



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

LEAP

Laos Extension for Agriculture Project Project Document Phase IV (2008 – 2012)

June 2008



◀ helvetas ▶

Note on illustrations

The illustration on the cover, and those on two inside pages, are taken from a poster that was produced and distributed by LEAP during Phase II.

The caption reads on the poster reads:

**ການສົ່ງເສີມກະສິກຳແມ່ນວຽກຂອງປວງຊົນ
ແລະທຸກໆຄົນມີບົດບາດເຂົ້າຮ່ວມໃນວຽກພັດທະນາ**

***Extension is for everyone –
and everyone has a role to play in development***

Executive Summary

Overview: Phase IV of the Laos Extension for Agriculture Project (LEAP) is a 4-year project to be implemented between July 2008 to June 2012 by the Government of Lao PDR with technical assistance from Helvetas. The project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with a budget for this phase of 4,807,173 Swiss Francs.

Context. About 2 million of the 5.6 million inhabitants of Lao PDR live in poverty, a large part of them upland farmer of ethnic minorities in remote areas. Progress in agriculture and forestry is an essential avenue out of poverty for rural people, while also being a key to economic development of the country as a whole. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is guided by 4 goals: enhanced food security, increased commodity production, stabilisation of shifting cultivation and sustainable forest management. Within the Ministry, the National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service (NAFES) provides guidance to a network of service centres at provincial, district and kumban levels.

LEAP Phases I to III. LEAP started at the end of 2001, the same year that NAFES was created. In the period 2002-2004, LEAP tested a participatory extension process in three provinces (Luang Prabang, Salavane and Champassak), out of which emerged the Lao Extension Approach (LEA), subsequently endorsed by the MAF in 2005. In phase II, 2005- 2007, the project supported NAFES in introducing the LEA into all 17 provinces of the country. LEAP also worked to improve links between extension and research, and developed a range of extension materials. During this period, a number of other donors and projects started to use the LEA. Between January and June 2008, an Alignment Phase was implemented with the aim of adjusting the project design to match new organisational strategies and structures introduced by MAF in the later half of 2007.

The Lao Extension Approach (LEA). The LEA can be understood in terms of one vision, two concepts and three features, or '1-2-3' for short. The inclusive vision of the LEA is summarised in the phrase '*Extension for Everyone*'. In other words, extension is for *all* farmers: rich and poor, men and women, from all ethnic groups, and regardless of literacy and educational level. In order to translate this vision into action, the LEA takes account of two concepts that are highly relevant to the Lao context: *decentralisation and pluralism*. Decentralisation means that Government assistance to farmers is planned and organised at the lowest possible level, while pluralism means that different types of extension activities take place in different places and a number of different actors play a role in the provision of services. The three operational features of the LEA which distinguish it from other extension approaches are that it is *participatory, needs based and group based*. Farming men and women form groups to learn about topics which they have selected based on an assessment of local problems and opportunities.

LEAP in relation to policies. The project is aligned to the Government goals of improving food security and increasing commodity production, thus enhancing the contribution of the agriculture sector to poverty reduction. The project fosters harmonisation through collaboration with other donors in the expansion and enhancement of the LEA. LEAP is also in line with SDC's priorities for the Mekong Region and the related Millennium Development Goals: it engages in building effective and accountable public extension services, and contributes to building

services that can support sustainable use of natural resources, establish working links with the private sector, effectively reduce poverty through inclusive rural growth, and promote opportunities for women.

Project objective and outcomes for phase IV. The project objective remains the same as in earlier phases: *"to contribute to the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that is capable of benefiting poorer households and communities, and reaches male and female farmers equally"*. Five components have been planned, with the following outcomes:

1. Strengthening Management of Service Centres. Outcome: managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge required to effectively plan and organise their work.
2. Strengthening Delivery of Technical Services. Outcome: technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.
3. Strengthening Delivery of Training Services. Outcome: the Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery
4. Strengthening Delivery of Information Services. Outcome: extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.
5. Capitalisation of Experience in Extension Delivery. Outcome: good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.

Strategic considerations. In Phase IV, LEAP will give more attention to the quality of service delivery, in order to complement the attention that was given in Phase II to increasing geographical coverage. Particular attention will be given to the needs of poor communities in remote areas. Direct collaboration with other projects is seen as an important means for achieving this goal, in addition to the capitalisation of good practices from a wide range of development actors. A strategy of 'extension menus' will be used to bring about more effective participation of farmers and to integrate the LEA with the newly-established technical service centres. Further collaboration with research is expected to play an important part in implementing the menu strategy, while a number of 'toolkits' will be provided to field staff as part of capacity-building.

Implementation arrangements. The project continues to be implemented jointly by NAFES and Helvetas. The Lao government partners will be supported by a technical assistance team consisting of two expatriate advisers and three Lao specialists. A number of multilateral and bilateral projects are expected to collaborate in implementation, while the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI) will continue to be an important partner. In this phase, greater attention will be given to monitoring and evaluation, with a series of impact studies being carried out to support future policy making and resource mobilization.

Budget. The total budget for the four years of LEAP phase IV is CHF 4,807,173. This is broken down into CHF 2,791,352 (58%) for operational costs, CHF 1,462,783 for technical assistance (30%), and CHF 553,038 (12%) as a management overhead.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ii
Acronyms	vi
Country Map	vii
1 Context and current situation	8
1.1 Introduction	8
1.1.1 Overview of phases I and II (2001 – 2007).....	8
1.1.2 Alignment Phase (2008)	8
1.1.3 Phase IV and beyond (2008 onward).....	8
1.2 Background, problems and potential	9
1.2.1 General background	9
1.2.2 Rural poverty	10
1.2.3 Potential contribution of extension	10
1.3 An evolving institutional environment	10
1.3.1 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.....	10
1.3.2 National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service.....	11
1.3.3 Provincial level.....	11
1.3.4 District level and below	12
1.4 The extension situation in Laos and LEAP's contribution	12
1.4.1 Evolution of extension in Lao PDR.....	12
1.4.2 Purpose and achievements of LEAP to date.....	13
1.5 The Lao Extension Approach (LEA)	14
1.5.1 Understanding the LEA with ‘1-2-3’	14
1.5.2 Structural aspects of the LEA, from Villages to Kumbans	14
1.6 LEAP in relation to policies of the Lao government and SDC	15
1.6.1 Lao government policies	15
1.6.2 The National Social and Economic Development Plan.....	16
1.6.3 MAF’s plan with 4 goals and 13 measures.....	17
1.6.4 SDC policies	17
2 Project Strategy	19
2.1 Project goal and objective	19
2.2 Phase components	19
2.3 Strategic considerations	20
2.3.1 Enhancing quality of service delivery, from LEA to LEA+	20
2.3.2 Adopting a programmatic approach	20
2.3.3 Capitalisation of field experience	21
2.3.4 Using ‘menus’ as a strategy for integration	21
2.3.5 Using ‘tool-kits’ as a basis for capacity-building	22
2.3.6 Collaboration between research, extension and education	23
2.3.7 Relationship between key ideas in Phase IV.....	23
3 Key Elements of the Project	24
Component 1: Strengthening Management of Service Centres	24
Component 2: Strengthening Delivery of Technical Services	25
Component 3: Strengthening Delivery of Training Services	26

