

Project Document

Laos Extension for Agriculture Project

LEAP

**Phase 1
(November 2001 - October 2004)**

**Lao PDR – Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC**

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Abbreviations

AEA	Agricultural Extension Agency	LEAP	Lao Extension for Agriculture Project
CETDU	Central Extension Training and Development Unit	MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser	NAFRI	National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forests Office	NAFEA	National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Agency
DEU	District Extension Unit	NAWACOP	Upper Nam Ngum Watershed Management and Conservation Project
DOA	Department of Agriculture	NEDI	National Extension Development Initiative
DOF	Department of Forestry	PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forests Office
DOI	Department of Irrigation	PETU	Provincial Extension Training Unit
DOL	Department of Livestock	PEP	Pilot Extension Project (Novartis Foundation)
DOP	Department of Planning	PM	Prime Minister
DME	Department of Monitoring and Evaluation	PDR	Peoples Democratic Republic
FSEW	Farming System Extension Worker	SDC	Swiss Development Co-operation
FSP	Forage Smallholder Livestock Project	TA	Technical Assistance
GoL	Government of Lao PDR	VEW	Village Extension Worker
GTZ	German Technische Zusammenarbeit	WUA	Water User Association
HQ	Head Quarters		
IPM	Integrated Pest Management		
IUARP	Integrated Upland Agricultural Research Project		

SUMMARY

LEAP is based on the shared conviction of the Lao Government and the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) that an effective extension system is a key element to achieve food security by increased food production based on sustainable agriculture, to improve the livelihood of Lao farmers and alleviate poverty in rural areas by rural development. It is firmly anchored in the Prime Ministers Decree 01/2000 on decentralisation, and the "Strategic Vision for the Agriculture Sector" of the MAF of 1999. In order to develop the extension system foreseen in its strategy, the MAF will start a National Extension Development Initiative (NEDI).

The goal of LEAP is to support the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that reaches male and female farmers equally.

To reach this goal, District Agricultural and Forestry Offices (DAFOs) will have to be empowered to effectively work as extension units through consistent training and coaching. Provinces in turn will have to be put in a position to train, coach and effectively support DAFOs in this endeavor. To launch this process of training, coaching and the further development of methods, a "Central Extension Training and Development Unit" (CETDU) shall be established in MAF. LEAP is based in the CETDU and will contribute to the development of its capacity and to the promotion of an on-going assessment of extension in Laos while the NEDI unfolds. In mid-2001, the MAF has started a reorganisation with the intention to create a "National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Agency (NAFEA)" at the level of a department. Once NAFEA will be fully established, the CETDU will be integrated into it and the LEAP will come under NAFEA.

In Phase 1, LEAP has four components corresponding to the following four purposes:

Extension Methods & Delivery Mechanisms	Institutional Strengthening	Training & Coaching	Assessment & Evaluation
Develop the methodological procedures for a demand-driven extension system, with demand coming from female and male farmers alike.	Strengthen the institutional set-up for the implementation of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable extension system.	Deliver training to central and provincial staff to run an effective training and coaching system and to district staff to deliver participatory extension services.	Maintain a well-informed debate on the effectiveness of the tested methodology and delivery mechanisms and on the policy and implementation of agricultural extension and research in the future.

The role of the field based testing component is to serve as a test-bed for developing and testing new methods and approaches in the real environment. The role of the institutional strengthening component is to establish and strengthen the organisations at all levels necessary for the effective functioning of a demand-driven extension system. The role of the training and coaching component is to develop and test suitable curricula for on-the-job training of Provincial and District staff. The role of the assessment and evaluation component is to ensure that experiences, insights and operational ideas are shared as soon as possible among staff of all the selected provinces and that new methods are developed to tackle emerging new challenges. An extended role is to inform MAF on how to continue with the NEDI, i.e. how best to organise and support extension nation wide.

The project will further develop extension approaches piloted in the "Farmer Irrigated Agricultural Training (FIAT)" Project (1996-2000) and the "Pilot Extension Project PEP (1996-1999). The backbone of the approach are the "Farming System Extension Workers" (FSEWs) at the district level, who will be supported by extension specialists and subject matter specialists from the provincial level. Extension will start out at the village level, and work through both male and female "Village Extension Workers" (VEWs), i.e. farmers recruited within and through local communities. Where appropriate, local farmer groups will be formed to disseminate and assess proposed technical change.

LEAP will directly work in 8-9 districts in two lowland provinces (Champassak and Saravane) and one upland province (Luang Prabang), which will serve as a test-bed for the development of extension methods and delivery systems, as well as for the development and testing of the training and coaching activities. Five more provinces will be immediately involved in the Exchange Network bringing together the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs) and their specialised Extension Training Units (PETUs) in order to share and evaluate extension experiences made within the LEAP and other initiatives in these provinces.

The CETDU will be the resource base for strengthening the institutional capacities at provincial and district levels. To ensure that an integrated (or transversal) approach to extension is maintained and promoted, it will be located within the Department of Planning of the MAF. It will be headed by a CETDU coordinator and be staffed by planners and experienced trainers assigned by the technical line departments.

SDC will mandate Helvetas (Swiss Association for International Cooperation) as the Implementing Agency to implement LEAP on its behalf. Through the implementing agency, SDC will provide the necessary technical assistance (TA). The TA team will consist of a permanent Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), a Training and Human Resources Development Specialist for 2 years and a further 8 person months of international and 72 person months of national consultancy inputs. The Swiss Center for Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (Landwirtschaftliche Beratungszentrale Lindau LBL) will be given a permanent backstopping mandate by the Implementing Agency. The Implementing Agency will also provide and recruit adequate support staff (administrator/accountant, secretary, 2 drivers, cleaner).

The MAF will provide the necessary staff at the central, provincial and district levels. It will also establish an Assessment Committee, whose function it is to ensure a continuous high level assessment of the development of the NEDI.

The total costs of LEAP are budgeted at **CHF 2'000'000**. The government contribution is equivalent to **CHF 180'000**, representing 9% of the total costs. Budget requested from SDC for the project is **CHF 1'820'000**. In addition to the above contribution, SDC will cover the costs of the Implementing Agency, the costs of the permanent expatriate CTA and a long-term international expert on training and human resources development, and the costs for the external evaluation of project implementation in the third year of Phase 1.

The LEAP has an in-built monitoring and evaluation system, but will be externally evaluated by SDC in the third year of Phase 1. If the project is successful, SDC support will support the gradual scaling up of the NEDI in the medium term. A possible scenario for this medium term support is included from the start.

The project rests on the assumption that the existing strategy for a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable extension approach will remain in place. It further assumes that the CETDU and the participating PAFOs and DAFOs will be given the freedom to experiment with and further develop the new extension approach. Serious risks are that the MAF will not be able to assign the necessary adequate staff at the different levels of the system, that uncoordinated or contradictory instructions hinder project implementation at the provincial and district levels, and that top-down approaches make it difficult to take up the ideas, aspirations and demands of farmers.

1. BACKGROUND

Extension in Lao Peoples Democratic Republic has up until now mainly been concerned with the development of infrastructure for agriculture (i.e. development of irrigation systems) and occasional campaigns. PAFO (Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices) and DAFO (District Agriculture and Forestry Offices) conducted such campaigns upon instructions. Since the inception of the New Economic Management plan (1998), there have been a number of projects with extension components, but with no lasting effect for the emergence of a Lao extension system.

Two key projects which have been effective in this regard are the "Farmer Irrigated Agricultural Training (FIAT)" Project (1996-2000) and the "Pilot Extension Project PEP (1996-1999). FIAT trained a large number of trainers at the Central, Provincial and District levels to have the capacity to form water user groups and provide effective extension so that irrigation schemes yielded greater benefits. The focus of PEP was the development of the whole DAFO as an effective unit for extension. It developed 'working models' for conducting extension, and 'programs' for capacity building of both administrative and technical staff of the DAFO. In addition to these two projects, the FAO inter-country IPM Project has since 1997 conducted a consistent training program of Provincial and District staff in a large number of provinces and the SIDA funded Lao-Swedish project developed extension approaches for the upland areas over the last few years. Together, these Projects have resulted in MAF (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) appreciating that extension also involves assisting farmers gain new technical knowledge and organisational skills, and that training of staff at all levels is necessary for this to be achieved.

The Prime Ministers Decree 01/2000 on decentralisation, and the parallel formulation of the "Strategic Vision for the Agriculture Sector" of the MAF have since provided the policy framework for decentralised and demand-driven extension to take place, which aims at supporting villagers to take initiatives for self-help. Thereby DAFOs shall operate as "generalist" extension services; i.e. extensionists simultaneously cover aspects of agriculture, forests and livestock. They shall be supported by Subject Matter Specialists based in the PAFOs.

SDC has been aware of the PEP initiative from its inception. Based on the PEP experiences SDC formulated in May 1999 a position for supporting a "decentralised; participatory; flexible; and generalist extension". Since then, SDC has continued to conduct a dialogue with MAF. It was realised that, although the policies are in place for Provincial and District extension services to operate in a demand-oriented way, the concrete ways of doing it are still largely unknown, and staff at all levels lack the knowledge and skills to take up the challenge. A concerted effort is therefore needed for learning from the diverse existing experiences in extension, and for developing suitable approaches for the diverse conditions in Lao PDR. A capacity at the central level therefore would have to be developed to support Provinces and Districts to learn to play their roles according to the policy guidelines.

The discussions between SDC and MAF continued with a visit of a Lao delegation to Switzerland to study the extension system there, led by the Minister of MAF, Dr. Siene Saphangthong. An agreement was reached that SDC will field an appraisal and formulation mission to Lao PDR which would define a first SDC-supported effort of the MAF to develop an extension system for Lao PDR. The present Project Document is a result of these discussions.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Development Goal

LEAP is based on the overall objectives of the Government of the Lao PDR for socio-economic development of the country. The socio-economic development plan sets out eight national priority programs for national development. Two of these programs are to achieve food security by increased food production and to improve the livelihood of Lao farmers and alleviate poverty in rural areas by rural development. In order to achieve these objectives, the **"Strategic Vision for the Agriculture Sector" of 1999 foresees the development of an effective extension service for achieving food security and improving the livelihood of Lao farmers and for alleviating poverty in rural areas.**

In particular, the strategic vision calls for the development of a farmer demand driven applied research and extension system whereby the DAFOs operate as generalist extension organisations, which are technically and methodologically supported by the PAFOs. The process envisages the strengthening of linkages among public and private sector extension mechanisms in order to arrive at a pluralistic system. The extension system is to be closely linked with research efforts by the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI). Developing suitable extension procedures for Laos will be a long-term effort. The MAF will therefore launch a "National Extension Development Initiative" (NEDI) with a long-term view. NEDI shall grow gradually, based on concrete experiences that are made throughout the country.

