines 2 specific objectives (hereafter named SO2 and SO3 for the purpose of this final evaluation²²) and 3 expected results (hereafter referred to as R4, R5 and R6 for the purpose of this final evaluation²³), with the corresponding indicators²⁴:

- SO2: 'Support the emergence and development of 'bamboo producers & pre-processing groups' generating additional income for villagers and added value in the villages'.
- SO3: 'Develop and adapt sustainable bamboo forest management for the development of bamboo value chains'.
- R4: '40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups are operational and make sustainable use and trade of village bamboo resource – with Forest Management Plans for bamboo shoots and bamboo slats value chains'

R4 Indicators (FE)
3 bamboo value chains are in development process, with adapted trading procedures and a sustainable allocation and use of bamboo resource
40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups are operational
4 bamboo pre-processing groups with collective equipment, paid workers and entrepreneurial management, are tested
The 40 bamboo harvesting and pre-processing groups have contracts (oral or written) with traders
More than 800 households have an regular additional income of 100 Euro per year

- R5: 'Tools and mechanisms of vocational / professional training are defined or settled for strengthening the bamboo sector'

R5 Indicators (FE)
Tools and mechanisms of vocational / professional training are identified or prepared for strengthening the bamboo sector in the future
10 Villagers Technicians are able to provide services or organize trainings aimed at professionalizing the bamboo sector'

²² In the Project Document of the Action funded by FE (French language), SO2 and SO3 correspond to Specific Objectives 1 and 2 of the Action

²³ In the Project Document of the Action funded by FE (French language), R4, R5 and R6 correspond to Result 1.1. & 1.2, Result 1.3 and Result 2

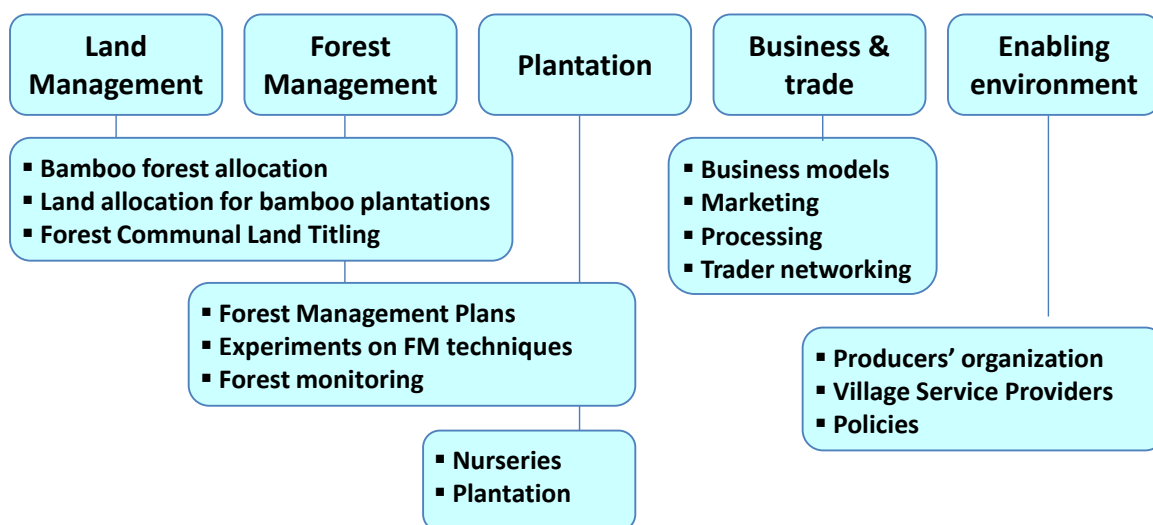
²⁴ Note that an updating of the initial indicators has been proposed by Gret and approved by FE, as described in the Narrative Report n°4 corresponding to the period April to September 2014

- R6: '20 approved and operational Forest Management Plans (FMP) supply the bamboo pre-processing groups involved in bamboo shoots and/or bamboo slats value chains'

R6 Indicators (FE)
20 land use plans allocating bamboo forest plots to villagers (either through PLUP or Combined method) are approved by the Districts
20 Forest Management Plans are approved by the Districts
20 Forest Management Plans are actually implemented and the corresponding forest plots are monitored every year

OPERATIONAL SETTING UP OF THE BAMBOO PROJECT

The support provided by the Project has been structured in **5 complementary operational components**: Land management, Bamboo Forest Management, Bamboo Plantation, Business & trade, Enabling environment and public policies.