	<i>Component 4: Strengthening Delivery of Information Services</i>	<i>27</i>
	<i>Component 5: Capitalisation of Experience in Extension Delivery</i>	<i>28</i>
4	<i>Implementing Arrangements</i>	<i>29</i>
4.1	<i>Implementing partners</i>	<i>29</i>
4.1.1	NAFES	29
4.1.2	Helvetas TA team	29
4.2	<i>Other partners</i>	<i>30</i>
4.3	<i>Project steering</i>	<i>31</i>
4.3.1	Steering Committee	31
4.3.2	Project Management Team	31
4.4	<i>Role of Helvetas Programme and Head Office</i>	<i>32</i>
4.5	<i>Overview of project actors and links between them</i>	<i>33</i>
5	<i>Controlling</i>	<i>34</i>
5.1	<i>Project Monitoring</i>	<i>34</i>
5.2	<i>Project Reporting</i>	<i>34</i>
5.3	<i>Project Evaluation</i>	<i>34</i>
5.4	<i>Extension Monitoring</i>	<i>35</i>
5.5	<i>Extension Outcomes and Impact</i>	<i>35</i>
6	<i>Risks</i>	<i>37</i>
7	<i>Budget summary</i>	<i>39</i>
Annex 1:	<i>Logical Framework</i>	<i>40</i>
Annex 2:	<i>The contribution of extension to poverty eradication</i>	<i>50</i>
Annex 3:	<i>Schematic of MAF organisational structure</i>	<i>51</i>
Annex 4:	<i>Financial management of the project</i>	<i>52</i>
Annex 5:	<i>Financial participation of the GoL</i>	<i>54</i>
Annex 6:	<i>Alternative funding options for operational cost of extension</i>	<i>55</i>
Annex 7:	<i>LEAP contributions to policies of the Government and SDC</i>	<i>57</i>
Annex 8:	<i>LEAP and Kumban development</i>	<i>60</i>
Annex 9:	<i>The menu-driven strategy for improving the LEA</i>	<i>61</i>
Annex 10:	<i>Market access and agribusiness</i>	<i>63</i>
Annex 11:	<i>Possible good practices to harvest under component 5</i>	<i>65</i>
Annex 12:	<i>Mandate of the LEAP steering committee</i>	<i>66</i>
Annex 13:	<i>ToRs of Technical Advisers</i>	<i>67</i>
Annex 14:	<i>Budget</i>	<i>69</i>

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEA	Agro-Ecosystem Analysis
AEDP	Agro-Enterprise Development Process
AIM	Agricultural Information Management (working group)
AKIS	Agricultural Knowledge and Information System
CETDU	Central Extension Training Development Unit
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DETS	District Extension and Technical Services (Centre)
EoP	End of Phase
FORCOM	Forest Management and Community Support Project
GES	Government Extension System
GoL	Government of Lao PDR
GPAP	Governance and Public Administration Reform - project
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KETS	Kumban Extension and Technical Services (Centre)
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Lao-IRRI	Project of the International Rice Research Institute in Laos
LEA	Lao Extension Approach
LEAP	Laos Extension for Agriculture Project
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MT	Master Trainer
NAFES	National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service
NAFRI	National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NICE	National Information Centre for Extension
NSEDP	National Social and Economic Development Plan
NTFPs	Non-Timber Forest Products
PACSA	Public Administration and Civil Service Authority
PARUA	Poverty Alleviation in Remote Upland Areas - project
PETS	Provincial Extension and Technical Services (Centre)
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
SADU	Sustainable Agro-enterprise Development in the Uplands - project
SC(M)	Steering Committee (Meeting)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMS	Subject Matter Specialist
STAR	A tool for monitoring and evaluating extension activities
SUFORD	Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development Project
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
URDP	Upland Research and Capacity Development Programme
VES	Village Extension System
VEW	Village Extension Worker
WB	World Bank

Country Map



1 Context and current situation

1.1 Introduction

This document presents the design of phase IV of the Lao Extension for Agriculture Project (LEAP), funded by SDC and implemented by the National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service (NAFES) with technical assistance from Helvetas, a Swiss NGO. It builds up on two previous operational phases of LEAP (phase I 2001-2004, phase II 2005-2007) and modifications made in an alignment period (phase III, January-June 2008).

1.1.1 Overview of phases I and II (2001 – 2007)

In phase I, LEAP explored an extension concept that suits the Lao conditions with their high diversity of agro-ecological conditions, production systems and ethnic groups. For this purpose it worked on a pilot basis in three districts each in three provinces (Luang Prabang, Salavane and Champassak). Out of this exploratory work the Lao Extension Approach (LEA) emerged, consisting of a set of principles and methodologies (see 1.5.1 for a description of the approach). Curricula and learning tools for training extension staff in the LEA were developed.

Early in phase II, the LEA was adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) as its official extension approach. In the remainder of the phase, LEAP and partners placed much emphasis on spreading the LEA across the country, introducing the approach in one district in each of the remaining 14 provinces of the country. At the same time the National Information Centre for Extension (NICE) was established at NAFES to support the work being done by provincial and district offices under MAF. Also, LEAP established working links between research and extension, developed further extension and information materials, engaged in policy dialogue to promote the LEA, and succeeded in persuading other donors to invest in LEA capacity building (see 1.4.2 for more on LEAP achievements in phase II).

1.1.2 Alignment Phase (2008)

The project document for Phase III of LEAP was completed and ready for official submission by September 2007. The following month, MAF approved a new organisational structure involving the establishment of Extension and Technical Service Centres at Provincial, District and Kumban levels. These changes have an important bearing on the implementation of the Lao Extension Approach (LEA) and, consequently, on the relevance and feasibility of activities that had been planned for Phase III. Consequently, SDC and the Government agreed to a 6-month bridging period aimed at bringing about an alignment between LEAP and the new structure of the Ministry. As part of this alignment phase, this project document was revised for what will become phase IV.

1.1.3 Phase IV and beyond (2008 onward)

In phase IV, LEAP will provide both continuity and innovation; it will continue to support what works well, while also addressing the weaknesses of the past and seeking ways to meet the challenges of the future. In particular, LEAP will support the integration of the Lao Extension Approach with the Technical Service Centres in

a way that is relevant to the needs of remote upland areas, ethnic minorities, poor households in general, and women. Phase IV is also designed with the Vientiane Declaration¹ in mind: greater management responsibility will be handed over to the Lao partners, while greater efforts will be made to build synergies with other development projects and programmes.

In particular, phase IV will:

- Strengthen the management of service centres at three levels: Provincial, District and Kumban;
- Strengthen the delivery of three types of services via the centres: technical, training and information;
- Continue to support the expansion of the Lao Extension Approach (LEA), with adaptations that aim to enhance the quality of implementation;
- Undertake capitalisation of experiences in extension delivery in order to promote a diverse range of good practices.

Building extension systems is a long-term undertaking in any country. In Lao PDR, this task is especially challenging given the high level of decentralisation and the rapidly changing socio-economic context. The current vision for extension in Laos is not a single fixed structure, but a pluralistic and flexible approach that can respond to diverse and evolving needs. Inevitably, this makes it difficult to make precise predictions about the future. By the end of phase IV, LEAP will have been running for 10 years. Beyond this, another 4-5 years of support should be envisaged to consolidate achievements, make further steps towards management by Lao partners and address emerging issues.