2.2 LEAP Project Goal

The goal of LEAP is to support the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that reaches male and female farmers equally.
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To reach this goal, DAFOs will have to be empowered to effectively work as extension units through consistent training and coaching. Provinces in turn will have to be put in a position to train, coach and effectively support DAFOs in this endeavor. To launch this process of training, coaching and the further development of methods, a "Central Extension Training and Development Unit" (CETDU) shall be established in MAF. LEAP is based in the CETDU and will contribute to the development of its capacity and to the promotion of an on-going assessment of extension in Laos while the NEDI unfolds.

2.3 Project Purposes, Phase 1 (November 2001 to October 2004)

The project goal and the project purposes of LEAP Phase 1 are shown in a logframe format on the following page. The specific outputs linked to the four project purposes are presented in more detail in Section 7.

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Assumptions/Risks
PROJECT GOAL		
To support the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that reaches male and female farmers equally.	• CETDU, PETU and DEU are established, are staffed and organised as outlined in this ProDoc. • Procedures for the delivery of agricultural extension are developed, documented and discussed. • Extension work is planned in response to the needs of male and female farmers in 3 provinces and 8-9 districts. • 30% of the households have adopted the techniques that were successful and show increased production.	• The policy base for fully decentralized bottom-up participatory planning within Lao PDR's government system stays in place. • The commitment by MAF to the strategy of developing farmer-demand driven applied research and extension is firm and ongoing. • MAF instructs the DAFO and PAFO to establish the PETU/DEU and to assign staff • MAF assigns enough experienced staff to the CETDU
PROJECT PURPOSES		
1. Develop the methodological procedures for the mentioned extension system to become demand driven with demand coming from female and male farmers.	• Impact of extension methods is visible in productivity, adoption rate and the capacity of farmers to identify their priorities and plan accordingly. • Sufficient Village Extension Workers (VEWs) have been chosen by the villagers to work according to the new technique (and with the new inputs if required). 40% of all VEW are female farmers. • 70% of the VEW show increase in production in the type of production that they experimented with.	• The attitudes of staff towards participatory extension will continue to change in the direction of making the DAFOs farmer service institutions. • Key staff of PETU remain in place for most of the phase. • Frequent monitoring trips by CETDU staff possible.
2. Strengthen the institutional set-up for the delivery of flexible participatory, pluralistic and sustainable extension. This includes the development of an effective methodology for monitoring of the extension services and coaching of the extension staff at the provincial and district levels.	• Roles of CETDU, PETU, DEU and communication and reporting procedures provisionally defined and under discussion. • Funding mechanisms for extension work studied and under discussion. • PETU regularly monitors and coaches the DEU. • Monitoring and coaching procedures and planning developed, tested and documented.	• Authority and instruction to PAFO and DAFO to form the new units (PETU, EU). • It must be possible to work in provisional structures. • Budget plan information must be available. • Large-scale programs that provide heavily project dependent and subsidized services are not jeopardizing the gradual building up of extension support capacities.
3. Deliver training to central and provincial staff to run an effective training and coaching system and to district staff to deliver participatory extension services.	• Training program developed together with MAF staff. • Training curricula developed together with MAF staff based on existing experience. • Planning for coaching developed together with MAF staff. • PETU trained by CETDU. • PETU deliver training and coaching to DEU.	• Ongoing commitment to human resource development in the face of a severe lack of skills and knowledge to implement the policies on extension.
4. Maintain a continuous, well-informed debate on the effectiveness of the tested methodology and delivery mechanisms and on the policy and implementation of agricultural extension and research in the future.	• Learning is achieved from experiences being made in the country. • New methods are developed to tackle emerging new challenges. • Linkages with private sector are strengthened. • Exchange meetings and tours are frequently made by PAFOs, CETDU staff and MAF senior staff. • Workshops are held annually with other projects that are working on extension to exchange experiences.	• An assessment committee established by MAF. This group has annual meetings to evaluate progress and assess methods and system used. • Establishment of an exchange network of senior PAFO staffs who have 6-monthly meetings to assess the methods and results of the tested extension methodology.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LEAP needs to maintain a flexible, process oriented approach. The basis will be the needs from female and male farmers. That means that planning of project activities and the development of the next phases of the project will have to be done in continuous consultation with all parties. Although an initial planning for the sake of programming and budgeting is made in this Project Document, it will be important to be open to the situation and to reassess the expected outputs and design the project activities together with the participants at all levels. As this will be only possible once the CETDU and the LEAP Team have been mobilised and started work, the present Project Document shall be re-assessed during a four to six month inception period. At the end of this period, a detailed work plan for the LEAP will be available.

While remaining flexible, the project objective of establishing a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable extension system demands that the project remains true to the following guiding principles:

3.1 Decentralisation and Participation

LEAP will be guided by the government policies and strategies of Lao PDR concerning decentralisation, which aim to make villages the implementation units in development work, the districts the planning and budgetary units and the provinces the strategic units, and call for a farmer-demand driven applied research and extension through the establishment of FSEW and SMS. LEAP will follow this decentralised approach, which also implies that at the central level, MAF should only develop regulatory frameworks for doing extension, while allowing provincial and district staff to adapt their operations for reaching the stated objectives.

It must also not be forgotten that the project assists in building the capacity of DAFOs and PAFOs primarily to help farmers to raise their capacity to plan their farm production and establish self-help groups in both flatland and sloping land. There will be a strong focus on capacity building of the staff at central and PAFO level but in light of the policy on decentralisation and participation it should be kept in mind that the capacity building serves to strengthen farmers and their organisations at the village level. The project will have to ensure mechanisms for a bottom-up flow of information in the system and the active participation of both male and female farmers in decision-making regarding extension.

3.2 Learning from Shared Experience

In order to design locally adapted, useful extension procedures, the diverse experiences currently made in the Lao PDR in doing extension must be identified, assessed, and made available for discussion and sharing among extension practitioners. This can only be achieved if and when staffs are encouraged to explore, develop, and closely observe and share their own ways of doing extension in their locality. Most field-staff are far from being capable of doing this and need to be trained in this skill. At the same time, the CETDU must emerge as a resource base for collecting and analysing experiences and informing the design of future extension efforts anywhere in the country.

3.3 Pluralism in extension

The highly diverse environmental, social and economic conditions in Laos must be taken into account when designing extension approaches at the village level. The MAF strategic vision correctly takes into account the role that could be played by businesses and other private initiatives, by the mass media and at agricultural and even regular schools. The people who design and implement extension at the local level must therefore have the chance to study useful ideas and experiences in other places, so that they can adapt and combine them to construct the system which is most useful for their own particular situation. The project will

therefore have to actively promote the search for suitable extension partners and initiatives also outside the official extension delivery through the MAF.

Extension services should increase the capacity and skills and, ultimately, the income of farming households through strengthening farmers' organisations and assisting farmers to plan and manage their farm production more in line with the economic changes around them. An important point is the training of villagers to set up their own small scale enterprises wherever provision of inputs and services can be commercialised, i.e. paravets, nurseries, craftsmen, seed growers, etc. In this way extension can play an important role in the reduction of poverty.

3.4 Gender in extension

Any development initiative must take into account that gender has an effect on the success of its operations, and vice versa, that its operations have an impact on gender issues at the village level. The majority of the extension staff in Lao PDR is male. This enhances the risk that female farmers are not included in extension activities in the same way as male farmers. The activities of the project shall therefore be regularly screened to check whether they adversely affect the social roles and economic status of either men or women in the villages. Further more the project will assess and promote options on how the participation and involvement of women at all levels can be increased. In the course of training and coaching, the staff at all levels shall be made aware of gender as a potentially important factor affecting the success of the programs they are engaged in.

3.5 Sustainability

Extension is and will remain an continuous effort. This therefore requires a close scrutiny of possibilities for sustainable funding. As a matter of principle those who benefit from extension services should contribute to its costs, from individual villagers or groups of villagers to village communities to Districts and Provinces. Funds need to be channelled to those beneficiaries who cannot afford the extension services they need. While developing extension services, the means for paying for such services shall be co-developed simultaneously, i.e. sustainable funding sources explored and verified. The funding mechanisms explored during a Phase 1 of the project shall be implemented on a trial basis during the next phase.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

This section gives a general outline of the extension approach to be implemented with the support of LEAP. This outline is divided in (i) extension methodology; (ii) capacity building; and, (iii) test areas.

4.1 Extension Methodology

Extension methodologies are diverse and it depends on the social, economic and ecological environment which methods will be used. However, a general framework for working together with female and male farmers on on-farm trials and for organising exchanges among farmers can be given without the risk to fix the extension methodology to one approach. The LEAP extension framework outlined in more detail in Appendix 1 has been tested under Lao conditions in the FIAT and PEP projects; and is adapted to the local circumstances.

Steps in Village Extension

Extension activities will start out at the village level. The approach basically follows four steps: preparation, training/implementation, follow-up and evaluation. Each of the steps consists of a series of extension activities that are dependent on the progress of the farmers in terms of knowledge, skills and capacity. Previous experience has shown that a three-year cycle is appropriate to fully involve a village in this approach (see also Appendix 1, Figure 1).

Working with Village Extension Workers and Farmer Groups

The FSEW of the DAFOs will not be able to reach all farmers directly. Recruiting male and female Village Extension Workers (VEWs), and then working with and initiating exchanges between VEWs is therefore a crucial element of the proposed extension approach. In order to make it as easy as possible to exchange experience and to establish networks the FSEW will work in clusters of villages with clustering dependent on proximity. This also has the advantage that FSEW can work in more villages at the same day and can organise training events and meetings for VEW from different villages together. The number of selected villages ranges from 2 to 3 village clusters (approx. 6 villages per cluster) depending on the capacity and experience of the DAFO (see also Appendix 1, Figure 2). VEW will further show and explain new successful techniques to their neighbors and other villagers. Gradually, more and more farmers will start to adopt the tested agricultural practices (see also Appendix 1, Figure 3).