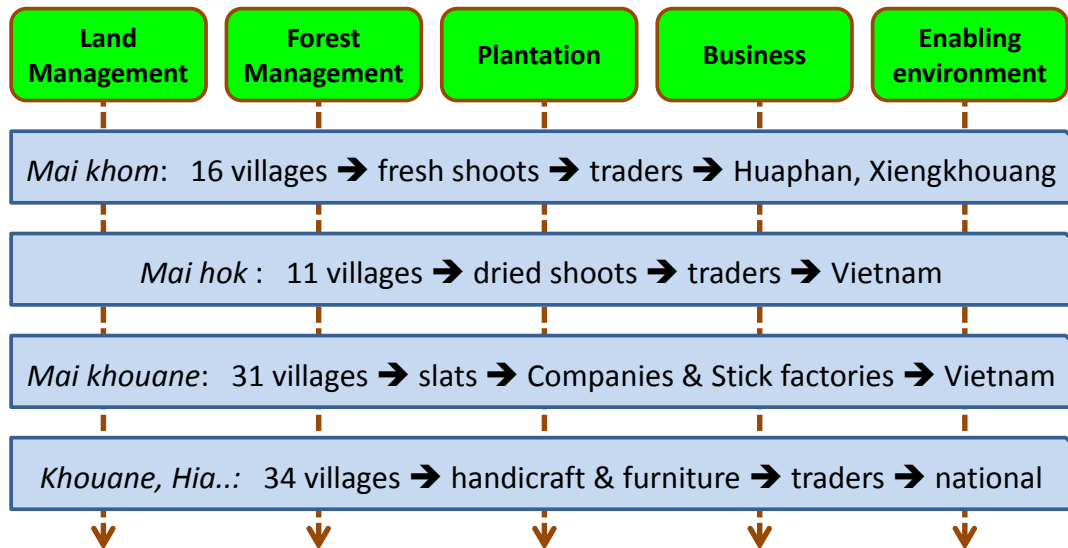
Gret assumed the coordination and coherence of the 5 components, implemented by a Project Team of advisors from both Gret and SNV.

Gret has been directly and operationnally involved in the implementation of the 5 components (from sustainable resource management to trade), whereas SNV contribution has been mainly focused on Business & Trade and Enabling Environment.