1.2 *Background, problems and potential*

1.2.1 General background

Key statistics are shown in the box. Farming systems are very diverse, both from a socio-cultural and bio-physical viewpoint. Lowland farmers are generally better-off and perceived as those who can better contribute to the development of the country. Upland farmers are generally poorer and – until recently – they relied on various forms of shifting cultivation that the government has tried to stabilize. It is generally estimated that about 60% of farms mainly produce for subsistence, not for the market. Agri-business plays a growing role in the dynamics of the rural areas, particularly contract farming and concessions for plantations (rubber, pulp wood, etc.). However, less than

Key Statistics for Lao PDR

Total population:	5.6 million
Population density:	24 per km ²
Rural population:	77%
Forest cover:	41%
Per capita income:	US\$491
Agric as portion of GDP:	47%
Farmers within workforce:	77%
Women within rural labour:	50%
<i>Source: GoL - 2005 Census</i>	

¹ The Vientiane Declaration, signed in November 2006, is a local version of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. More details here: <http://www.rtm.org.la/VT%20DeclarationOverview.php>

1% of agricultural production is being processed in Lao PDR. Main exports from the sector include: cattle, grain, NTFPs, timber, coffee and a variety of other products.

1.2.2 Rural poverty

About 2 million people are estimated to live in poverty. They are largely upland farmers belonging to ethnic minorities who depend on insecure livelihoods and live in remote and diverse environments. Most live in upland forested areas and often use swidden systems to produce upland rice and other crops. They also raise livestock. Some lowland poor have moved from upland areas where they were better-off. To compensate for rice shortages, they generate income by selling NTFPs, wildlife, small livestock, vegetables, handicraft products, and by hiring out family labour to wealthier farmers in their own or different villages. The agro-ecosystems of the poor are low-input rice based agricultural systems already stressed by external factors (mainly land use restrictions and natural hazards). Family labour is the main input. A lack of assets prevents them from contributing actively to development initiatives. However, they usually have a wealth of traditional knowledge about their environment.

Extension needs for the poorest are generally driven by the necessity to develop alternative production options to traditional swidden cultivation systems. A major challenge is to apply participatory approaches that gradually integrate traditional knowledge with new production techniques.

1.2.3 Potential contribution of extension

Agriculture and forestry extension can contribute to the development process by helping farmers to examine their problems and find the best way to manage their resources in any particular situation. The specific problems that can be addressed by extension are: (i) limited know-how of production techniques and inadequate access to innovative technology; (ii) lack of exposure to more productive farmers and their practices and to other potential opportunities for improvement; (iii) limited organizational development among farmers and capacity for collective action; (iv) insufficient understanding of markets, including information on prices and standards; (v) low educational level of farmers, resulting in insufficient understanding of basic scientific concepts that are relevant to agriculture.

In the current rapidly evolving agriculture and forestry business sector in Laos, investments in extension services, which enable small farmers in poor areas to benefit from the opportunities that the current dynamism offers, could be extremely profitable for the rural economy and the individual farmers.

1.3 *An evolving institutional environment*

1.3.1 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

As of October 2007, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) consists of 11 Departments each headed by a Director General, as follows:

- General Departments: Planning, Personnel, Inspection and the Permanent Secretary

- Technical Departments: Irrigation, Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Forest Inspection
- Service Departments: Research and Extension

At the national level, all Departments consist of a number of *Divisions* and *Centres* that are subdivided into *Units*. In addition, most Departments provide technical support to centres and units at the Provisional and District level that fall within the administrative responsibility of either the Provincial Agricultural and Forestry Office (PAFO) or District Agricultural and Forestry Office (DAFO). See Annex 3 for schematic of MAF organisational structure.

1.3.2 National Agriculture and Forestry Extension Service

NAFES was established in June 2001 as the apex organisation for agricultural and forestry extension. The current role of the NAFES can be summed up in one word: *guidance*. NAFES does not directly manage a national extension system, instead it performs three key functions that are designed to improve extension activities that are planned and implemented at the Provincial and District levels, as follows:

Coordination: monitoring of extension implementation, organising coordination meetings, management of extension projects and components;

Capacity-Building: compiling guidelines and tools, staff training, providing information services and materials, supporting innovation;

Capitalization: analyzing experience, identifying good practices, disseminating cases and lessons.

Following the re-organisation in October 2007, NAFES is now comprised of 4 divisions (Administration, Planning, Extension and Information, Stabilization of Shifting Cultivation) and 1 centre (the Houay Pamone Training Centre). In practice, however, much of the work of NAFES is organised according to projects. At the start of 2008 NAFES was responsible for implementing LEAP and 10 other projects.

1.3.3 Provincial level

Responsibilities for extension activities at the provincial level changed in 2006 and again in 2007. The first change saw the reorganisation of the Provincial Agriculture & Forestry Extension Service (PAFES) into a much smaller Provincial Agriculture & Forestry Extension Centres (PAFECs), both situated within the PAFO. The second change involved the dissolution of the PAFECs and – to replace them – the assignment to NAFES of a number of technical centres (eg. seed farms, fish hatcheries) that will now be used as a base for providing extension *and* technical services. The functions of these Provincial Extension and Technical Service Centres (PETS Centres) have been agreed but operational details were still being worked out, including staffing and financing. One major functions of the PETS is to provide support for centres at lower levels.

Three levels of Service Centres

- The Kumban Extension and Technical Service (KETS) Centres, know in MAF as *grandchild centres*.
- The District Extension and Technical Service (DETS) Centres, also known as *child centres*.
- The Provincial Extension and Technical Service (PETS) Centres, also known as *mother centres*.

1.3.4 District level and below

Between 2006 and 2007 an attempt was made to restructure the District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFOs) to become District Agriculture and Forestry Extension Offices (DAFEOs). This effort was abandoned in October 2007 and – as an alternative – the DAFOs will become responsible for supporting Service Centres at two levels: the District and the Kumban².

District centres will be managed by staff of the DAFO, and will function as frontline units for delivery of government services. Kumban centres can be seen as grassroots service providers operating under diverse management arrangements (community-organised, privately owned, project run)

An important function of the centres at all levels is the production and provision of inputs for farmers, including both *material inputs* (eg. seeds and animals) and *knowledge inputs* (eg. training and information).

The number of centres and the level of staffing will vary from place to place based on needs and available resources. At the time of preparing this document, MAF was aligning existing centres under the new system and identifying priority locations for establishment of new centres.

1.4 The extension situation in Laos and LEAP's contribution

1.4.1 Evolution of extension in Lao PDR

The evolution of extension in Lao PDR has been documented in a NAFES report entitled “Consolidating Extension in the Lao PDR” that was produced with the support of LEAP and published in June 2005.

The origins of the current government extension system date back to 1992 with the establishment of the Agricultural Extension Agency (AEA). The approach used at that time centred on ‘model families’ who would provide examples to others. District staff were required to identify progressive farmers, request them to use an intensive package of technology, and provide seed and fertilizer for the first year of production. To assist the model farmers, staff from AEA and/or districts often resided in the village to guide and supervise the model families.

Later in the 90’s a number of donor-funded projects demonstrated alternative approaches to extension. For example:

- The Pilot Extension Project (PEP) used participatory methods for needs assessment;
- The Farmer Irrigated Agriculture Training Project (FIAT) used a cascade training system;
- The Integrated Pest Management Project (IPM) used season-long training in farmer’s fields.

The creation of NAFES and the start of LEAP in 2001 provided an opportunity to assess what had been learned over the previous decade and combine the best practices.

² A kumban is a cluster of between 5 and 10 villages that have access to common services.

1.4.2 Purpose and achievements of LEAP to date

The main purpose of phase I of LEAP was to develop and test the procedures that would subsequently become known as the 'Lao Extension Approach' (LEA). Pilot activities were carried out in three provinces representing different agro-ecological zones:

- Champassak (Mekong valley, commercial)
- Salavane (plateau, subsistence)
- Luang Prabang (uplands, subsistence)

These activities included capacity building for both the 'Government Extension Service' (GES) which involves provincial and district staff, and the 'Village Extension System' (VES) which involves village leaders, farmers and volunteer extension workers (VEWs).

