

Human Rights

The proposed action is aligned with the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 and links up with human rights in the aspects of (1) right of expression and (2) right to work, corresponding respectively to articles 19 and 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Freedom of expression will be addressed especially under the AO1 – Governance component of the programme. And regarding art 23, the action-supported development of value chains, will generate a substantial amount of jobs in the formal sector and help to reduce Lao PDR's current rate of unemployment. Labour rights as a sub-category of human rights (including the abolition of child labour) will be adequately reflected in the communication activities as well. Synergies will be sought with the ongoing project fostering social protection and decent work in the agro-food industry (including in the coffee and tea value chains) co-financed by the EU and Belgium, and implemented by ILO and OXFAM.

Disability

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the action does not include activities that specifically aim at the integration of or care for disabled persons. Nonetheless, throughout the implementation of the action, due attention can and will be given to opportunities for involving disabled persons.

Democracy

Strengthening capacity of state actors and institutions is a main objective of the action. The enhanced capacities should enable them to better comply with their mandates in the areas of forest governance and sustainable forest management. In addition, the action will support the effective implementation of village forest management arrangements and smallholders' engagement in plantation forestry and value chains. This modality is foreseen by law (Forest Act) and involves villagers in managing and using public forest resources.

Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience

It is expected that the implementation of the action will have positive effects on the resilience of local communities by promoting income generating activities (value chains), by assisting them in the registration and sustainable management of planted forests, and by improving the productive capacity of their environment (agroforestry, restoration).

Disaster Risk Reduction

Good forest cover has a regulating effect on the hydrological systems in the concerned watershed. By addressing deforestation and promoting forest restoration, the action contributes to reducing the risks of flooding, landslides and of wells and rivers drying up during the dry season, and enhancing climate and disaster resilience. In addition, the action includes reforestation of slopes for watershed protection. This contributes to reducing the risks of disasters caused by local landslides and soil erosion, it strengthens the integrity of the ecological systems and the role of forests in building resilience to climate-induced and other disasters.

Other considerations if relevant

Because of resurgence of poverty, youth tend to leave their villages to find jobs in neighbouring countries, and are exposed to risk of human trafficking. By supporting a sustainable rural development and providing alternative or complementary sources of incomes, the project would have an impact on preventing migration.

Risks and Lessons Learnt

The most important risks under this priority area relate to the slow pace of reforms, limited capacities, and the pressure on the use of natural resources from ongoing and new investments. There may be insufficient political attention and/or budget allocations to support effectively the adopted plans and proposed sector reforms. New investments for plantations, mining and/or large infrastructure may put additional pressure on availability of land for smallholders and threaten the sustainable use of natural resource. Business environment facilitation reforms may not be implemented rapidly enough, which in turn hampers private sector development, trade and tourism. European Partners will strive to mitigate these risks through continued dialogue at political, policy and project level, encouraging an integrated/holistic development planning and budgeting for the sake of a balanced, non-contradictory promotion of all relevant sectors and areas. European Partners will also provide specific technical assistance and