On the basis of interest and the need to address the increasing demand for input supplies and in order to develop a better position at the market farmers will be supported to form groups. Group strengthening will be done according to the experiences of FIAT and PEP. Group development in Laos is strongly influenced by the ideas on the participatory development of Water User Groups. A group is supported in working together on solving problems and addressing their needs. At the same time farmers learn to work with a formal group with an organisational structure, goals, rules and regulations and a financial aspect. It is hoped that formal farmers groups will be recognised by the Lao law in the future as are Water User Groups.

4.2 Capacity-Building

It is an art to deliver extension in such a way that the farmers get the best opportunities to build up their own skills and capacity to analyse and solve their problems and to base extension activities fully on farmers' demand. Most DAFO staffs do not have this capacity. Therefore, it is extremely important that extension workers from the DAFO get the necessary training and opportunity to practice their new skills. But when extension workers of DAFO start to function more dynamically also the supporting administrative structure around them has to understand what has changed and how to support the new approach effectively. Therefore, the administrative and management side of extension also needs attention in capacity building.

The ones who will have to coach the DAFO in the end are PAFO staff. For this reason a Provincial Extension Training Unit (PETU) will have to be set up. A considerable effort will need to be made to train the PETU staff in how to guide and support the DAFO staff in their new roles in a demand-driven extension system. It is foreseen that the PETU staff will be trained by the technical staff from the departments of MAF and will be coached in conducting their function as coach for the DAFOs by staff from the to be newly established Central Extension and Training Development Unit (CETDU). (See Section 5 on the institutional framework for the place and function of the CETDU and the PETU.)

A program of training, on-the-job training and coaching will have to be made depending on a needs analysis in the villages and DAFOs that participate in the LEAP effort. A tentative program is given in Appendix 2. This program can serve as a basis at the start of the project and later be changed.

4.3 Start-up Areas: Champassak, Saravane and Luang Prabang

In an effort to try to start working with a new system on-the-job which means that the new system is being tested while at work already it is useful to start with staff that understand and experienced already what it means to work with a demand-driven approach. The PAFOs of Champassak and Saravane already had a Provincial Extension and Training Unit (PETU) established during PEP work. These PETUs and their managers went through extensive discussions and on-the-job training to grasp the concepts and implications of delivering participatory extension. They could serve as resource persons for another province to start to work according to a new approach. At the same time they could start to guide other DAFOs than the ones that already were involved in PEP to start using a new approach and they could guide the 'experienced' DAFOs to keep developing new methods and to use successful methods in all villages in the district.

While it makes sense for LEAP to continue working with the experienced PAFOs/DAFOs of Champassak and Saravane, it is considered crucial to start activities also in one upland province already in Phase 1. Luang Prabang Province is proposed to be this province. The reason is that NAFRI has launched the Integrated Uplands Agricultural Research Project (IUARP) in Luang Prabang province, which is also supported by SDC through the Lao-IRRI Rice Research and Training project Phase 4 (2000-2003). Moreover, a number of projects, like the Lao-Swedish Upland Research Development Project and the Forages for Smallholder Livestock Project are developing and testing new techniques for sloping land in Luang Prabang.

In Champassak, Saravane and Luang Prabang Provinces, LEAP will have to select specific districts for in-depth work in consultation with the PAFO. In the lowland provinces, it is recommended to select 3 districts, and to involve in each province 1-2 districts that were involved with PEP before. In Luang Parabang, it may be recommendable to start with 2 districts. This means that the project will start with 8 or 9 districts.

During Phase 1, more provinces will be involved with the core provinces to form a PAFO Exchange Network to continuously share experiences and assess the state of extension. For this network, it is proposed to select provinces that are near to provinces where LEAP will operate and provinces that have a clear need to be included in the next Phase. It is proposed to consider involving Attapeu, Sekong, Vientiane, Khammouane and Xieng Khouang Provinces in the PAFO Exchange Network.

5. INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP, PHASE 1

Section 5 outlines the institutional set-up for the implementation of LEAP during Phase 1. The MAF organisational structure and the LEAP set-up are graphically represented in Figure 1 below.

Executing Agency and Implementing Agency

The Planning Department of MAF is designated as the Executing Agency for the LEAP. SDC is mandating Helvetas (Swiss Association for International Cooperation) to act as the Implementing Agency (IA) with the implementation of LEAP on its behalf. The IA collaborates with The project CTA reports to the Head of the Planning Department. His or her counterparts and main everyday contacts will however be the Head and members of the CETDU, who he will directly advise and coach. The Director General of the Planning Department, the Head of the CETDU and the CTA will closely collaborate as a Task managing Team (TMT), in charge of the executive management and coordination of all LEAP activities. The Implementing

Agency will provide the Technical Assistance (TA) needed for the implementation of the LEAP. The technical assistance needs are further described in Section 8. Arrangements for working in Champassak, Saravan and Luang Prabang Provinces are made by MAF, including authorisations for experimenting with organisational set-ups.

The implementation of the LEAP will be overseen by a Steering Committee, which will meet at least once per year. The Steering Committee will review the annual progress report of the project and approve the annual workplan and budget. The Steering Committee will deliberate and approve any measures to ensure the successful implementation of the project. The Steering Committee is headed by the Director General of the MAF Department of Planning, and includes representatives of the State Planning Committee, of the MAF Cabinet Office, of SDC and of Helvetas, as well as of the Coordinator of the CETDU and the CTA of the project.

Backstopping Agency

In addition to the TA provided by the Implementing Agency, SDC will support the LEAP through a regular and continuous backstopping arrangement with the Swiss Center for Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (Landwirtschaftliche Beratungszentrale Lindau LBL). LBL is thereby seen as a sister-organisation which has a similar mandate for extension in Switzerland as is envisaged for the CETDU in Lao PDR. The backstopping mandate under the Implementing Agency will ensure that the CETDU will remain involved in the international exchange network on extension, and will regularly be coached to both contribute and profit from experiences being made in other countries. It will also serve as an instrument to regularly monitor and assess whether the project works towards achieving its objectives and heeds the guiding principles outlined in Section 3.

CETDU

In order to provide the provinces with ongoing support and guidance so that they can give assistance to the DAFOs as basic extension units, the CETDU will be set up under the Department of Planning of the MAF. This set-up will ensure that the CETDU has access to, and is accessible for the various line-agencies of the MAF. It will also make sure that extension work is treated as transversal in nature, i.e. that it covers at the same time and with the same approach crop production, animal husbandry, and managing resources such as forests and water. The CETDU will be made up of planners and trainers assigned by from the extension units of all the technical departments. The CETDU therefore will be a team of people who have their individual backgrounds and each have a line of information to their departments (see also Figure 2). The staff requirements for the PETUs and CETDU are discussed in Section 8.

The MAF has in mid-2001 started an initiative to further reorganise the MAF and create a "National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Agency (NAFEA)". NAFEA will bring together the extension experts from the current line ministries and create a unified and trans-sectoral extension approach, as NAFRI has brought all research and development initiatives under a common umbrella. Once this reorganisation has been fully formalised and implemented, the CETDU will be integrated in NAFEA, and therefore, LEAP will be implemented with and under NAFEA. The reorganisation, once implemented, is expected to strengthen the extension approach advocated by SDC and MAF.

Besides providing training and guidance on extension management to the provincial level, the CETDU will have the task to further define and test extension approaches at the field level, to promote the exchange and dissemination of extension experiences, and to assess and evaluate ongoing extension work. The role and tasks of the CETDU are further described in Section 6 outlining the four main components of the LEAP. During the project inception period, its roles and tasks have to be further defined and to be reflected in the project work plan. The project will also set up Thematic Working Groups linking key persons from the central, provincial and district levels. Figure 1 shows the communication flow between the Extension

and Training Units at all levels. For the budget flow needed to support the extension work and capacity building at DAFO and PAFO refer to Section 8.