After successfully testing the Lao Extension Approach in Phase I, the main purpose of the next phase was to introduce this approach to all other Provinces in the country. In March 2007 the External Evaluation Team reported that the major achievements of Phase II were as follows:

- i) Adoption of LEA by the government as the official extension strategy
- ii) Successful first steps have been made towards harmonisation as other projects have also started to apply the LEA
- iii) The LEA has been introduced in at least one district in all 17 provinces close to 20'000 farmers have been reached
- iv) Most participating farmers have achieved substantial production increases
- v) Establishment and systematic strengthening of a pool of LEA trained extension staff in all provinces
- vi) Production and dissemination of different forms of extension and information materials.
- vii) Development of the concept "extension is for everyone" that integrates gender and social dimensions into the LEA
- viii) Establishment of the National Information Centre for Extension (NICE) within NAFES
- ix) Establishment of information links e.g. through the AIM working group, web platforms, informal alliance

The major shortcomings of Phase 2, as identified by the External Evaluation, were:

- i) Lack of pro-poor options
- ii) Limited success of the VES, particularly the VEWs
- iii) Unsatisfactory quality of training and coaching
- iv) Unresolved question of financing
- v) Insufficient leadership and coordination in NAFES

1.5 The Lao Extension Approach (LEA)

1.5.1 Understanding the LEA with '1-2-3'

The Lao Extension Approach (LEA) is a *framework* for implementing extension activities in Lao PDR that was endorsed by MAF in 2005. The approach can be understood in terms of one vision, two concepts and three features, or '1-2-3' for short.

The Lao Extension Approach has a single inclusive vision which is expressed in the phrase '*Extension for Everyone*'. Extension is for *all* farmers: rich and poor, men and women, from all ethnic groups, and regardless of literacy and educational level. This inclusive vision has been explained in a number of documents produced by LEAP, and has been presented during training at all levels, from the national to the village.

In order to translate vision into action, the LEA takes account of two concepts that are highly relevant to the Lao context: decentralisation and pluralism

Decentralisation is a central tenet of the Government's development policy. It means that Government assistance to farmers is planned and organised at the lowest possible level, with district staff responding to needs identified at the village level, provinces supporting the efforts of the districts, and coordination and capacity building at central level.

Pluralism is a consequence of both decentralization and the diversity of conditions in rural Laos. Pluralism means that different types of extension activities take place in different places, and these activities can change from year to year. It also means that many different actors should play a role in the provision of extension services, including the Government, the private sector and civil society organisations such as farmer associations.

The three operational features of the LEA which distinguish it from other extension approaches are as follows:

Participatory: extension processes should involve rural people in the planning and organization of their own learning and development activities;

Needs-based: extension subject matter should be based on an analysis of local constraints and opportunities, giving farmers a range of options;

Group-based: extension organisation should be based on groups at village and kumban level, with voluntary membership open to everybody.

1.5.2 Structural aspects of the LEA, from Villages to Kumbans

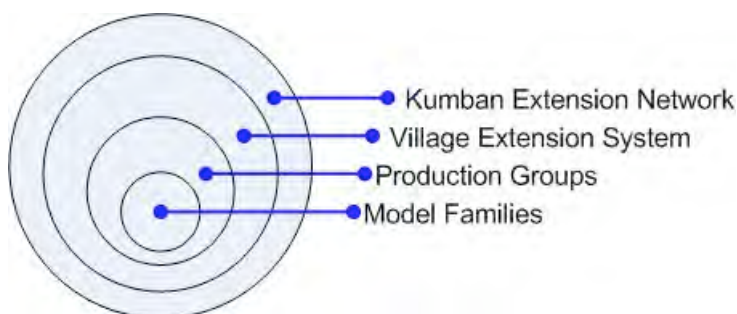
The operationalisation of the LEA is carried out through the establishment of the 'Village Extension System', or VES. The components of the VES are (i) Village authorities, (ii) Production Groups, (iii) Village Extension Workers (VEWs) and (iv) Learning Projects. In Phases I and II of LEAP, NAFES staff have initiated the establishment of the VES in more than 200 villages.

The attention given by the project to the formation of production groups was a significant step in the development of extension services in Laos, moving away from earlier approaches that emphasised model households. The attention given to capacity-building at the village level, which might encompass a number of different

production groups, was intended to be another step towards community-based management of extension activities.

The External Review in 2007 showed that the impact of LEAP at the village level was weaker than at the level of production groups, something that was expected in view of the speed with which the LEA has been scaled up. In Phase IV, LEAP will give further attention to strengthening the VES, working in partnership with other projects. This is a prerequisite for the next step in the evolution of the LEA, which is the creation Kumban Extension Networks.

The Kumban Extension Network is not a replacement for the VES, but a further development of the VES that brings together representatives from all of the villages in a particular kumban. Families, groups, villages and kumbans are intended to work together as layers of a larger community-driven system, as shown in this diagram.



This development is something that LEAP has supported for a number of years. As early as 2004, exchanges between villages were being organised as part of LEA pilot activities. A year later, the potential for extension activities at the Kumban level was acknowledged in the NAFES report on 'Consolidating Extension in Lao PDR'. By 2006, LEAP had produced detailed suggestions on 'Improving Extension Services at the Cluster Level', which incorporated experience from other projects. These suggestions included 6 services that could be performed by extension staff at the kumban level, as follows:

- a) Establishing the Village Extension System
- b) Organising Cluster Meetings with VEWs and other representatives
- c) Maintaining an Information Centre
- d) Organising Cluster Demonstrations
- e) Connecting producers with agribusiness stakeholders
- f) Conducting studies to identify new opportunities

In Phase IV, the project will further capitalise of the experience of other projects working at the kumban level, leading to the development of toolkits and training activities that will support the wider implementation of the services listed above.

1.6 LEAP in relation to policies of the Lao government and SDC

1.6.1 Lao government policies

LEAP relates to several important policy and strategy papers of the Lao Government. These include:

- (i) the "Lao PDR Strategic Vision for the Agricultural Sector", written in 1999, a key reference for the sector;

- (ii) the “National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES)”, issued in 2004, which, among others, identified the 72 poor districts out of 141 to receive priority assistance from the *Poverty Reduction Fund* (PRF) and other initiatives;
- (iii) Prime Minister’s instruction 01 of decentralization issued in March 2000, “regarding the policies to building the Province to become the strategic unit, the District as budget-planning unit, and the village as implementation unit”;
- (iv) Prime Minister’s Decree 135 “on the Formulation and Management of the Social and Economic Development Plan” on duties of the local administration and the adaptation of activities to the local situation;
- (v) Party’s instruction No 09/PB.CP from June 2004 which sets out guidelines for managing development at the kumban level.
- (vi) the “6th National Social and Economic Development Plan 2006-2010 (NSED 2006-2010)”, and
- (vii) the MAF Plan for 2006-2010 which spells out MAFs strategies to contribute to the implementation of the NESPD, including 4 goals and 13 measures.

1.6.2 The National Social and Economic Development Plan

The NSED 2006-2010 which is the most recent and complete relevant government policy, spells out a strategy for the transformation of the agriculture sector, which is designed to contribute to the overarching goal of poverty reduction and of moving out of the LDC (least developed country) status by 2020. The key themes of this strategy include: rural economic growth, reduction of poor households and malnourished children, eradicate seasonal hunger, participatory planning and implementation, enhancing productive capacity of rural people, enhancing economic opportunities and the enabling environment for businesses.

Regarding agriculture and forestry, the NSED emphasises the following: improve productivity through better technologies and access to markets, promote commodities and commercial farming, enhance food production in food-deficient areas, diversify the rural economy and develop economic opportunities for poor people in remote areas in according with their traditions.