BAMBOO VALUE CHAINS SUPPORTED BY THE BAMBOO PROJECT

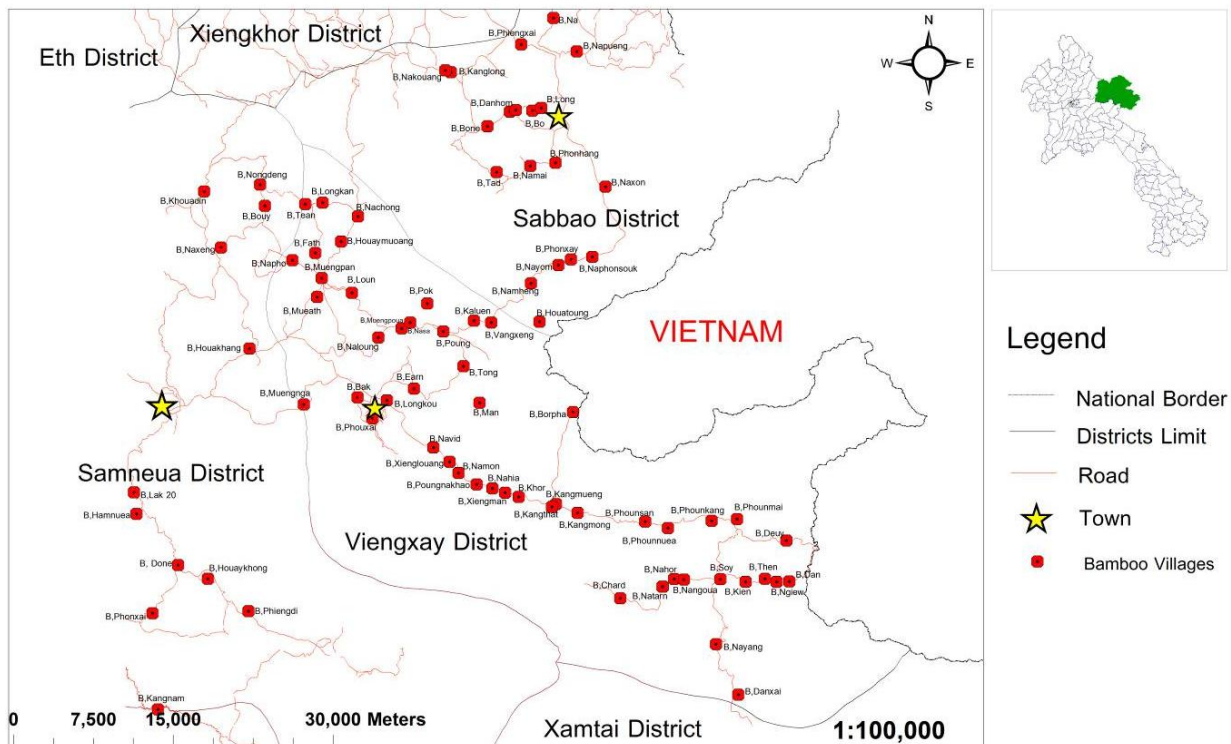
In 2014, the Bamboo Project currently supported 4 value chains: fresh bamboo shoots (mai khom) for national market, dried bamboo shoots (mai hok) for Vietnamese market, bamboo slats (mai khouane) for Vietnamese market, bamboo handicraft and furniture for national market (mai Khouane and Hok).

A fifth value chain has been temporarily suspended since 2013: the supply of bamboo culms (mai xang) for locally based paper pulp factory exporting to Vietnam.



GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE OF THE BAMBOO PROJECT

In 2015, the Bamboo Project provides support to 70 villages in three districts of Huaphan Province (Viengxay, Sabbao and Sam Neua).



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS ON ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Main achievements and challenges of the Project are summarized in the documents attached in annex:

- *Bamboo Project Towards co-management of a sustainable bamboo sector in Huaphan Province through villagers' empowerment, plaquette, 2 pages, 2014*
- *Innovative learning process for building sustainable NTFP value chains: the case of the Bamboo Project in Huaphan Province, Laos – An overview in 7 slides, October 2014*
- *Four bamboo value chains: Scope and impact of the Bamboo Project in Huaphan Province, Laos, A brief summary, December 2014*
- *Taxes and fees for promoting sustainable bamboo value chains lessons learned from the Bamboo Project in Huaphan Province, Laos, Contribution to the SSWG ABD, December 2014*

FINAL EVALUATION REQUESTED

The TOR of the Final Evaluation of the Bamboo Project has been designed with reference to the Project Documents of both Actions: EU²⁵ and FE²⁶.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

The Consultant will assess how the Bamboo Project has contributed to the improvement of the poverty status and income generation in target communities, while assessing the efficiency of producer groups.