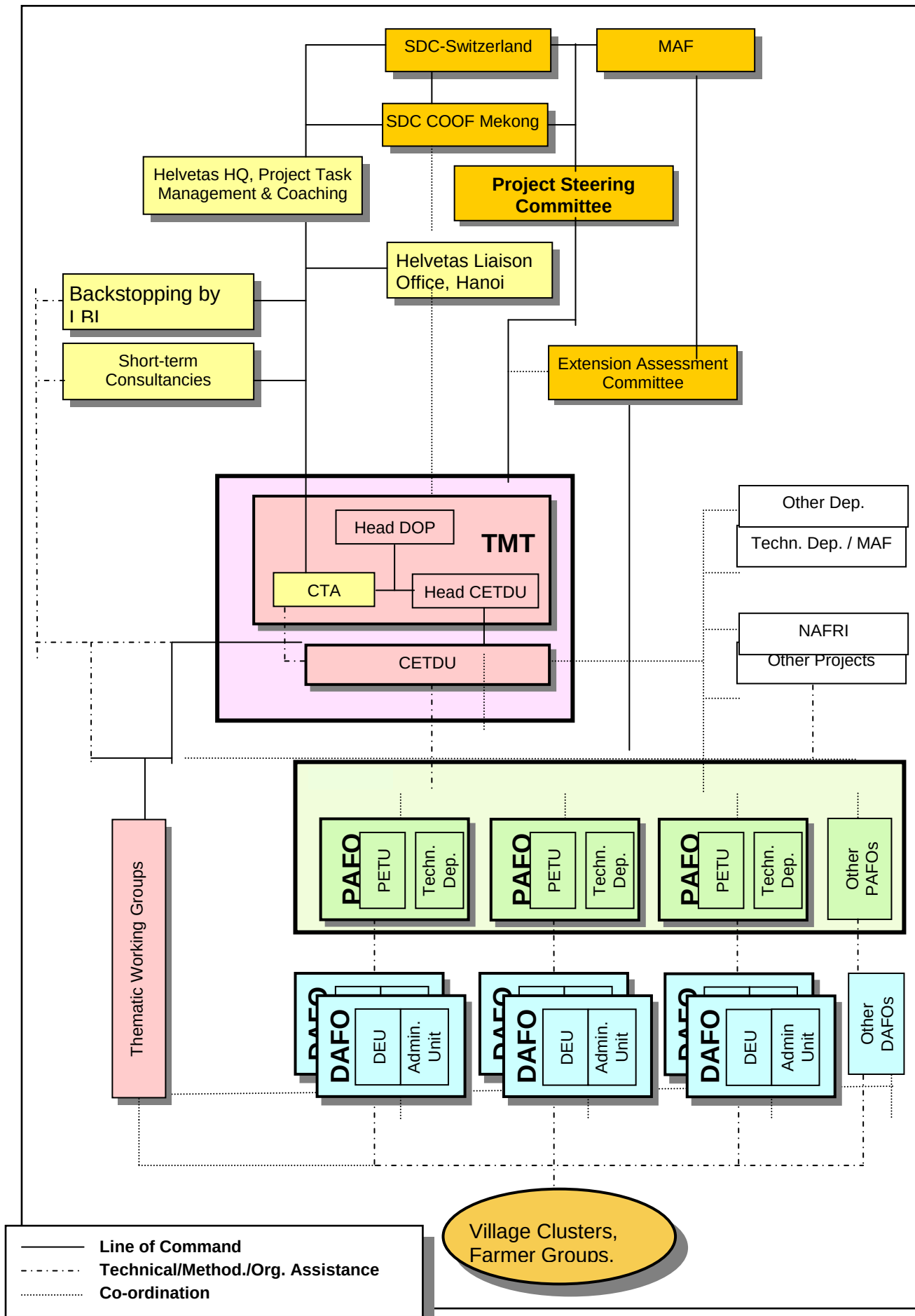
Provincial Level Set-up

The PAFOs play a pivotal role, and must function as fully integrated extension organisations. Methodical and technological efforts are co-ordinated at this level, and the various development efforts are operationally co-ordinated here too. The PAFO level is responsible for developing the strategy for the provincial agricultural development and for the monitoring and guidance to the DAFOs. In the three provinces where LEAP will work, the Provincial Extension Training Units (PETUs) will be further developed to provide ongoing support, on-the-job training and sometimes, formal training to the DAFO. In fact, these PETUs were established in 13 provinces already during the Farmers Irrigated Agriculture Training Project. Where ever possible, trainers from these former PETUs should be asked to join the PETU for the implementation of LEAP.

District Level set-up

For extension methods to be delivered in a participatory and flexible way the DAFO needs to have the support of Subject Matter Specialists, training by the technical departments, guidance in the management and administration of extension work and support in the approaches to planning, monitoring and conducting the extension work. In order to ensure the needed support to the DAFO a number of institutional changes are proposed in line with the Agricultural Strategic Vision. The vision proposes to reorganise the DAFOs in three sections: (i) an extension unit with Farming System Extension Workers who are generalists (this unit will be called District Extension Unit (DEU) in this document); (ii) an administrative section; (iii) a supervising and co-ordinating unit (in this document the persons in this unit are called the managers of extension). LEAP will work intensively with its core DAFOs that will be reorganised according to these lines. Capacity building and testing of extension methods will be done primarily with the DEU and the managers of extension will receive regular training and opportunities to share their experience.

Figure 1 LEAP Organisational Set-up



6. PARTNERS AND CLIENTS, PHASE 1

6.1 Partners in Phase 1

The direct partners are MAF and SDC through a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding. The responsibility for the implementation of LEAP rests on the Lao side with the MAF, Department of Planning. Once the NAFEA will have been fully established, the CETDU is expected to be integrated in NAFEA. At this point, NAFEA will become responsible for the implementation of LEAP. SDC will mandate an Implementing Agency with LEAP implementation as explained in Section 4 above.

In implementation, it will be crucial that LEAP enters into working partnerships with other institutions, organisations and projects in the country dealing with aspects of agricultural extension, and integrates them into the exchange network on experiences in extension. Where possible and feasible, LEAP will enter into collaborative arrangements with other partners to support the development of the national extension system at all levels.

With regards to donor co-ordination, LEAP is expected to take into account the so-called "Neuchâtel Initiative", which is an international donor coordination group for extension issues.

6.2 Clients and Beneficiaries of LEAP:

Farmers

Phase 1 must show benefits for the female and male farmers that are involved in the efforts for testing new methods and procedures. It is ultimately the benefits at that level which will allow judging the usefulness of the supporting work at all levels. However, during Phase 1 the benefit at the village level will be limited in quantitative terms, such as number of villages reached, production increased in a province, etc. The focus is on quality, i.e. getting the methods and procedures right in order to be able to scale up at a later stage. However, because some methods may still be in the testing phase, it may well be that some testing efforts fail to achieve a marked measurable benefit in the villages. It is therefore assumed, that the most important benefit for participating villages will be, that the relationship and interactions with the extension system have been improved and are showing promise for further beneficial action. Chances for initiating self-help actions are the main expected general benefit for participating villages during this Phase 1.

DAFOs

The benefits for participating DAFOs will be that they have the chance to learn how to operate as a fully functional organisation capable of doing generalist extension. This objective will not be fully achieved, but the learning will be initiated, and the procedures set up. Again, supporting efforts by PAFOs may also fail, since procedures are being tested. So here too, the main benefit is expected to be an improved and motivating relationship between DAFO staff and villagers, and DAFO staff and PAFOs, which will allow continuing with and initiating new interesting initiatives.

PAFOs

The benefit to the three participating PAFOs will be the establishment of Provincial Extension Training Units (PETU), and their training and coaching by CETDU. Very similarly to the benefit for the DAFOs, the main benefit is expected to be a motivating relationship with DAFOs and CETDU, which has good chances of further searching for and implementing effective methods that can be scaled up. Furthermore, the 6 provinces that are part of the exchange network group will benefit in terms of having opportunities to share experiences and to get new ideas. In the future it is foreseen that more PAFOs will benefit from the services of the CETDU. As soon as the capacity allows, the CETDU will start to provide services to other PAFOs especially the ones that are establishing PETUs in order to work with other projects like the

WB financed Agricultural Development Project, the ADB financed Decentralised Irrigation Management Development Project and SIDA funded research ventures by NAFRI.

MAF

MAF is the main direct beneficiary, as the project supports MAF to launch the NEDI with a long-term perspective. The immediate benefit during this Phase 1 is the provisional establishment on a small scale of a national capacity for developing the skills for decentralised extension. Furthermore this capacity will have surveyed extension efforts in the country and initiated a general exchange of experiences and discussions on how best to organise it. Furthermore activities for this central capacity will have been explored. Therefore MAF will achieve an informed position for continuing the NEDI on a step-by-step basis.

7. COMPONENTS AND OUTPUTS OF PHASE 1

In Section 2, the purposes of Phase 1 have been outlined. For each of the four specific purposes, specific project components have been defined, which are the following:

- Field Based Testing of Extension Approaches and Delivery Mechanisms
- Institutional Strengthening
- Training and Coaching
- Assessment and Evaluation.

Fig 2 shows how these components are related to the different collaborating bodies described in Section 5.

The outputs to be achieved in each of the four components are described in more detail in a logframe format below.

A provisional time planning is presented in Appendix 5 for the activities of the four components of the first Phase. However, as explained above, the LEAP team – once operational - will have to revise and adjust this provisional planning and present a specific work plan at the end of the 4 to 6 month inception period.

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Assumptions/Risks
OUTPUTS		
1. Extension Methodology and Delivery Mechanism		
1.1 Effective and efficient methods developed, tested and documented.	• A range of methods are used competently : PRA/GA, on-farm trial, exchange groups, training, demonstration, farmers' meetings etc. • DEUs are developing new initiatives with female and male farmers. • Farmers respond favorably to extension so that adoption expands, productivity is increased, and evaluations by farmers are positive • Male and female farmers are equally reached: In training events and study tours, 40% are female farmers.	▪ Each selected DAFO will be reorganised to form a unit for extension. ▪ Staff of the Extension Units will work as FSEW in selected villages. ▪ The work of the FSEW is monitored and coached by PETU and SMS with support from the CETDU.
1.2 Effective delivery mechanism for participatory extension established, tested and documented.	• DEU listens to farmers and plans their extension activities accordingly. • DEU communicates needed on-farm research to PAFO and NAFRI • DEU knows which method to use when, when to call in the SMS from PAFO to help, and how to supply inputs for trials on-farm on time. • DEU monitors, documents and records data on extension. • Network of male and female VEW and farmers' groups with female and male farmers established for different production types.	▪ Instructions from higher levels to the DAFOs are coordinated. ▪ The aspirations and agricultural planning by the villagers are taken into account. ▪ Various approaches and philosophies must be coordinated to operationally converge at the PAFO and DAFO level.
2. Institutional Strengthening		
2.1 Selected DAFOs operate on an experimental basis in a new fashion with a DEU and an administrative regulatory unit.	▪ DEU with FSEW and administrative and regulatory unit in the 7-8 DAFOs involved are set up with clear tasks and roles. ▪ Selected 7-8 DAFOs know how to plan and manage their extension activities based on farmers' demand. ▪ Budget system for DEU work is set-up and run by DAFO. ▪ DEUs test and identify suitable methods for extension. ▪ 30% of the FSEW are women.	▪ DEUs can implement their planning based on the needs and plans of the villagers without being interrupted by ad-hoc instructions from higher levels . ▪ DAFO are given authority to experiment with the new organizational set-up. ▪ Budget for work by DEU is available on time. ▪ DAFOs have means of transportation for their staff
2.2 Selected PETUs are established and experiment with the new set-up.	▪ The selected provinces form PETU with 5 staff from their technical sections. The staffs include 2 women. ▪ PETUs are able to continue working on capacity building and guide the development of extension in remaining DAFOs of their province with limited support of the ▪ Budget system for work by PETU is set-up ▪ PETU knows how to plan their coaching and monitoring work and is able to mobilize SMS ▪ Methods of assessments of the impact of extension are developed and used: ▪ Regular discussions within the PAFO on the functioning of the PETU are held.	▪ The 5 staff have good training and field experience. ▪ PETU is allowed to conduct on-the-job training and coaching for DEU and the administrative unit of the DAFO. ▪ PAFO must be given the required authority to experiment with the new organizational set-up. ▪ PETU must be able to mobilize SMS and channel input and research requests. ▪ Budget for work by PETU and transport is available on time.

