

Why the Land Issues Working Group?

The Lao PDR still has a relatively broad and rich range of natural resources. Over the last 10 years foreign investment, supported by local actors, in industries such as mining, hydropower and plantation sectors, making use of these resources has increased rapidly. There is a growing competing interest over land, water and forests between large-scale investors and rural, often poor, communities relying on the same natural resources for their livelihoods and food security.

Exploitation of land and natural resources in order to boost economic growth creates a potential for local communities to have improved access to services, expansion of local employment opportunities, spread of environmentally sound practices, and more equitable participation in the development process.

However, there are growing concerns that land issues impact negatively on livelihoods of marginalized groups in Lao society. This may lead to reduced access to land and forests by smallholders who are pushed aside by concessionaires. There is a risk of increasing outflow of young people from rural to urban areas, reduced wildlife and forest products, and a consequent erosion of natural capital, human resources and cultural identity, creating a path towards an unsustainable extractive economy. Cooperation and action is urgently needed by all stakeholders to prevent this process.

The LIWG was set up in 2007 under the umbrella of the iNGO Network, primarily to inform each other about land issues and later also to develop common initiatives to constructively address land issues with a wider range of stakeholders.

Working towards greater community control over land, forests and natural resources, through cooperation with Government, civil society organisations, communities, Development Partners and other stakeholders.

Who we are

LIWG aims to ensure that the Lao PDR's rapid economic growth and the flow of investment into the land and natural resource sectors generate sustainable, inclusive and equitable development.

The LIWG consists mostly of international and local civil society organization staff and other individuals working on land issues in Lao PDR. The group includes representatives of nearly 40 different organizations.

The activities are implemented through the LIWG Secretariat which is overseen by the Committee, elected from among the member organizations.



What we do

Our main target groups are civil society, Government, Development Partners, and private sector. The following four objectives guide the LIWG activities:

1: Awareness raising, training and capacity building
Support the civil society, Development Partners and private sector so that they are better able and willing to enhance gender equitable community ownership and control over land and natural resources.

2: Networking and promoting dialogue
Promote collaboration and engagement of different stakeholders, both national and international, in order to enhance dialogue and sharing of information in view of increasing leverage of activities.

3: Government policy support
Government policies and legislation concerning land are to protect the interests of people of Laos and enhance local communities' control over land, forests, and natural resources.

4: Research and documentation
Increased wealth of in-depth information on specific cross-cutting issues is to be widely available to enhance and support our work and objectives.

Notable achievement

Since its creation in 2007 the LIWG has gradually become a significant actor in the land sector, providing the civil society perspective into the issues related to land and natural resource management in Laos.

In March 2013 the LIWG, through representation of its member organizations, was elected as the Co-chair of the Land Sub-Sector Working Group (LSSWG) established under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

LIWG Secretariat
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