He will assess the Bamboo Project according to the 5 criteria from OECD: relevance, intern and extern coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

²⁵ An external final evaluation will be carried out to assess how the Action has contributed to the improvement of the poverty status and income generation of target communities, while assessing the efficiency of producer groups. The evaluation surveys should be prepared at the request of the provincial Bamboo Task Force and implemented under their supervision. Public research institutes will implement this evaluation survey, to learn lessons for this action and to increase their implication in the development of the bamboo sector for the whole country. Outcomes will be used to prepare appropriate second phase proposals (2015–2020) and related work plans (Project Doc Action funded by EU)

²⁶ Une évaluation finale sera menée par une structure externe et conduira à une analyse évaluative du projet et prenant en compte les différents critères de l'évaluation définis par l'OCDE: pertinence, cohérence interne et externe, efficacité, efficience, effectivité, effets, impacts et viabilité. L'évaluation analysera les écarts entre les résultats planifiés dans les documents de projet (proposition technique, cadre logique, cadre budgétaire) et les résultats contenus. L'analyse évaluative considèrera également la « redevabilité » du projet, au travers de l'examen de son dispositif de suivi opérationnel et financier, du coût détaillé de ce dispositif. Sur la base des conclusions de l'analyse évaluative, des recommandations seront formulées pour chacune des composantes du projet. L'évaluation mettra en évidence les enseignements de portée générale à tirer de l'évaluation. Enfin, elle fera des recommandations sur les suites à donner au programme pour garantir la pérennité des actions développées durant les quatre années de projet. (Project Document Action funded by FE - in French).

He will highlight lessons learned, including on transversal issues. He will formulate recommendations on further steps to be given in a next phase (2016-2020) for consolidating and ensuring sustainability of the results achieved by the Bamboo Project.

EVALUATION ACCORDING TO THE 5 CRITERIA (OECD)

The Consultant will evaluate the Bamboo Project according to the 5 criteria of OECD, reminded below²⁷ :

- ***Relevance***

Relevance examines the consistency of the intervention with respect to the objectives and issues determined at the outset. It also assesses:

- The internal consistency of the project (consistency of the various resources and tools used to help achieving the objectives);
- The external consistency of the project (consistency with the interventions of the other actors: bilateral and/or multinational development partners, public administrations, NGOs...

- ***Effectiveness***

Effectiveness assesses the extent to which the project's objectives were fulfilled (technical, financial, institutional, trade-related and social objectives), as well as its possible unexpected effects (positive or negative effects). It includes:

- A comparison of intended and actual project results;
- An analysis of the gaps observed.

- ***Efficiency***

Efficiency examines the relationship between the resources implemented and their costs, on the one hand, and the funded outcomes, on the other hand. The evaluation carried out by the consultant must make it possible to:

- Assess whether the required resources were actually implemented, in a timely fashion and at the least cost;
- Analyze any observed delays or overspread.

Particular attention will be given to the technical and financial follow-up system, its cost and efficiency

- ***Impact***

Impact measures the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the

²⁷ For more detail, see: *The DAC Principles for the Evaluation of Development Assistance*, OECD (1991), *Glossary of Terms Used in Evaluation*, in 'Methods and Procedures in Aid Evaluation', OECD (1986), and the *Glossary of Evaluation and Results Based Management (RBM) Terms*, OECD (2000).

positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions. The following questions will be included in this section:

- Achieved and potential impact on the attitude and perception of the villagers, traders and government towards the bamboo forests and the bamboo sector;
- Achieved and potential impact on the GDP, the incomes of villagers and traders, and the revenues of the government (taxes);
- Achieved and potential impact on the protection of the bamboo forests;
- Achieved and potential impact on the provincial bamboo sector policy.

▪ ***Sustainability***

The consultant will examine whether the fulfillment of the objectives and the results and impacts obtained are of a sustainable nature, or even likely to be amplified, over the long term, and, if so, under what conditions.