2.3 Methodology of PETU in monitoring and coaching the DEU in their extension efforts developed and tested.	• Suitable ways and methods for monitoring the extension services at Provinces and Districts identified, tested and documented. • PETU has a plan for monitoring and coaching the DEU based on DEU extension plans. • PETU has range of methods available for monitoring of extension impact, of DEU functioning. • PETU knows how to coach the DEU in development of extension methodology and planning of extension work • PETU supports the DEU by making available inputs for trials, research data, marketing information, training to DEU, the right SMS at the right time	▪ PAFO Head and administration are supporting PETU in fulfilment of their tasks. ▪ Budget system is set up for PETU to do their work.
2.4 Useful ways to organize and permanently institutionalize the CETDU identified.	• CETDU is established and staffed with the type and number of staff required (see Section 8.2) • CETDU initiates activities to test mechanisms for dynamic extension/research linkages and farmer/market linkages including the involvement of the private sector. • CETDU opens opportunities for innovative exchange mechanisms among peers at all levels. • Ideas developed on what role the CETDU has to play in coaching the PETU and monitoring the extension services of the DEU. • CETDU has tools and monitors work of PETU and DEU	▪ The core group of CETDU becomes the core of future expanded CETDU in later phases. ▪ The CETDU staff is allowed and has time to coach the PETU to be able to fulfil their role in supporting the DAFO. ▪ The CETDU staff is allowed and has time to monitor the extension work by the DEU. ▪ CETDU has means for their work.
3. Training and Coaching		
3.1 Effective methodology for training and coaching male and female trainers at central and provincial level and for training DEU in support of their extension work established.	• Training curricula tested and documented and made available to the exchange network. • Suitable procedures identified for developing and testing useful training and coaching. • Training program made based on requests by PETU and DEU. • Draft Manuals/tools for coaching the PETU available.	▪ Experienced trainers are available when needed. ▪ Clear rules for learning and sharing need to be formulated in order to make it possible for DAFO and PAFO to experiment with their own methods and techniques and to report on it.
3.2 Effective system for the training and coaching of PETU and DEU developed and tested.	• Plan for training and coaching made. • Female and male trainers at central and provincial levels trained for training and coaching functions (4 in the CETDU and 5 per PETU). • Plan for technical training inputs by departments made. • Technical training delivered at right time and place. • Budget system for training and coaching set-up.	▪ Trainers at CETDU remain in place for at least the first Phase. ▪ CETDU can request staff from the technical departments to conduct training. ▪ Trainers are allowed to fulfill their coaching functions in the field.
4. Assessment and Evaluation		
4.1 Effective system to promote the assessment of extension methodologies and delivery mechanisms set up.	• Plan for assessment and further developing suitable extension methods prepared • DEU has regular exchange meetings with the VEW and records the findings. • DEU has clear reporting schedule to DAFO and PETU. • PAFO exchange network, established and meeting twice a year. It consists of PAFO and PETU heads in the 3 provinces of direct work and in 5 other selected provinces that will participate in the exchange. • Assessment committee established in MAF and meeting at least once per year. • Procedures for doing evaluation work are tested and cleared and evaluation is planned regularly. • Evaluation conducted at last year of Phase 1.	▪ DEU staff understand and are committed to the assessment of extension methodology. ▪ MAF approves work of Assessment Committee. ▪ PAFO heads and PETU heads are committed to take part in the exchange meetings and study tours. ▪ Intensive exchange of information and experiences among practitioners is possible.

4.2 Recommendations developed on the methodologies and delivery mechanisms for extension.	- Documentation on tested and efficient methodologies available. Documentation could be in different media: written, VDO, pictures. - Discussion and agreement at all levels on useful methods.	- Procedures and methodologies are clearly explained to all involved. - The staff involved has the commitment to develop useful extension methodologies together.
4.3 Recommendations developed based on concrete experiences on how to scale up.	- Suitable procedures identified and agreed upon for conducting testing of methodologies in other provinces and districts. - A concrete plan made for the number of provinces and districts involved. - An assessment made of the human resources needed for scaling-up training and coaching program at all levels. - An assessment made for the amount of budget needed for scaling-up including the expected GoL contribution.	- Assessment Committee calls actively for assessments of extension methodology and training and coaching program by CETDU and PAFO exchange network. - CETDU staff has time to start this assessment and evaluation effort.
4.4 Existing efforts of extension in Laos surveyed.	- Survey done on extension approaches and capacity-building programs in existence in Lao PDR including extension by the private sector. - Materials on extension and capacity building collected in CETDU. - Exchange meeting on the results of the survey held.	Active attitude of CETDU staff in contacting departments and agencies in order to know their extension efforts and to collect their materials.
4.5 Recommendations developed based on concrete experiences on how to link with various programs and projects involved in extension work in the country.	- Opportunity for integration of different extension approaches and initiatives identified and indicated. - Assessment of extension approaches for use in highland area made. - Mechanisms for extension/research linkage identified. - Linkages with private sector pursued and promoted.	- Co-operation and copying of approaches from one program to another must be possible. - CTA and Head of Planning keep each other informed about discussions with Donor agencies. - Exchange with the private sector is possible.

8. MEANS

The means for the project are categorised as: (i) technical assistance; (ii) personnel and, (iii) budget.

8.1 Technical Assistance

For the duration of the Phase 1, Technical Assistance (TA) will be required for the implementation of all project components. The TA will be provided by the Implementing Agency mandated by SDC with the implementation of the project according to the procurement and recruitment guidelines agreed between SDC and the Implementing Agency. All consultants will function through the Chief technical Advisor (CTA) in co-ordination with the co-ordinator of the CETDU and are required to report to the CTA.

The Implementing Agency will provide 2 long-term international consultants, who will be full-time employees of the Implementing Agency: a CTA (36 months) and a training and human resources development specialist (24 months). In addition, 170 person days of short-term international consultants are put at the disposition of the project. This includes the backstopping mandate given through the Implementing Agency to the Swiss Center for Agricultural Extension and Rural Development (LBL). The short term consultants and LBL will provide additional support in the areas of training and coaching, training of trainers, extension methods, marketing and financing of extension services. It will be up to the LEAP team to design the detailed workplan and to decide on what kind of short term consultancy expertise will be required to effectively implement the project.

Additionally, it is proposed to deploy a total of 72 person months of long-term national consultant capacity to work with the CETDU team and the international consultants. Again, the specific terms of reference for the national consultants will have to be reassessed during the inception period to ensure an optimal provisions of necessary skills.

Consultants will require substantial experience relevant to institutional development, training and human resources development, community development and extension is foreseen. If possible, international consultants should have working experience in the Lao PDR, and preferably a working knowledge of the Lao language. At least one of the members of the consulting team should be female.

The terms of reference for the above TA are set out in Appendix 6.

8.2 Personnel

The projects' success will be dependent on the availability of MAF staff. It is understood that MAF will make the personnel available for the CETDU, PETU and DEU for Phase 1.

CETDU

The following CETDU staff will be assigned by the MAF, which will also carry their salary costs. The CETDU will be headed by a Co-ordinator from the Department of Planning who will work closely with the CTA. Furthermore, the CETDU will consist of the heads of the extension sections in each technical department. For the Department of Irrigation that has no section for extension, somebody with experience in extension and water users' groups development will take part. Together with a person from the Department of Personnel, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation and NAFRI, these staff will be responsible for the planning and organisation of training through their departments, for the timely input of resource persons and

for appropriate on-farm research trials based on the needs of farmers. Preferably, there should be 1 or 2 women among these staff.

Beside these planners, 5 experienced trainers, preferably one from each technical department, will join the CETDU to monitor and coach the PETUs in their new functions and to assist them in training DEU staff. These 5 trainers will also become the trainers in extension methodology and management for the PETU. At least 1 of these trainers should be female. The total professional staff on the CETDU will be 11 persons and 1 co-ordinator.

LEAP Support Staff

The Implementing Agency will provide the necessary support staff for the CETDU and LEAP Team to function adequately. It is deemed necessary to hire an experienced administrator/accountant, one secretary, one cleaner and two drivers. The recruitment of this support staff will be done by the LEAP CTA in co-operation with the CETDU Co-ordinator.

PETUs

The following PETU staff will be assigned by the PAFOs, which will also carry their salary costs. The PETUs in the 3 core provinces are envisaged to have 5 staff across the technical lines. Preferably, this should be staff with some or more experience in training. 2 out of these 5 should be women. The head of the PETU could be one of these 5 staff or could be an additional person who could act as manager and who has a good relationship with the PAFO head. PAFOs are requested to also provide the PETUs with a secretary/accountant and with the services of a cleaner.

DEUs

DEUs in the core districts should be set up in line with the Agricultural Strategic Vision. The DEU consists of all DAFO staffs who are not in the administrative or regulatory units or on management positions. All extension staff in the DEU will become generalist FSEW.

PAFO Exchange Network Group

For the PAFO Exchange Network Group the participating 8 PAFO will designate a representative who will be close to the PAFO head and who will commit him/herself to attend the PAFO Exchange Network Group meeting. Preferably, it should be a person who is committed to the development of extension and likes to exchange and compare ideas on new approaches. For the PAFOs that will directly work with the project, the heads of the PETUs should also join the network group. Altogether, there will be 11 persons from the PAFO level joining this group. The group will come together twice a year for 3 to 5 days. One of these meetings per year will be ended with a presentation to and discussion with the Assessment Committee. In between meetings the members of the group can observe the fieldwork by the DEU and the PETU and keep a discussion with the PETU in their PAFO going.

Extension Assessment Committee

MAF will assign senior officials from the technical departments to the Extension Assessment Committee. Members of the committee must be prepared to free themselves for about 10 days per year for this task. In the last year of Phase 1 another week should be added for setting the criteria for the evaluation and analysing the results of the evaluation and formulating changes or consolidation possibilities for the future. Officials from NAFRI, and other relevant institutions could be invited to join the assessment committee.

8.3 Budget

The total costs of LEAP are budgeted at **CHF 2'000'000**. The government contribution is equivalent to **CHF 180'000** representing 9% of the total costs. Budget requested from SDC for the project is **CHF 1'820'000**. A summary budget is presented in Table 1 below, based on the detailed budget shown in Annex 4.

In addition to the above contribution, SDC will cover the costs of the Implementing Agency, the costs of the permanent expatriate CTA and a long-term international expert on training and human resources development, and the costs for the external evaluation of project implementation in the third year of Phase 1.

A project account under the MAF Department of Planning will be opened to provide timely funds for operational expenses of the PETU and DEU upon request. These operational costs are under Components 1 and 2 (PETU coaching and monitoring). Initially, an advance will have to be made to the DAFOs and PETUs before they start working according to new approach. This advance can be settled once the first accounting for spent budget is sent in together with the plan for the next period. The setting-up of the budget system should support the flexible nature of the approach. It should be as close as possible to the system used by the government but at the same time it should enable the availability of funds on time.

Besides the above, the LEAP will maintain a project account for funding Components 2 (except for PETU coaching and monitoring), 3 and 4, as well as equipment and personnel cost for the support staff.