The plan recognises gender equality as essential for poverty reduction, and suggests improving access of women to extension, support to economic activities of poor women, gender-segregated needs assessment, data collection and monitoring, inclusion of women in project activities, affirmative action in staffing including extension and increasing the number of women in capacity building activities as measures towards this.

It also stresses the need to improve public services as part of a public administration reform, and explicitly mentions extension services in this context. Measures for improvement are upgrading the level of professionalism and technical knowledge, participatory way of working, bringing services closer to people, modernising the management of services e.g. through ICTs, enhance productivity and motivation of staff, and sound financial management.

LEAP supports poverty reduction by contributing to the development of an extension system that is capable of assisting poor people to improve the productivity and profitability of their farming systems. The project is aligned to the key themes of the NSED poverty reduction strategy through its promotion of participatory approaches,

its focus on capacity building at different levels of the Government system, and its support for the commercialisation of agriculture. Annex 7 shows in detail how LEAP is contributing, and will continue to contribute in phase IV, to key themes in the NSEDP.

1.6.3 MAF's plan with 4 goals and 13 measures

Based on the NSEDP 2006-2010 and a party congress resolution on the Agro-Forestry Sector in July 2006, the MAF has produced a Plan for 2006-2010 with 4 goals (enhance food production, expand commodities and cash crops for export and local markets, stabilisation of shifting cultivation, sustainable forest resource management) and 13 implementation measures, to most of which LEAP contributes more or less directly.

Measure 4 is “promoting and providing technical services and staff training”, which is the core purpose of LEAP. Other measures are aimed at better planning and coordination in the agriculture and forestry sector, effective supply of necessary seed, fertilisers and other inputs, accelerating capacity building for production groups, enhance productivity through environmentally sound soil fertility management and animal husbandry practices, and increasing the production of both food crops and export commodities, and well managed implementation, monitoring and evaluation. LEAP contributes to the implementation of all of these measures.

The adoption of the LEA as the official extension approach of the GoL and the numerous ways in which LEAP contributes to government policies clearly show how LEAP is aligned with Lao development priorities and strategies, and that this alignment is far-reaching. Through engaging in policy dialogue, supporting the Lao institutions in coordination of donor and other interventions in the agriculture and forestry sector, and in assisting the GoL in encouraging other donors to support the expansion of the LEA, LEAP contributes also to the harmonisation of donor interventions in the country.

1.6.4 SDC policies

From SDC's side the central policy paper is the *Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Mekong Region 2007-11*, elaborated in 2006. LEAP IV is in line with this strategy. LEAP also contributes to SDC's intended contributions to outcomes at the country level formulated in the Framework for Monitoring for Development Results. This framework is a tool under development by SDC's East Asia division to monitor SDC's programmes for their contributions to specific MDGs and the respective goals of the partner countries' towards these.

Specifically, LEAP contributes to “an effective and accountable public administration that provides services to meet people's needs” through building technical and managerial capacity of the extension system at all levels, and through collaboration with GPAR Xiengkhoang in financial management and administration of extension, and through developing and mainstreaming of extension processes and contents that are adapted to more specific needs of the population in both lowland and upland areas.

Through changing from the fast introduction of LEA with full financial support in all provinces to the LEA expansion that will be managed by NAFES, less financial contribution from SDC and based on the interest and willingness of the provincial agencies themselves, LEAP encourages the ownership of the local agencies to

gradually take over the whole process, including fund raising, LEAP supports “Effective decentralisation supported and capacity of the public administration on local levels strengthened”.

Also issues such as “sustainable utilization of natural resources”, “interlink between agricultural research, extension and education system, “farmers are profiting from service provision (extension) modalities, which include private-public partnerships, and are linked to private agro-enterprises” are well integrated into the key activities of LEAP IV, for instance, through broadening the LEA menu with upland community livelihood development, participatory forestry approaches, harvesting and sharing good practices on agro-enterprises, marketing approaches for agri-business, and supporting information management and networking etc.

Annex 7 shows in detail how LEAP will be contributing in its phase IV, to SDC's contributions to development objectives of the GoL, and table 3 how LEAP will be contributing to MDGs.



Illustration: In some Districts, LEAP has been successful in increasing the involvement of women in extension activities, both as trainees and as trainers. In other Districts the level of participation remains very low. The reasons for these differences will be examined under component 5, with good practices being identified and shared to promote the vision of ‘extension for everyone’.

2 Project Strategy

2.1 Project goal and objective

The development goal of LEAP – in line with GoL priorities – is as follows:

To contribute to a high level of food security, reduced poverty in rural areas, inclusive economic growth, better productivity and profitability of agriculture/forestry through effective extension services.

The project objective remains the same as in the previous LEAP phases:

To contribute to the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that is capable of benefiting poorer households and communities, and reaches male and female farmers equally.

2.2 Phase components

Based on the achievements and lessons of previous phases, and the current context for extension in the country, Phase IV will have five components as follows:

Phase IV Components

1. Strengthening Management of Service Centres

Outcome: Managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge required to effectively plan and organise their work.

2. Strengthening Delivery of Technical Services

Outcome: Technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.

3. Strengthening Delivery of Training Services

Outcome: The Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery

4. Strengthening Delivery of Information Services

Outcome: Extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.

5. Capitalisation of Experience in Extension Delivery

Outcome: Good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.

A detailed breakdown of the five components is given in section 2.

2.3 Strategic considerations

2.3.1 Enhancing quality of service delivery, from LEA to LEA+

The need to improve the quality of extension services is an overriding consideration for the next Phase of LEAP.

The External Review of Phase II concluded that the major short-coming of the project was that “The speed and coverage with which LEA has been introduced has had its impact on the quality that could be achieved”. The review team went on to make the following recommendation: “It is therefore now time to move from the first stage to the second stage of LEA extension where the quality issue needs to be addressed. This mainly refers to the core issues of LEA becoming more demand-based, flexible and adapting, as well as giving sufficient attention to poverty, ethnic minorities and gender considerations”.

At the time of the external review, the project management identified five factors that determine the quality of extension delivery. These are shown in the box on the right.

The Review Team mentioned a ‘second stage’ of the LEA. This is been named ‘LEA plus’ or ‘LEA+’ by MAF. This combines all of the elements of the original LEA, *plus* the following improvements:

- more attention to the 5 determinants of quality;
- more attention to the role of technical service centres;
- more attention to planning and management at kumban level.

The following sections describe how this transition from LEA to LEA+ will be achieved during Phase IV.

2.3.2 Adopting a programmatic approach

Improvements in the quality of extension services cannot be achieved by one project working alone. This is especially important for projects such as LEAP that operate at the national level. In Phase II, LEAP activities expanded from 3 to 17 Provinces, without any increase in the number of Master Trainers or technical advisers. The only realistic way to improve quality in Phase IV is for LEAP to collaborate with other projects or organisations that have staff based in the Provinces. These projects will bring new methods and content into the LEA, making it more relevant to the local

5 Determinants of Quality

- Level of participation
- Extent of inclusiveness
- Localization of content
- Facilitation of community organising
- Integration with other programmes

Expected collaborators for implementing LEA+

- Governance and Public Administration Reform (GPAP) funded by SDC/UNDP)
- Poverty Alleviation in Remote Upland Areas (PARUA), funded by SDC/CARE
- Sustainable Agro-Enterprise Development in the Uplands (SADU), funded by SDC
- Upland Research and Capacity Development Programme (URDP), funded by SIDA
- Sustainable Forestry and Rural Development Project (SUFORD), World Bank/Finland
- Forest Management and Community Support Project (FORCOM), funded by JICA
- Northern Region Sustainable Livelihoods through Livestock Development (LDP), funded by ADB/SDC/IFAD
- Nam Ngum River Basin Development Project (NNRDB), ADB
- Smallholder Development Project (SHDP), funded by ADB

needs and opportunities, and they will be able to directly supervise activities at the District level and below. This is particularly important as the project begins to give more attention to communities living in remote areas.

