

TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF PLANTED FORESTS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

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Tree Plantation Sector Development in Lao PDR

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Background to Plantations in Lao

- some 146,600 ha of commercial plantations have been established, predominantly in the Central region
- Plantation area for 05/06 and 06/07 was some 35,000 ha and 25,800 ha respectively.
- Lao PDR is now experiencing it's 3rd tree plantation boom.
- 3rd boom is much larger in scale and more diverse in species than the past two booms in the early 90s and 2000 respectively.
- Not only large foreign and domestic investors but also farmers converting their fallow land to rubber, Agarwood & teak plantations.
- Trans-national companies are establishing and/or looking for land for fast-growing mostly Eucalyptus plantations to feed their mills in Asia.

Plantation Investment Incentives in Lao

- Climate and site conditions suitable for growing of trees.
- Low population density.
- Availability of degraded forest areas that can be used for tree plantations.
- Flat or undulating terrain.
- An existing road infrastructure that is gradually being upgraded.
- Closeness to large markets in neighboring countries
- Low costs for land lease.
- Competitive costs for labor and inputs.
- The Lao 2 + 3 smallholder approach has merit

Main Species Plantation in Lao

- **Eucalypts**
Species commonly planted in Laos
+potential.
 - E. tereticornis*
 - E. camaldulensis*
 - E. urophylla*
- **+ hybrids**
- **Acacias**
- **Rubber**
- **Teak**
- **Jatropha**

Perceived Strengths in Planted Forest Management

- Well managed plantation projects have demonstrated that they can contribute to improved livelihoods of local communities in Lao, although the % is low;
- Plantation have assisted regeneration of degraded land;
- Teak plantations in Northern Lao are providing a sustainable alternative to naturally occurring teak;
- Provides an alternative source of income to villagers and the GOL;
- Private sector IP investment has boosted enhanced technical know-how;
- Improved forest cover directly contributing to the Lao Forest Strategy to the year 2020;
- Plantation development has resulted in improved infrastructure i.e better roads, all weather access.
- International investors have also contributed to local community facilities i.e schools and community centres

Potential Threats in Planted Forest Management

- Inadequate plantation research and lack of tending has resulted in poorly formed stands with limited marketability;
- The threat of fire to plantations is significant with the expansion of Eucalyptus plantations increasing the risk of serious fire events.
- Limited scientific expertise means that attack from Pathogens and disease poses a real threat;
- Hydro Dam proposals have negatively impacted on existing plantations. Both directly via inundation and indirectly via increased pressure from relocated villagers seeking timber products.
- Land use conflicts

Perceived Weakness in Planted Forest Management

- Lack of national guideline for sustainable plantation development;
- Misguided land concessions have had numerous negative impacts;
- Plantation establishment is not adequately managed from the perspective of environmental impacts;
- A lack of plantation monitoring and evaluation post plant has resulted in poor long term performance;
- Species site selection has not been adequately addressed;
- Lack of understanding of improved genetics and or seed sources;
- Plantation development has not adequately addressed the integration of NTFPs.
- A lack of understanding of international markets as resulted in a low sale price for raw material.

Examples of Past Bad Practice



Pushing debris or soil into drainage lines

Examples of past bad practice

Debris pushed up against existing vegetation

Windrows following contours is good but downhill is bad practice



The Lao Vision

Consistent with national policy
A World Class Sustainably Managed Plantation Sector

Strategy/ Code

Productivity

Social Responsibility

Environment

Governance

Supporting

- NFP Facility Support
- Voluntary Guideline for Responsible Management of Planted Forests (FAO, 2007)
- Regional Workshop Chiang Mai – Facilitating 5 yrs plan

Recommended Actions

Need to Develop a National Plantation Code of Practice

Who

- Collaboration with all stakeholders including the GOL;
- Private Plantation Companies
- Lao Tree Plantation Associations;
- Provincial and District Authorities;
- Village Forestry Organisations;
- Farmers; & NGOs

What

- Develop a comprehensive Code of Practice that addresses the key requirements of all stakeholders;
- Decide on an appropriate site to commence trials;

How

- Conduct a detailed consultation and information dissemination/gathering exercise with targeted workshops for key stakeholders;

Where

- National, Provincial & District levels with linkage to a working trial.

**Commercial Plantation (Wood Fibre) Species
grow well in Lao PDR
No identified technical constraints**



Eucalypts



Tropical acacias

Plantations in Lao



Teak in Laos



~15 000 ha of teak smallholdings
>95% smallholders

Processing System for paper production

