

## World Bank supports Participatory Sustainable Forest Management in Lao PDR

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The Government of Lao PDR and the World Bank signed today a grant agreement of US\$ 31.83 million for the Scaling-Up Participatory Sustainable Forest Management (SUPSFM) Project. The agreement was signed by H.E. Mr. Santiphab Phomvihane, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Finance for the Lao PDR and Mr. Constantine Chikosi, Acting Country Director for the World Bank to Lao PDR. The grant signed today consists of a US\$ 19 million International Development Association (IDA) grant and a US\$ 12.83 million grant from the Forest Investment Program (FIP) under the Strategic Climate Fund (SCF) Trust Fund. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland will provide a co-financing of US\$14.5 million in grant to the project in the form of Technical Assistance.  
The Government of Lao PDR is developing a strategy and program for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD+) to avoid the unnecessary loss of forests and increase carbon storage. The objective of the Scaling-Up Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Project is to support REDD+ activities through participatory sustainable forest management in priority areas and to pilot forest landscape management in four Northern provinces in Lao PDR, including Xaiyaboury, Luang Namtha, Oudomxay and Bokeo.  
"This grant supports the Government of Lao PDR to strengthen sustainable forest management and improve livelihood for rural communities, said Mr. Khamphay Manivong, Acting Director General of the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.  
The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will implement this project in close partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. SUPSFM is a continuation and expansion of the Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development Project (SUFORD), which was implemented from 2003 to 2012. The Scaling-Up Participatory Sustainable Forest Management Project aims to achieve in the expansion of areas under approved Participatory Sustainable Forest Management (PSFM) plans, and development and piloting of a Landscape approach to forest management. The project also aims for an increase in the number of people with monetary and non-monetary benefits from forest, decreased rate of forest cover loss, enhanced carbon storage from improved protection and forest restoration, and reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in project areas.  
"Strengthening sustainable natural resources management, in particular sustainable forestry management, is one of the key objectives of the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Strategy 2012-2016 in Lao PDR, said Chikosi. "We are committed to supporting the Government of Lao PDR's Forestry Strategy and scaling-up participatory sustainable forest management is one way in which we are providing that support.  
The Government of Lao PDR's Forestry Strategy to the year 2020 aims to improve the quality and quantity of forested areas, as well as generate a sustainable stream of forest products. SUPSFM will support these efforts by promoting payment for ecosystems services and will work closely with other Development Partners including the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, to create environmentally sound and sustainable growth opportunities.  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
DC 20433 Washington  
USA  
Telefon: (202) 473-1000  
Telefax: (202) 477-6391  
Mail: investigations\_hotline@worldbank.org  
URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/>  
img src="http://www.pressrelations.de/new/pmcounter.cfm?n\_pinr\_=541193" width="1" height="1">

### Pressekontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

[worldbank.org/](http://worldbank.org/)  
[investigations\\_hotline@worldbank.org](mailto:investigations_hotline@worldbank.org)

### Firmenkontakt

The World Bank

DC 20433 Washington

[worldbank.org/](http://worldbank.org/)  
[investigations\\_hotline@worldbank.org](mailto:investigations_hotline@worldbank.org)

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