A list of potential collaborators is given in the box. LEAP has contacts with each of these projects, although only in one case – with GPAR in Xieng Khuang – has there been substantial cooperation in the implementation of field activities so far. This experience has demonstrated the importance of programmatic planning at the provincial level, something that will be undertaken more systematically in Phase IV.

2.3.3 Capitalisation of field experience

There is a substantial amount of experiences and good practices in Laos that aims to improve the livelihoods of rural people. This experience comes from a wide range of sources: not only large aid projects, but also the work of mass organisations, universities and colleges, the private sector, small NGOs and a growing number of non profit associations. There is great opportunity for LEAP to capitalise on this experience for the further development of a pluralistic extension service.

Knowledge capitalization involves four interrelated processes, each of which will be undertaken in phase IV of LEAP:

- The *consolidation* of information from diverse sources
- The *extraction* of generalisations from a number of specific cases
- The *interpretation* and *sharing* of lessons drawn from past experience
- The *application* of experience-based knowledge in the planning of future activities

Capitalisation activities will be carried out through a series of mini-projects with a range of partner organisations. Example partners are listed in the box, although it is expected that a lot more will be identified during the implementation. Through a competitive process, partners will be selected who are addressing technical and organisational aspects of extension that have been previously neglected by LEAP, with an emphasis on the provision of better services to women, poorer households, and ethnic minorities in remote areas.

Example Partners for Capitalisation	
○	Lao Women's Union / Gender Resource Info & Development Center (LWU/GRID)
○	Micro-Finance Working Group (MFWG)
○	Sustainable Agriculture Forum (SAF)
○	National University of Laos / Faculty of Agriculture (NUoL/FoA)
○	Rural Research and Development Training Center (RRDTC)
○	Enterprise Development Company (EDC)
○	Village Focus International (VFI)
○	Vredeseilanden Laos (VECO)

The results of these partnerships will be 'harvested' by the project and fed into training and information activities carried out by LEAP and collaborating projects.

2.3.4 Using 'menus' as a strategy for integration

In Phase IV, LEAP will integrate the LEA and the Technical Service Centres by means of 'extension menus' as explained below. This strategy will enable the LEA to become an area-based approach that involves both research and extension staff in the identification of problems and opportunities which are subsequently addressed through a wider range of services than at the present time.

What are menus? An extension menu is a set of topics that are offered to farmers. Each topic on the menu is associated with one or more services: training, demonstrations, group facilitation, input supply etc. Different geographical areas have different menus, and they are revised year-by-year.

Creating menus: Menus are created as a result of studies (farming systems, market chains etc) and stakeholder meetings (farmers, traders, researchers etc). Provincial staff take the lead in creating menus. Provincial staff also ensure that capacity to deliver services based on the menus is available at the District and Kumban level.

Using menus: Groups of farmers select the topics and services that they want. District staff take the lead in delivering these services to farmer groups. At the village level, services are often bundled together in the form of 'learning projects'. Village extension workers (VEWs) help to multiply the impact of these learning projects.

Compared to the open-ended LEA that is currently in operation, the menu-driven strategy has a number of advantages:

- Technical Service Centres have clearly defined roles in extension delivery
- Planning of extension services can be carried out more systematically
- Services will be matched to problems and opportunities
- Different types of services will be integrated (eg. training with input supply)
- The activities of different projects will be more easily coordinated
- Capacity building will be better focused
- Monitoring and evaluation will be easier

While realizing these advantages, LEAP does not intend to reduce the level of farmer participation in the Village Extension System. Rather, it is expected that the menu strategy will provide a framework for *more effective participation*. Further details of the menu-driven strategy are given in Annex 9.

2.3.5 Using 'tool-kits' as a basis for capacity-building

In Phase IV, LEAP will support NAFES in developing the capacity for extension planning and management by producing a set of *tool-kits* for staff at different levels.

A toolkit is a set of concepts, cases, procedures and forms that are designed to help staff perform certain functions. A toolkit for agricultural extension already exists, having been developed in an earlier Phase of LEAP. The following are examples of new toolkits that are needed for the further improvement of the extension service:

- a extension planning toolkit (incl. procedures for menu-driven LEA),
- a monitoring and evaluation toolkit,
- a savings and credit toolkit;
- a input facilitation toolkit
- a market chain support toolkit.

In some cases, LEAP does not need to develop new tools, rather it should compile tools that have already been tested under different projects and subsequently assessed as part of a capitalisation process. Once they are prepared, the toolkits will provide a basis for further staff training.

2.3.6 Collaboration between research, extension and education

In Phases II and III, LEAP played a important role in promoting better link between extension and research by organizing a national conference on the issue and subsequently convening the Agricultural Information Management (AIM) working group. The working group brought together staff of NAFES and NAFRI in a range of activities including a series of workshops at the regional level and the joint production of extension materials.

In Phase IV, LEAP will continue to support activities carried out in collaboration with NAFRI under the auspices of the AIM working group, including the design of priority extension materials and the strengthening of provincial capacity for information management. In addition, the link between research and extension will be given considerable attention in the development of area-based menus; NAFRI have tested a number of tools that can be used at the kumban level.

Past collaboration with the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA) at the National University of Laos has included hosting 12 bachelors students who completed studies of extension impact in three provinces. In Phase IV, the role of the FoA in impact assessment will be further developed, with a series of annual studies in selected locations. Attention will also be given to improving links between NAFES and the agricultural colleges, with a focus on curriculum development.

In December 2007, representatives from NAFRI, NAFES, NUoL and a number of NGOs produced the Dongdok Statement on Access to Information for Development (Dongdok SAID). The statement provides a vision and specific commitments for further action in the area of information management.

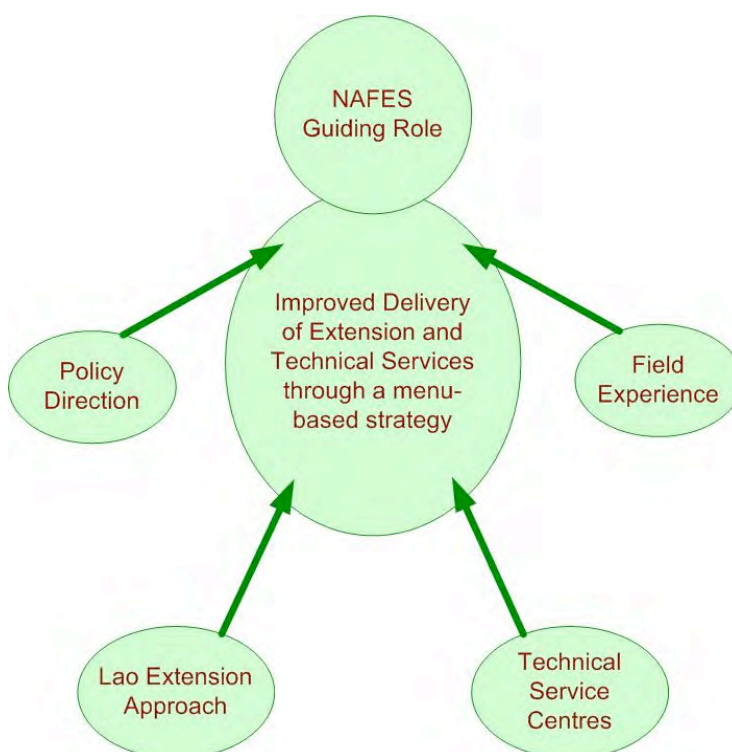
2.3.7 Relationship between key ideas in Phase IV

The diagram on the right summarises the relationship between some of the key ideas from sections 2 and 3 of this document.