Table 2: Components Project Cost Summary (US \$ and CHF)

Components	Total in US\$			Total in CHF 1)		
	GoL	SDC	Total	GoL	SDC	Total
Field based Testing	0	160'425	160'425	0	280'000	280'000
Institutional Strengthening	70'000	322'180	392'180	118'000	565'000	683'000
Training & Coaching	0	38'300	38'300	0	67'000	67'000
Assessment & Evaluation	0	38'750	38'750	0	68'000	68'000
Equipment & Transport	1'000	189'800	190'800	2'000	332'000	334'000
Local Personnel Costs	35'320	44'250	79'570	60'000	77'000	137'000
International Consultants	0	92'407	92'407	0	161'000	161'000
National Consultants	0	154'285	154'285	0	270'000	270'000
Total (excl. long-term TA/expat costs)	106'320	1'040'397	1'146'717	180'000	1'820'000	2'000'000

1) Calculated at 1US\$ = 1.75 CHF. Figures in CHF have been rounded.

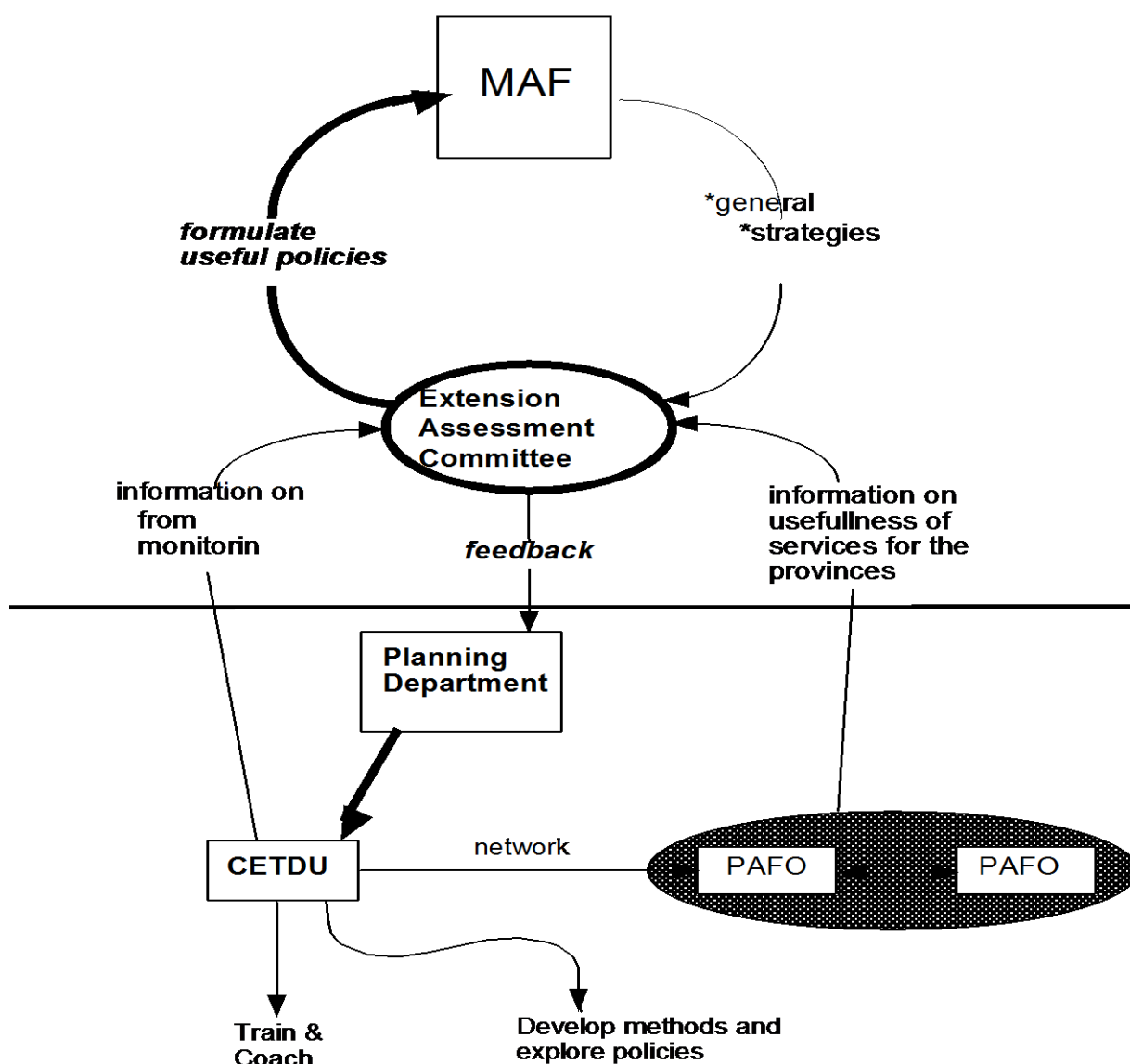
9. MONITORING & ASSESSMENT

LEAP will be a learning effort for all levels as stated in the guiding principles. This means that monitoring and assessment must take place of the methodologies used, the extension activities carried out, the delivery mechanism used, the effectiveness of the newly established institutional units, the impact of the extension efforts, the management and administration of

extension work and the policies supporting extension. Without this continuous and in-built monitoring and assessment there would be no learning of what works and what does not and what should be done to improve the situation next time (cf. Figure 3 below).

The CETDU, the PAFO exchange network group and the Extension Assessment Committee are the main bodies to carry out monitoring and assessment. The basis of their work will be the internal monitoring system which the CETDU will establish right from the start of its operations. An internal evaluation is foreseen towards the end of Phase1. It will in turn be the basis for a subsequent independent external evaluation to be arranged by SDC. The evaluation tool recently developed by the "Neuchâtel Initiative" for the "Monitoring, Evaluation and Joint Analysis of Pluralistic Extension Support" could be used as a tool at this stage.

Figure 2 Assessment and evaluation for extension



10. MEDIUM TERM PERSPECTIVE

The MAF and SDC are well aware that the development of an extension system is a medium to long term effort. However, as capacities at the provincial and district levels increase, the role of the CETDU and of the SDC support will have to be adjusted as well.

During Phase 1 a group of 8-10 people is envisaged to work in the CETDU as planners and as trainers. This group may have to be enlarged if and when more Provinces will be involved, and when approaches and methodologies tested become available for dissemination to further provinces. On the other hand, as more and more provinces and districts have well established extension capacities, the CETDU can and must devolve more and more of its original training functions to the PETUs, and concentrate more on its networking, co-ordination and policy advice functions. Given the decentralisation objective of the policy of the government, the size and role of central units must be tightly monitored to avoid any counterproductive top-heavy development.

Ultimately, the clients of the services of the extension system will have to become the managers of extension in the sense that activities are based on demand. This means the ultimately, it will be the demand from the provinces which will to a considerable extent determine the role and size of the CETDU. This would be analogous to the Swiss system, where Cantons directly control the work of the Swiss Extension Center LBL.

SDC perceives LEAP as a medium-to long-term support of the NEDI, at first mainly focusing on developing the national level capacity. Including more and more Provinces in the NEDI will have to be planned outside the framework of SDC-support to this project. Co-operation with other programs and projects will be actively sought when scaling up. This may mean a particular programme operating in a certain Province may pay for the services of the CETDU to that Province. As mentioned in section 3, it is extremely important to find funding mechanisms for the extension work by DEUs and for the coaching and training work of the PETUs. This funding could come from private business ventures by the clients, who could pay DEUs for their services, from other projects like the ones financed by ADB and WB or from the government. Without the extension work in the field there would be no demands generated and there would be no reason of existence for the PETU and the CETDU as players in a demand driven extension system.

Keeping the above in mind, a possible scenario for SDC involvement at the medium term is set out below. This scenario is dependent on co-operation with other funding agencies. In this scenario more phases than SDC is currently committed to, are sketched in order to provide some kind of reference for what could be expected in the future. It does not mean SDC will commit itself for more than 10 years.

Phase 1

LEAP creates the basis for further work by testing the NEDI extension approach in 8-9 districts of the 3 participating provinces, and provides the exchange network to involve another 5 provinces. Given the pilot character of this work, LEAP will to some extent finance DEU and PETU operations.

Phase 2

The 8-9 DAFOs of Phase 1 are able to function independently. These districts are left to their own devices at this point. The participating PETUs are encouraged to scale up their training and coaching work in the other districts of the province but with government funds. It is assumed that by that time most DAFOs will have been restructured according to the Agricultural Strategic Vision. LEAP will no longer fund the training and coaching activities of the PETUs in the first three provinces but will fund the CETDU staff to monitor and coach these PETUs regularly. At the same time the 5 PAFOs that were participating in the PAFO Exchange Network will establish operational PETUs, supported by LEAP. However, LEAP will not normally fund the

operation of the DEUs in the field. Therefore, co-operation needs to be sought with other donor agencies that can fund the extension activities in villages. For the CETDU to cope with an increased number of provinces, additional staff may have to be added to the CETDU. During Phase 2, the CETDU should also start to play a significant role in managing training for other provinces where projects are working. With LEAP funding, the PAFO Exchange Network will be expanded with 5 more provinces that will participate in bi-annual meetings, study trips and share experience on extension work in their provinces. This means that there are 13 provinces on this network at this time.

Phase 3

The coaching and monitoring role of the CETDU in the first 3 provinces will be terminated, while the second 5 PETUs will still be monitored and coached, and 5 more provinces join the network. LEAP will support the establishment of the PETUs, if necessary, but by that time PETUs might have been established in all PAFOs already. The last 5 provinces of the country will join the PAFO Exchange Network during this phase.

The further development of the NEDI goes beyond the current planning horizon of SDC support. However, if successful, the system may continue to expand as in Phases 2 and 3. By this time, the PETUs should be well trained and established to fulfil their task. At this time the staff of CETDU might be reduced because the provinces should now be in a position to cover the continuous training needs of their extension staff. However, it may well retain its role to monitor and evaluate the development of the system, act as a resource center for the provinces and to keep in touch with new initiatives in extension that will undoubtedly develop over the years. By this time, the field operations by PETU and DEU could ideally be entirely funded by their own funds (or government funds). The CETDU will also have their own funds to provide services wherever needed.

11. RISKS; AND PRECONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

The key assumptions and risks relative to LEAP have been addressed in the logframes presented in Sections 2 and 7. Nevertheless, a few important issues are further clarified in the following.

Effective coordination among technical programs.