LESSONS LEARNED AND TRANSVERSAL ISSUES

The consultant will give attention of the major innovations of the project in Lao Context. The Consultant will highlight lessons learned. Particularly, the consultant will evaluate in this section the strategies adopted and/or proposed by the Bamboo project to:

- create the conditions for a multi-stakeholder learning process;
- Create the conditions for innovations, compare to other projects.
- combine a territorial approach (land management, forest management and plantation) and a market approach (business and trade);
- involve the value chain's stakeholders in the development of a sustainable bamboo sector, particularly the sustainable use of the bamboo forests and the plantations;
- involve the Province and District authorities and technicians in the implementation of the Bamboo Project, and in the improvement of Provincial and District sector policies enabling the development of the bamboo sector;
- promote the organization of the bamboo sector stakeholders in order to develop and strengthen a sustainable bamboo sector (this includes the discussions on organization at different levels);
- overcome the key challenge and difficulty of 'turnover' of project team staffs, District technicians, bamboo task force members (this includes the discussions on a NPA-hosted Bamboo Service Center with autonomous management).
- Coordinate the Bamboo Project with other projects (NUDP, CLIPAD, TABI, LEAF...) implemented in the Province.
- Link the Bamboo Project activities with key innovative processes with national implications and contribute to the debate on these topics (e.g.: communal land titling, Participatory guarantee Systems...);
- Document and share the results and lessons learned of the Bamboo Project (visibility).

Also, considering the amount of funds injected by International donor in rural development, what are the factors explaining the lack of interest for continuing this project

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STEPS FOR CONSOLIDATION & SUSTAINIBILITY

The Consultant will formulate recommendations for consolidating the results achieved.

Recommendations will particularly focus on:

- the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020 in formulation & finalization
- further Project proposals submitted or to be submitted by Gret to donors
- What can be the strategy to ensure the continuity on the bamboo sector in Houaphan?

CONDITIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION

The Final Evaluation will be conducted before the end of the Project, so that the Consultant can have easy access to Project team and partners.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology will include the following orientations:

- Desk review of Project documents made available by Gret
- Meeting with bamboo Project partners in Vientiane : [FRC/NAFRI, SNV](#)
- Meeting with the Bamboo Project team in Sam Neua
- Meeting with Bamboo Project partners in Huaphanh, including: PAFO, DPI, PONRE, DIC, at provincial and district level (Viengxay, Sobbao, Sam Neua)
- Field interview / meeting with key beneficiaries of the Bamboo Project for the main value chains, including villagers, traders and factories.
- Debriefing with the Project team in Sam Neua
- Debriefing workshop with the bamboo Task Force, in Sam Neua. Public research institutes will be invited in the workshop, in order to learn lessons and to increase their implication in the development of the bamboo sector for the whole country.
- National workshop in Vientiane, presentation to an ad hoc meeting of interested stakeholders (preferably SSWG on Agroforestry)

DELIVERABLES

The deliverables are:

- A presentation PPT in English and in Lao of maximum 30 slides summarizing the main findings, which will be presented during the validation workshop

- A document written in English, with the main findings addressing the topics and questions to be answered: progress, key lessons, recommendation. the document will include:
 - A 4 pages summary in English and Lao languages, including photos, maps... focusing on lessons learnt, policy recommendations, etc
 - The full report (25 to 30 pages plus annexes)
 - A cdrom with the same report plus a selection of most significant project documents, presentations and media products
 - Annexes: methodology used, timetable, minutes of the workshop with the bamboo task force

TIME TABLE

The time table is as follows:

Total work days needed: 15 to 20 days

- reception of applications : 5th July 2015
- selection of the consultant: 8 July 2015
- Launching meeting July/ august
- Preparatory work 3 days
- field work: 7 to 10 working days in Huaphan Province (out of debriefing workshop)
- Debriefing with the team and with the BBTF: July 2015 or beginning September
- Visit to other projects leaders and development partners in HP and Vientiane : 3 days
- Draft report : before 15th september
- full report: before 30th september
- Presentation to an ad hoc meeting of interested stakeholders (SSWG) : September/ October 2015.