At the *head* of the extension system is NAFES, which plays a guiding role for what happens at other levels.

The delivery of services provides the *body* of the system, which rests on the *two feet* mentioned by the Minister: the Lao Extension Approach and the Technical Service Centres.

The development of this body is fed by Policy Direction on the *right hand*, and by Field Experience on the *left hand*.



3 Key Elements of the Project

Component 1: Strengthening Management of Service Centres

Outcome 1. Managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge and skills required to effectively plan and organise their work.

End of Phase (EoP) Indicators:

Improved procedures for planning, managing and monitoring extension services have been adopted – at least partially – in at least 5 Provinces and 25 Districts.

Output 1.1 Head of agriculture offices and service centres at Provincial and District level have a better understanding of roles, responsibilities and procedures for planning and management of extension services

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 1.1.1 Compile at least three new toolkits for planning and managing extension services based on organisational mandates, staff ToRs and a performance review.
- 1.1.2 Heads of all PAFOs and PETS receive toolkits and training in their use.
- 1.1.3 Heads of all DAFO and DETS are provided with toolkits.

Output 1.2 Heads of service centres have opportunities to carry out planning in a coordinated and programmatic manner

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 1.2.1 Annual extension conference is conducted for all PAFO/PETS heads at national level.
- 1.2.2 Annual R & E planning meetings are held in at least 5 Provinces.
- 1.2.3 Annual or seasonal extension partners meetings are held at the District level in at least 25 Districts by EoP.

Output 1.3 A nation-wide system of monitoring extension activities is in operation

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 1.3.1 NAFES develops and maintains the Kumban Database, with information on at least 200 kumbans by EoP.
- 1.3.2 NAFES develops and maintains the Project Archive, including key documents from all projects based at NAFES.
- 1.3.3 Reporting procedures for PETS and DETS are agreed and implemented by at least 5 Provinces and 25 Districts by EoP.
- 1.3.4 Planning Division at NAFES produces annual report on extension delivery starting 2009.

Output 1.4 Options for financing the service centres and extension activities have been assessed

Activities and Operational Indicators::

- 1.4.1 Study completed on financing options, and findings presented to national stakeholders.
- 1.4.2 Strategy for long-term financing of extension services is prepared and agreed by MAF and Ministry of Finance.
- 1.4.3 GoL-managed budgets are being used to fund LEA+ extension activities in 3 Provinces (a total of at least 6 Districts)

Assumptions

- Organisational structures and mandate are not drastically changed, thereby undermining the validity of the new procedures and the benefits of staff training;
- New procedures and tools are actually used by provincial and district staff

Component 2: Strengthening Delivery of Technical Services

Outcome 2. Technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.

End of Phase (EoP) Indicators:

Procedures for facilitating a) the supply of inputs and credit, b) the development of market chains and c) the establishment of community-managed service centres, have been developed and/or tested in remote kumbans of at least three provinces.

Output 2.1 Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the supply of inputs required by farmers in selected poor and remote areas.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 2.1.1 Procedures for assessment of input chains and services are developed and tested in remote kumbans in at least 3 Provinces.
- 2.1.2 Based on the above assessment, Kumban level plans for improving input supply and services are agreed and progress monitored by community representatives in the selected locations.
- 2.1.3 The experience gained from 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 has been documented and disseminated to all other Provinces.

Output 2.2 Staff of PETS and DETS understand the options for rural savings and credit, and can offer appropriate advice to farmer groups.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 2.2.1 Best practices for rural savings and credit are identified, and discussion carried out on the role of extension staff in these processes.
- 2.2.2 A savings and credit toolkit is produced and disseminated to all PETS and DETS.

Output 2.3 Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the development of market chains in poor and remote areas.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 2.3.1 Training in area-based development of market chains (AEDP) is conducted for PETS and DETS staff in selected areas (same as for 2.1).
- 2.3.2 The AEDP process is implemented at the kumban level, facilitated by extension staff.

Output 2.4 Community-managed KETS have been established in selected poor and remote areas.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 2.4.1 Cases of facilities managed by community representatives at the inter-village or kumban level are identified (anywhere in Laos), documented and assessed.
- 2.4.2 Consultations are carried out in selected areas (same kumbans as for 2.1. and 2.3) leading to a community-owned plans for construction and management of low-cost facilities that will expedite extension activities in the area.
- 2.4.3 The construction of up to 6 community-managed KETS are co-financed by EoP.
- 2.4.4 The utilisation of the centres is monitored, documented and lessons learned are shared with stakeholders at national level.

Assumptions

- Other projects are willing to collaborate on community-based activities
- Extension managers or staff are willing to play a facilitating role for input supply and marketing, rather than seeing this as a revenue-generating opportunity
- Local authorities are willing to allow community-managed KETS.

Component 3: Strengthening Delivery of Training Services

Outcome 3. The Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery.

End of Phase (EoP) Indicators:

The LEA is operational in at least half of the Districts on the Government's list of 72 Poor Districts.

Output 3.1 The basic Lao Extension Approach has been introduced into all Provinces, in accordance with the strategy agreed by NAFES in 2005.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 3.1.1 Completion of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 4 Provinces in 2006.
- 3.1.2 Completion of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 5 Provinces in 2007.

Output 3.2 An improved version of the LEA has been introduced into selected poor and remote areas.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 3.2.1 Complete the testing of procedures for planning and managing LEA+ (kumban based, opportunity oriented, menu-driven) as started in the Alignment phase.
- 3.2.2 Document and disseminate the procedures for LEA+ to all PETS and KETS.
- 3.2.3 Support further expansion of LEA+ in at least 20 Districts by EoP based on a competitive procedure that focuses on poor and remote areas.

Output 3.3 The technical content of training carried out under the LEA has been greatly expanded.

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 3.3.1 Curriculum development workshops are conducted in at least 5 Provinces, involving both extension and research staff, in order to expand the farmer training menu in areas covered under 3.2 in a manner that promotes 'extension for everyone'.
- 3.3.2 PAFO and PETS staff provide training and back-stopping to District staff who are implementing new training modules.
- 3.3.3 The benefits of new training modules on farmer production and income are assessed through both participatory M&E and independent impact studies.

Output 3.4 The pool of LEA trainers has been expanded and upgraded

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 3.4.1 Training of trainers workshops for at least 60 new staff by EoP from Provinces and Districts in support of outcomes 3.2 and 3.3.
- 3.4.2 Refresher training carried out for at least 40 Provincial and District staff originally trained under Phases I and II.
- 3.4.3 Advanced skills training for at least 5 NAFES staff in areas relating to training methods, curriculum development, and HRD.
- 3.4.4 Institutionalizing a process for certifying LEA Master Trainer.

Assumptions

- National and Provincial staff who were involved in previous phases of the project will continue to perform the functions for which they were trained.
- District staff are willing and able to work with poor communities in remote areas.

Component 4: Strengthening Delivery of Information Services

Outcome 4. Extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.

End of Phase (EoP) Indicators:

Relevant information materials on at least 5 new topics are supplied to staff in all provinces, while at least 5 provinces have established a system for improved management of information.