The operations of the CETDU and in the Provinces can be badly damaged, if and when DAFOs are put under pressure to implement competing or contradicting approaches. This risks is high if large-scale focussed campaigns are launched, and DAFOs are instructed to implement them without regard to the other work that DAFOs have agreed to do based on planning with villagers. It is mainly up to the Department of Planning to contain this risk, but project has some leverage through intensive networking among all levels.

Precondition for success:

Coordination of instructions from higher levels (state or projects/programs) to the DAFOs must be assured. It must be possible to combine such demands with the ideas and aspirations of villagers while planning extension work at the village level. It must be possible to coordinate various approaches and philosophies to operationally converge at the PAFO and DAFO level. Intensive exchange of information and experiences among practitioners working in various projects and programs must be possible. Cost sharing, co-operation or even copying of approaches from one program to the other must be possible.

Institutional insecurities

The institutional set-up for extension will develop over the coming years, especially with the full implementation of the planned NAFEA. Moreover, regulatory adjustments will almost certainly become necessary when the approach outlined in this ProDoc is being put into practice. LEAP will have to live with institutional insecurities and will, if successful, contribute to solve them.

Precondition for success:

LEAP must be able to work in provisional structures. Participating PAFOs and DAFOs must be given the required authority to experiment with organisational set-ups that they think are useful, and then to suggest how to institutionalise them.

Local creativity

Experience shows that on the one hand, some local staff will become very enthusiastic and launch themselves into ventures with villagers which may eventually not be adequate or successful. On the other hand, enthusiasm to initiate something at the local level is a key element for the success of the NEDI. To deal with this dilemma, LEAP may have to set up and test some rules for experimentation at the local level.

Precondition for success:

DAFOs and PAFOs need the possibility but also sufficient guidelines to experiment on their own with methods and techniques.

Appendix 1

Framework for Extension Methodology

DAFO must relate its recommendations on extension to the:

- (a) production targets
- (b) stages of development and diffusion of new technology and,
- (c) steps in extension

(a) Production Targets

Extension should look at each agricultural production field in two ways:

- stage of production/raising and its related problems, causes, solutions and extension recommendations; DEU staff has to relate its recommendations to the stage of production/raising
- what the desired output, or target, should be at the end of the production/raising season and what the intermediate outputs should be at different times in the process; production targets will have to be set for all production fields in which DEU will provide assistance to farmers

Technical monitoring and guidance should be related to the stages in production in each field. FSEW should be able to look at the stages of production from a problem solving perspective and formulate recommendations on the basis of this

(b) Stages of Development and Diffusion of Technology

The process of diffusion of new ways of agricultural production describes how new technologies spread from farmer-to-farmer and from village-to-village.

From an agricultural extension point of view the stages of development of a village may be described by the degree of diffusion of new technology for a certain type of production:

Stage 1 - Small numbers of farmers are interested to try out new technologies.

Stage 2 - More farmers are interested and start to try the new technologies and Stage 1 farmers decided to use the technology as normal practice.

Stage 3 - Many farmers begin to use the new technology on a substantial part of their land.

Each of these stages has its own extension objectives that extension has to keep in mind.

Stage 1: Engaging Farmers' Interest:

- assist a small number of 'selected' farmers to try new technologies to stimulate other farmers to try them also;
- establish a relationship and confidence with farmers and village

Stage 2: Intensify Technology Support:

- establish and train Village Extension Workers (VEW) to assist all 'interested' farmers to use new technologies effectively
- assist all interested farmers to obtain required material inputs

Stage 3: Consolidation of new Technology and Establishment of Production

Groups:

- further build the capacity of VEW, and provide assistance to all interested farmers
- establish Farmer Production Groups (FPG) so that villagers can begin to plan, organize, manage village resources and contact outside groups (e.g. banks, merchants)

- begin to develop the Farmer Exchange Meetings into a network for farmers to exchange experiences and stimulate further technology development and innovation, for local conditions

The process of farmers' decision making which describes the steps that farmers go through before they decide to use any new technology, including new varieties and inputs, is called the adoption process. The extension process in a village is related to the stage of development of the village in regards to the adoption process. Farmers can be lead by the FSEW through the different stages in the adoption process by proper phasing of extension activities. The FSEW start working with interested farmers, then with Village Extension Workers and finally facilitate group development of farmers with the same interests and needs as a result of that process.

Village Extension Workers (VEW) will be identified and selected by every village where the Project is working. The villagers should do identification and selection themselves in order for them to have the full benefit of having a VEW. If DEU staff selects without involving the villagers, the role and function of the VEW will not be understood and used efficiently. The DEU should facilitate meetings with the villagers to discuss the role and use of VEW and leave the selection process to the village. During the first year only 'interested farmers' for irrigation, as a kind of contact person for the WUA, and for rice production are identified and selected by the village. In the second year the village can select VEW from the 'interested farmers'. In subsequent years 'interested farmers' and VEW for Livestock, Fruit trees, Vegetables, and Forestry should be identified and selected. For each of the production field a plan of development of the VEW has to be made. This plan should enable the VEW:

1. To improve the techniques in the agricultural field that they selected for.
2. To assist other farmers in learning to use these new techniques.

Basically, the development of the VEW in order to reach the above skills is the same for each agricultural field and follows the steps in extension as explained below. Only the contents of the training to VEW, of the exchange meetings and the points for monitoring are different.

Each year the group of farmers who want to try and expand new technologies increase. FSEW work according to this:

- Year 1: work with 3-5 interested farmers in a village
- Year 2: some interested farmers are selected by the village to become VEW
- Year 3: VEW start to form groups together with other interested farmers

For each new field of production that the FSEW introduce they need to follow the progress in expansion of a new technique and should work accordingly.

From the experience of FIAT and PEP phases in group development have been identified. These phases of group development are:

- Phase 1: RSA/data collection/needs
- Phase 2: Analysis lead to objectives/formation: the problem
- Phase 3: Solution to problem = planning/formation of group
- Phase 4: Activities/stabilization of group
- Phase 5: Follow-up/strengthening
- Phase 6: Evaluation/strengthening
- Phase 7: After evaluation/strengthening:
 - contact and exchange with other groups
 - networking and/or co-operation with other groups
 - if there is no need any more, dissolve the group

(c) Steps in Extension

Each stage of development within a village, in relation with the stage of production in each production field, is completed in about a year. The same steps are followed within each stage of development:

Preparation ⇒ training & implementation ⇒ follow-up ⇒ evaluation

(i) Preparation

Farmers need to identify their problems and needs in a particular production field and agree on a course of action. Then the village should select a few farmers who would want to try out the chosen course of action. These should be interested farmers.

(ii) Training and Implementation

Support is then focused on the interested farmers to provide them with the technical advice on new inputs and technology to try out at small scale. For crops this will mean to try it out on a trial plot and for livestock this will mean to try with a small sample. The interested farmers will receive training and regular visits by the FSEW.

(iii) Follow-up

FSEW give additional advice and discuss improvements to the practice. Farmers assess the new technologies. Together with farmers it is discovered what works best for them.

(iv) Evaluation

Farmers evaluate new technologies together and the lessons learned are reported back to the other farmers in the village. The interested farmers can also be given the opportunity to visit other villages where also trials are going on.

These steps are repeated for each production field in which new technology is introduced and for which VEW are identified and selected by the villagers.

Within this framework of extension, training activities to farmers need to address the following issues:

- Diversification of farm production;
- Integration of crops, livestock and fish;
- Use of improved materials and improved practices in all production fields;
- Agricultural production group management;
- Integrated Pest Management;
- Use of approaches for soil fertility improvement;
- Use of green manure;
- Watershed Management;
- Forest plantation and conservation;
- Credit and saving; and
- Food storage and conservation.

Appendix 2

Framework for Capacity-Building

For DEU Staff

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
On-The-Job Training	On-The-Job Training	On-The-Job Training
→ (back-up in the field)	→ → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → → (back-up in the field)	→ → → → → → → → → (back-up in the field)
Formal Training	Formal Training	Formal Training
◇ Extension Concepts + Methodology <u>5dys</u>	◇ EMS, Extension Planning 1# <u>5 dys</u>	◇ Extension Planning 2# + Reporting. <u>5 dys</u>
◇ Facilitation Skills + Dev. <u>10 dys</u> incl. Start with WUA, GiD, PRA/GA	◇ GiD Crop Prod. <u>8 dys</u>	◇ Basic Technical Skill: - Livestock/Fish* <u>10 dys</u>
◇ Review of PRA and Role of VEW Including GiD <u>5 dys</u>	◇ Communication – Skills <u>5 dys</u> – Group Dev.* <u>5 dys</u>	
	◇ Basic Technical Skill: - Rice* <u>10 dys</u>	
Workshops	Workshops	Workshops
◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS <u>2 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS <u>3 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>3 dys</u> ◇ Vision <u>2 dys</u>
Short-technical Input	Short-technical Input	Short-technical Input
Rice Prod. <u>8 dys</u>	DS Crops <u>1 day</u>	Compost making <u>1 dy</u> Fruit trees <u>1 dys</u>
Total <u>30 dys</u>	Total <u>38 dys</u>	Total <u>24 dys</u>

* training is preceded by data collection by DAFO staff in the field

For PETU and Managers in Extension

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Training	Training	Training
◇ EMS 1: Introduction to Extension Methodology and Capacity-Building Program <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Facilitation Skills + Dev. <u>10 dys</u> including GiD, PRA/GA ◇ Review of PRA/GA GiD Dev VEW selection <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Basic planning, monitoring and accounting procedures <u>5 dys</u> <u>Short Technical Input:</u> ◇ Rice Production Monitoring <u>8 dys</u>	◇ EMS 2: Review of basic planning; monitoring and accounting <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Basic rice production Incl. Technology Transfer to VEW Follow-up <u>10 dys</u> ◇ Communication and Facilitation Skills <u>10 dys</u> ◇ Group Development <u>10 dys</u> <u>Short Technical Input:</u> ◇ DS crop <u>1 day</u>	◇ EMS 3: planning and reporting <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Leadership: management staff support <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Technical Training: Livestock/Fish <u>5 dys</u> <u>Short Technical Input:</u> ◇ Compost making <u>1 day</u> ◇ Fruittrees <u>1 day</u>
Workshops	Workshops	Workshops
◇ Role of Extension within MAF policy <u>2 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS: Reporting procedures as support to technical staff <u>3 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS: budget and planning <u>2 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>5 dys</u>
Total <u>37 dys</u>	Total <u>41 dys</u>	Total <u>24 dys</u>