BUDGET AVAILABLE

Total budget available for the consultancy is 8 000 USD.

This budget includes:

- workdays of the consultant
- perdiem and accommodation
- transportation VTE Sam Neua VTE
- translation in Lao / English of the report

The project car will be made available for the evaluation team.

APPLICATIONS

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF CONSULTANT

Consultant should have:

- Advanced academic background and experience in rural development Project
- Knowledge of the Lao context and policies
- Experience in monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the development assistance activities, in particular related to NGO implemented programs.
- Demonstrated experience in participatory methodologies for planning and evaluation.
- Lao speaking (or must include translator in his proposal)
- Excellent English writing skills
- Experience in forestry or bamboo would obviously be a plus
- Being part of Lao Research Institute would be a plus.

HOW TO SEND PROPOSALS

Consultants interested should send:

- team composition (1 or 2 persons) and CV
- A technical proposal (particularly for the field work): understanding of the terms of references + the methodology of the logic of intervention
- A financial proposal (total budget including all expenses)
- Proposal of workplan

Not later than: 5th July 2015

To: Sara MELKI melki@gret.org

Annex 2: Agenda of the mission

Dates	Time	Objectives		Venue		Location
20/08	12:00 am	Arrival to Vientiane				
	14:00 pm	Meeting				Vientiane
21/08	9:00 am	Meeting	Partners in the project 2011 2014	Franck Tolentino	SNV	Vientiane
	12:00 am	Meeting Lunch	Other project	Seb Koch	CLIPAD/TABI	Vientiane
	14:00 pm	Meeting	Partners in the project 2011 2015	Mr. Southone	FSRC	Vientiane
	16:00 pm	Meeting	Other project			Vientiane
22/08	12:00 am	Meeting	Other project	Peter Grendj	SUFORD	Vientiane
23/ 08		Travelling to SN by Xiengkouang		Mr. Lee	SNV/ LEAF	
24/08	all day	Team meeting	Presentation of the project/ Interviews	Sith, Phong, Vi, Ang, Bounam, Khamsay, Soullignon	Project team	Sam Neua
25/08	am	Hok Value Chain	E&D, Forest management, monitoring		VBC / VFMT/VV	Ban Fath
	pm	Hok Value Chain	Processing, PU organisation and functioning, village fund		Pu members	
		Diner with District partners	Policy at D level		DAFO, DOIC, DPI, DONRE, Admin Office	Viengxay
26/08	am	Khom Value Chain	PLUP & Forest management; E&D		VBC	Ban Napho (also hok)
	pm	Khom Value Chain	Producer group organisation and village bamboo fund,	Miss Pengvone	PG, local trader	

27/08	Am	Meeting Government partners	project coordinator/ PAFO	M Phetsakhone	PAFO	Sam Neua
		Meeting Gov BBTF	Head PAFO	M Kin		Sam Neua
			Head DPI	M. Somphone, M. Somphone,		
			NuDP PAFO	M. Vongkham		Sam Neua
			Administration office	M Pouvhong		
	PM	Meeting Gov BBTF	DOIC LWU PONRE	Mme Ponvan, Mme Peng M. Keopasith	PAFO, DPI, DOIC, Admin Office, PONRE	Sam Neua
28/08	am	Handicraft Value chain	Producer group organization and processing, VDF, bb plantation, service providers		PG Handicraft and member of the Lao Farmer Network/ SP	Ban Pounakhao
	pm	Khouane value chain	PLUP, CLT, E&D, forest monitoring		VBC	Ban Eurn
	pm	Handicraft Value chain	Trading	Mme La	Traders	Viengxay
29/08						
		Hok and Handicraft VC	Trading Hok dry shoot and Handicraft	Mme Tuy	Trader	Sam neua
30/08		off				Sam Neua
		Kouane slats and stick VC	Processing		Thongvixay Factory	Ban Vanghai
31/08		Kouane slats and stick VC	Forest Management and resources utilization		VBC	Ban Naphounsouk
		Handicraft Value chain	Trading	Mme La	Hdc traders	Viengxay