For Staff at CETDU

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Training	Training	Training
◇ EMS 1: Introduction to Extension Methodology and Capacity-Building Program <u>9 dys</u> ◇ Preparation Facilitation Skills + Dev. <u>9 dys</u> incl. GiD, PRA/GA ◇ Review of PRA/GA WUO Dev/GiD Dev VEW selection <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Basic planning, monitoring and accounting Procedures <u>5 dys</u>	◇ EMS 2: Review of basic planning; monitoring and accounting <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Basic rice production Incl. Technology Transfer to VEW Follow-up <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Communication and Facilitation Skills <u>8 dys</u> ◇ Group Development <u>8 dys</u>	◇ EMS 3: planning and reporting <u>3 dys</u> ◇ Leadership: management staff support <u>5 dys</u> ◇ Technical Training: Livestock/Fish <u>5 dys</u>
Workshops	Workshops	Workshops
◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS: Reporting procedures as support to technical staff <u>2 dys</u> ◇ Evaluation <u>2 dys</u>	◇ EMS: budget and planning <u>2 dys</u>
Total <u>30 dys</u>	Total <u>30 dys</u>	Total <u>15 dys</u>

Appendix 3

Terms of Reference for Consulting Services

For the three-year duration of Phase 1 of the Laos Agricultural Extension Project technical assistance will be required for all project components in order to:

- a) provide advice and guidance to national staff on planning and programming of the project
- b) develop ways to strengthen the newly organised units
- c) assist the staff in the new units to find the purpose and contents of their mission and tasks
- d) assist the national staff in developing training and coaching methods and mechanisms
- e) assistance in the provision of training for national staff and for specific training events for PETU and managers of extension
- f) assist in developing the training plan based on the needs of the farmers
- g) develop the framework and schedule for a three year capacity building program for CETDU, PETU and DAFOs based on existing modules
- h) assist in organising the training for PETU and DEU
- i) assist in organising study tours, especially the trip abroad for the higher levels
- j) have an ongoing dialogue with the higher levels about the progress of the projects and the findings with regards to new approaches that are tested
- k) provide guidance to Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Provincial and District Agricultural and Forestry Offices (PAFOs and DAFOs) on agricultural extension
- l) provide advise regarding the marketing and processing of agricultural produce
- m) continue developing a participatory approach for extension
- n) ensure that the new approach adequately involves female staff and female farmers and that the benefits of the project are equal for male and female farmers
- o) formulate and develop systems and procedures for proper monitoring of extension efforts
- p) assist with procurement under the project
- q) assist with the reporting requirements of SDC

In order to provide this assistance international and national consultants will be employed. SDC will finance these consultants and they will be recruited in accordance to SDC guidelines. All consultants will function through the CTA in co-ordination with the co-ordinator of the CETDU and are required to report to SDC through the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA). International consultants will only come in part of the time except for the CTA. Both international and national consultants will be assigned to provide technical assistance and a high level of technology transfer will be required to ensure project sustainability. The assignments of the consultants with substantial experience relevant to institutional development, training and human resources development, community development and extension is envisaged. Strong preference would be given to consultants with direct experience in either Lao PDR; and with fluency in English, and preferably with a working knowledge of Lao. At least one of the members of the consulting team should be female.

It is proposed that four international consultants and three local consultants will be engaged over the three year period for a total of 67 staff months for international and 108 staff months for national consultants. Besides, 4 months are reserved for backstopping activities twice a year.

The international consultants will include:

- a) Institutional Development Specialist/CTA (36 months);

- b) Training and Human Resources Development Specialist (24 months);
- c) Extension Methods Specialist (3 months);
- d) Marketing Specialist (4 months).
- e) Backstopping (twice a year).

The national consultants will consist of:

- a) Training Specialist (36 months each)
- b) Participatory Approach/Gender Specialist (36 months)
- c) Extension Marketing Specialist (36 months)

A staffing chart is set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1 Staffing chart for consultants

Position	Months	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<u>International Consultants</u>				
Institutional Development Specialist/CTA	36			
Training and Human Resources Development Specialist	24			
Extension Methods Specialist	3			
Marketing Specialist	4			
Backstopping	4			
<u>National Consultants</u>				
Training Specialist (2 persons)	36			
Participatory Approach/Gender Specialist	36			
Extension Marketing Specialist	36			

The terms of reference of these consultants are as follows:

Institutional Development Specialist/Chief Technical Advisor

The CTA will have joined responsibility with the co-ordinator of the CETDU for the implementation of the project activities, and for ensuring the timely completion and quality of activities and will have overall responsibility for the services of all consultants. The CTA will report directly to SDC and to the head of the Planning Department. The CTA shall:

- a) Stay in close contact with the Head of the Planning Department in order to ensure that the exploratory efforts may run smoothly, particularly with regard to.
 - institutional and regulatory problems that arise during the course of the methodological testing efforts of the CETDU and the PETU.
 - transversal co-ordination among programs of various technical departments with regard to extension
 - the learning effort at the level of MAF, i.e. policy formulation and planning for scaling up the efforts.
- b) Train and coach the Head of the CETDU in developing and running the program of CETDU

- c) Facilitate and supervise the technical assistance from abroad
- d) Proactively search for and maintain contact with other Donor agencies running or contemplating to run programs and projects with a component in extension. Donor co-ordination in extension matters should be sought. (This is the analogue of the Lao side, where the Planning Department will co-ordinate all programs and projects to fit with the emerging Lao extension system.)
- e) provide advice and guidance to national staff on planning and programming of the project
- f) develop ways to strengthen the newly organised units
- g) assist the staff in the new units to find the purpose and contents of their mission and tasks
- h) have an ongoing dialogue with the higher levels about the progress of the projects and the findings with regards to new approaches that are tested
- i) arrange for backstopping missions and keep an ongoing communication with the backstopping agency
- j) assist in organising study tours, especially the trip abroad for the higher levels
- k) assist with procurement under the project
- l) assist with the reporting requirements of SDC

Training and Human Resources Development Specialist

The training and human resources development specialist will assist the CTA in ensuring the timely completion and quality of the project activities. He/she will report to the CTA and will assist in:

- a) develop ways to strengthen the newly organised units
- b) develop the training plan on the basis of what the farmers need
- c) assist the staff in the new units to find the purpose and contents of their mission and tasks
- d) develop the framework and schedule for a three year capacity building program for CETDU, PETU and DAFOs based on existing modules
- e) assist the national staff in developing training and coaching methods and mechanisms
- f) assist in training the trainers at CETDU, PETU and DEU level
- g) assistance in the provision of training for national staff and for specific training events for PETU and managers of extension
- h) assist in organizing the training for PETU and DEU
- i) assist in organizing study tours, especially the trip abroad for the higher levels
- j) develop new curricula and discuss available curricula with the technical departments for revision
- k) collect all curricula and training materials that are available in the departments of MAF and in the agricultural centres

Extension Methodology Specialist

The extension methodology specialist will come in during the second and third year. By that time the DEU and PETU have had time to get familiar with the scope and approach to extension. That is an opportune time to provide them with new ideas on how to deliver extension. The extension methodology specialist will therefore:

- a) collect and document extension methodologies in use in Lao PDR
- b) initiate discussions on extension methodologies with the staff of the CETDU, the PAFO Exchange Network group and the Assessment Committee
- c) initiate the testing of new approaches with the DEU
- d) provide guidance to Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Provincial and District Agricultural and Forestry Offices (PAFOs and DAFOs) on agricultural extension
- e) continue developing a participatory approach for extension
- f) ensure that the new approach adequately involves female staff and female farmers and that the benefits of the project are equal for male and female farmers
- g) formulate and develop systems and procedures for proper monitoring of extension efforts

Marketing Specialist

Time and time again farmers complain that they have no market for their products or that they do not know the market. The DAFOs are generally not well aware of the role that market factors play in production of farmers. The marketing specialist will sensitise the DEU staff for marketing issues and will:

- a) train the DEUs on how to look at market factors
- b) advise DEUs on the way how farmers could approach marketing
- c) guide PETU and DEU on how to spot market opportunities
- d) guide PETU and DEU in making contacts with the private sector and agro-businesses
- e) provide advise regarding the marketing and processing of agricultural produce

Training/Extension Specialist

The training specialists will assist the training and human resources development specialist and the extension methodology and the marketing specialist when they have to conduct training for DEU, PETU and the CETDU. Furthermore, the specialists will:

- a) collect information on extension methodologies used in Lao PDR
- b) collect and develop training and extension materials
- c) disseminate extension and training materials to the PETUs and DEUs
- d) assist the CETDU staff in the preparation of promotion materials
- e) assist in training the trainers

Participatory Approach/Gender Specialist

The participatory approach and gender specialist will ensure that all economic groups in the participating villages as well as ethnic minorities and women will be involved and will benefit in the project equally. Therefore, she/he will:

- a) undertake socio-economic studies in the participating villages in order to know who live there
- b) assist the staff in conducting and analysing PRA/GA
- c) undertake regular assessments of the status of women in the project and recommend on ways how to improve with regards to gender issues
- d) train the staff in gender issues
- e) report on the status of gender issues to the higher levels
- f) contact with LWU and other projects working on gender issues in order to form a network for strengthening the commitment towards full participation of women
- g) assist in delivering participatory training and in training CETDU, PETU, DEU and the technical staff who will train others how to do participatory training

Extension Marketing Specialist

The extension specialist will assist the extension methodology and the marketing specialist with collecting and disseminating appropriate information and furthermore will:

- a) monitor the impact of the extension efforts
- b) develop ways on monitoring extension efforts and train DEU and PETU in the use of the new tools
- c) sensitize DEU and PETU for marketing factors
- d) train DEU how to train farmers on how to analyse the market
- e) keep contacts with NAFRI on needed on-farm research
- f) liaise with private sector and agro-businesses

Backstopping

Backstopping missions can be called in when the need arises. However, in order to give a clear task to the mission that fits the project planning it might be foreseen that:

- a) the mission facilitates the PAFO Exchange Network meetings
- b) the mission advises the meeting of the Assessment Committee with the PAFO Exchange Network
- c) the mission presents new initiatives during those meetings
- d) the mission observes field work together with the Assessment Committee
- e) the mission brings the CETDU staff in contact with useful sites and addresses to learn more about extension in agriculture
- f) the mission assists in organising study tours abroad

Reporting Requirements

The consultants will assist the co-ordinator and the CTA in producing a semi annual progress report as required by SDC. Additionally, the consultants will assist the co-ordinator in producing a brief inception report three months after start of the project and the project completion report in the last month of the project, phase 1.