1/9	am	Gov District	Policy at D level		DAFO, DOIC, DPI, DONRE, Admin Office	Sobbao
	pm	Xang Value chain	Forest management and E&D. contract		VBC & VV	Ban Na
2/9		Preparation of team debriefing				
3/9		Preparation of team debriefing				
4/9		Team debriefing	Debriefing	Project team	Bamboo team	Sam neua
5/9		Preparation of workshop evaluation				
6/9		Preparation of workshop evaluation				Sam Neua
7/9		Workshop evaluation	Presentation of the evaluation	M. Petsakone, M. Kin, M. Somphone, Mme Ponvan, M Pouvhong/ Vongphan, M. keopasith	BBTF, PAFO, DPI, DOIC, Admin Office, PONRE, Project team, Partners in SN	Sam Neua
		Strategy validation	Validation of the provincial strategy			Sam Neua
8/9		Team meeting				
9/9		Travel to Vientiane				Vientiane
10/9	am	Workshop evaluation vientiane	Presentation of the evaluation	EU delegation meeting room	UE, SDC, FD, projects partners and so on	
	pm	Travel back to France				

Annex 3: Minute of the restitution meeting with provincial and district authorities (Sam Neua; 7 of September 2015)

Agenda of the meeting:

8:30 – 9:45: Presentation of the evaluation
10:00 – 12:00: Discussion of the conclusions of the evaluation
14:00 – 17:00: Presentation, discussion and validation on the bamboo strategy
2016-2020

Presentation of the evaluation:

Paul Sfez presented the results of the evaluation, according to the PowerPoint issued by the evaluator.

Discussion:

After the presentation, the Vice Governor of the HP asked all representatives of the different departments to continue with the project activities and integrate them to their work plans even if no funding is available for a second phase.

Questions and answers:

Vice-Governor of HP:

How many HH went out of their poverty status after the project?

Answer: The project did not establish a baseline related with poverty and did not assess this date. Nevertheless it must be highlighted that bamboo is a side activity for most HH involved. In some cases bamboo income represents the only source of cash for the poorest. In 2014 a total of 400.000 USD was generated in the 70 villages where the project worked, meaning an average of 166 USD/HH/year.

How many FMP were carried out before and after the project?

Answer: The number of FMP rose from 9 to 26. In addition 14 forest monitoring exercises have been carried out in villages without FMP. Forest monitoring is still a challenge at this date and must be consolidated.

DONRE Representative, Sobbao:

How is Phu Tho service cooperative funded in Vietnam? What are the roles and responsibilities established?

Answer: At the beginning the cooperative was supported by DIALOGS project through trainings and purchase of services to the cooperative. Quickly the know-how of the cooperative technicians was recognized by projects in several provinces and donors, that began asking for services, which caused an important growth of the cooperative. Roles and responsibilities have been defined as in all other cooperatives, according to the law and taking into account the competences of each member.

Governor of VX District:

Activities will go on in VX especially in the Soy Cluster.

Why the objective on plantations has not been achieved?

Answer: On the one hand plantations do not represent a short-term income for villagers but a medium-term investment as time is needed for the plantations to be producing. Consequently plantations appear above all as a way to secure land access for the less poor villagers. On the other hand the focus given to Luang plantations (at least till 2014) tallies with the future development of a new value chain oriented to the Vietnamese market and not with a need for present uses. The consultant considers that the establishment of plantations of species used for handicraft in villages with poor availability or remoteness of the resource would have been more successful.

DAFO representative of SN District:

The establishment of new plantations in SN district should be continued. For other project activities the lack of budget is a limitation for going on with the project activities. What ideas can be developed to face this limitation?

Answer: At this stage considering the results of the project a second phase is highly recommended to donors. This second phase would be the opportunity to reinforce the sustainability of the actions. Particularly the revision of the provincial policy on taxes and quotas could increase the global volume of collected taxes and thus make financial resources available for further development.

PONRE representative:

What has been exactly done in each of the 70 villages?

Answer: The project elaborated a database on all activities carried out in each village and kept the BBTF informed about it. Thematic maps on these activities have been designed but a deeper analysis of these data is desirable.

The collaboration with PONRE has not been strong enough and PONRE considers that budget for a second phase is needed. A yearly evaluation should be necessary.

Answer: The project kept the BBTF informed on the achievements of the project on a regular basis through annual meetings, quarterly district meetings, annual value chain workshops and an intense consultation of all stakeholders for the drafting of the provincial bamboo strategy 2016-2020. These events have been the opportunity not only to share about project progress but also to take decisions on the project development.

POFA representative:

Which part of the added value created goes to villages? How villagers' livelihoods can be improved? How many permanent jobs have been created?

Answer: The added value calculated by the project (1 million dollars in 4 years, representing an average of 166 USD/HH/year) is calculated at village level (and doesn't include the added value created through trade nor taxes). This additional cash income represents close to 10% of the average net agricultural income (14,66 million kips/HH/year in 2013). This already largely contributed to villagers' livelihoods improvement.

The number of jobs created has not been calculated by the project. In addition of the permanent jobs created by slats and sticks factories, it is necessary to add the time spent by villagers in collecting and pre-processing bamboo as well as traders jobs.

Quarterly reports should be sent to POFA.

Answer: This is the responsibility of the BBTF and provincial authorities.

Complement by Mr Komlek: DAFO and DPI should communicate with all other departments. Trainings to villagers and producers groups increased villagers' leadership. Bamboo is a side activity for villagers. Now that several handicraft shops opened, there is a need for more support to traders, particularly on how to access markets and capitals.

PAFO coordinator:

Many trainings have been carried out to villagers, particularly on plantations. How can government go on with these activities.

Answer: The government itself would need an important budget to do so. But he could support the efforts of the foreseen Business Service Association so that the service providers could improve their work.

Complementary intervention of Christian Castellanet, GRET:

Around the world GRET has supported several initiatives for services delivery to producers. In Cambodia technical and financial skills have been developed among service providers on irrigation skills in order to maintain the system. Villagers accept paying for services when the services are useful.

In Mali, rice producers associations became the owners of mills and could in this way finance a service association for trade purpose.

In Mexico, after tenure rights have been ensured cooperatives that produce timber registered a forestry association that now manages FMP and trade of timber.

Nowadays conditions are met in the HP to implement a similar Business Service Association.

Presentation of the draft of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020:

Sara Melki presented the draft of the Provincial Bamboo Strategy 2016-2020, according to the PowerPoint issued by the project team.

Discussion:

PAFO representative:

To reach the objective of 5000 HH, it will be necessary to extend the activities to other districts after the potential of the BB natural forest has been assessed. Districts and villages must still be identified. Some doubts still persist respect to the service association.

DAFO representative:

Reducing taxes still needs discussion. If the province does it for bamboo products, it is likely to do revise the, also for other products.

DPI representative:

All departments agree on the proposed strategy 2016-2020. It will be necessary to deepen the vision on the way.

Evaluator:

It is relevant to make a difference between consolidation, extension and innovation in the new strategy. As well between difficulties and vision. The new strategy is not the simple continuation of what has been carried out till today.

Vice-Governor of HP:

The province congratulates all departments for the success of the actions carried out as well as NGOs' experts and donors for the support given to villagers to improve their livelihoods. Rules and regulations must be improved and some aspects of the strategy need clarification. The Vice-Governor invites all departments and the districts to pay special attention to the needs for stopping slash and burn practices and for strengthening the producers groups. During the next phase it will be necessary to discuss the adjustments to be done in the support policies to the sector in order to simplify their implementation. NGOs and donors are invited to continue to bring their support to the bamboo sector in order to reduce poverty.