Output 4.1 Information services have been institutionalised within the extension structure

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 4.1.1 Guidelines for establishment and management of information units within service centres are developed and disseminated across the country.
- 4.1.2 Information units are actually established in at least 5 Provincial and 10 District service centres by EoP, each with trained staff, links to other actors in the information system, and a set of basic materials.
- 4.1.3 The concept of a 'call centre' is tested in at least two of the supported centres, and the results are monitored and evaluated.

Output 4.2 Information materials for priority topics have been produced and disseminated

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 4.2.1 Priority topics are identified as a result of activities under 3.2 and 3.3, and an annual production plan is produced by NAFES.
- 4.2.2 At least two information products are developed and disseminated each year in accordance with the 'NICE communication strategy' that was tested in Phase II, involving staff at both national and provincial level.
- 4.2.3 A 'wisdom bag' will be supplied to at least 200 kumbans, and the use and impact will be evaluated in selected locations by EoP.

Output 4.3 The agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) at the national level has been enhanced

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 4.3.1 Advanced skills training for at least 5 NAFES staff in areas relating to media production, ICT, and knowledge management.
- 4.3.2 Regular cooperation among the members of the Agricultural Information Management (AIM) working group, with at least two collaborative events per year
- 4.3.3 Production and dissemination of the NAFES newsletter to all Provincial and District offices, at least twice per year.
- 4.3.4 Collaboration with Agricultural Colleges and the Faculty of Agriculture at National University in curriculum development and information sharing related to extension
- 4.3.5 Continued support for online discussion groups with at least 50,000 exchanges per month (i.e. messages x members)

Assumptions

- Information materials reach the intended audience and are actually used

Component 5: Capitalisation of Experience in Extension Delivery

Outcome 5. Good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.

End of Phase (EoP) Indicators:

At least 10 cases will have been disseminated that illustrate opportunities for extension delivery that meets the needs of women, the poor, or those living in remote areas; and at least 5 cases that address emerging opportunities and problems related to resource management and agribusiness.

Output 5.1 Partnerships are established in order to capture good practices

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 5.1.1 Procedures and criteria for the management of a competitive grant fund are developed by project management and approved by the steering committee.
- 5.1.2 Proposals for mini-projects are solicited and appraised by project management, and grants are awarded to between 5 and 10 partners per year.
- 5.1.3 Partners carry out field work, document their activities and share results in the form of reports, videos, exchange visits and workshops (at least 10 such events per year).

Output 5.2 Lessons from extension delivery are consolidated and compared

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 5.2.1 Thematic workshops are held once per year to share experiences among a range of projects and partners on a key issue approved by the project steering committee.
- 5.2.2 Consultants are hired to help organise the thematic workshop, including the production of a report that synthesizes the experiences that are presented.

Output 5.3 Innovative examples of extension are recognised by NAFES

Activities and Operational Indicators:

- 5.3.1 Procedures and criteria for identifying innovative extension activities are developed by project management and approved by NAFES
- 5.3.2 Nominations are solicited from Provincial and District Extension staff, scrutinised by a national committee which selects the winners
- 5.3.3 Awards are given and publicized, and awardees make presentations at the national extension conference.

Assumptions

- Potential partners will submit proposals that meet the agreed criteria

4 Implementing Arrangements

4.1 *Implementing partners*

The project agreement for LEAP will be concluded between SDC representing the Government of Switzerland and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) representing the Government of Lao PDR.

LEAP will continue to be implemented jointly by a Lao government partner – NAFES – and a partner mandated by SDC to provide technical assistance – Helvetas. As mentioned in the sections on the individual components, the division of responsibilities among the two partners differs between components.

4.1.1 NAFES

Within NAFES, day-to-day responsibility for project management rests with the National Project Director (NPD). In Phases I and II, the NPD was Head of the Central Extension and Training Development Unit (CETDU). In this role he had direct command over a team of between eight and ten staff who acted as Master Trainers. In addition, a Deputy DG of NAFES was appointed as Project Advisor who participated in meetings of the Project Management Team and the Steering Committee. Further support came from two NAFES accountants who assisted with financial supervision and reporting.

In October 2007, the NPD was promoted to Deputy DG while retaining responsibility for LEAP during Phase IV. The Master Trainers are now working under the Extension and Information Division (see 1.3.2). The Planning Division of NAFES will also be represented on the Project Management Team, with a special responsibility for M&E under Component 1 and capitalisation under Component 5.

The number of Master Trainers has been a constraint since the project started. At least 8 of the people trained under previous phases will continue to work full-time on LEAP activities at the national level, but a substantial increase is not expected in Phase IV. The constraint arises from the policy of the Public Administration and Civil Service Authority (PACSA) which wants to avoid having too much personnel at the central level and – instead - focuses on capacity building at province level. In line with this policy, LEAP IV will continue to provide training, coaching and material support for staff at the Provincial and District levels. A process for certifying LEA Master trainers at the Provincial level will be included.

4.1.2 Helvetas TA team

The TA team will continue to consist of two expatriate advisers (see Annex 13 for TORs.) In addition there will be three Lao thematic specialists and a number of support staff (finance manager/accountant, administrator, secretaries, driver). The division of responsibilities is shown in the following table.

Resources are also available for contracting in international and local consultants as required. Areas in which external support is likely to provide added value include e.g. M&E, knowledge management, marketing and agribusiness, and pro-poor extension.

4.2 Other partners

Responsibilities of TA team members	Project Components				
	Strengthen Management of Services	Strengthen Technical Delivery	Strengthen Training Delivery	Strengthen Information Delivery	Capitalisation of Extension Experience
Expatriate CTA: Institutional Dev.					
Expatriate: Human Resources					
Lao: Knowledge Management					
Lao: Community Development					
Lao: Info Technology					

The strategy for Phase IV includes partnerships for capitalisation of experience (see 2.3.3), and collaboration with other projects for implementation of the LEA+ (see 2.3.2).

In selecting partners and collaborators, the LEAP management will solicit proposals from provinces, projects, NGOs etc. Having already introduced the LEA into all 17 Provinces, it is no longer the aim of the project to act as a driver for the approach across the country, rather LEAP will 'work with the willing' on making the approach more effective in specific situations. Partners are expected to come forward with their own ideas before receiving support.

Human resource capability will be an important criteria for accepting proposals from collaborating provinces and projects. Provincial agricultural offices (PAFO and/or PETS) need to assign at least two staff who were trained under previous phases of LEAP, and a team of at least 3 staff at the District level, if they are to receive funding for expansion to new Districts. Assuming project implementation in 5 Provinces and 25 Districts, there will be at least 85 Government staff involved in LEAP activities during Phase IV.

Farming families and the Village Extension System. As for any extension system, farming families are the ultimate partners. Village Extension Workers are key partners in the LEA, as link between the farming families and the government extension system. LEAP indirectly supports their capacity building.

DAFOs/DETS centres. District staff are the frontline extension workers of the government extension system. More of them will undergo the LEA capacity building process provided by LEAP.

PAFOs/PETS centres. Provincial managers and subject matter specialists are key partners in managing the LEA expansion process. Selected PETS staff will be supported in becoming Master Trainers, with an important role in providing coaching and technical backstopping to DETS.

MAF. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is a key partner at the policy and strategic level. MAF is also an important partner in mobilising support for the LEA from other donors and the country's leadership.

NAFRI. NAFRI is a key partner in know-how and information management, and a contributor of specialist know-how on many topics.

Other projects and NGOs. They can be direct LEAP partners in chiefly in two ways: (i) as a collaborating organisation that is funding and supervising LEA+ in the Districts where they are operating, and (ii) as a partner in capitalisation activities funded by LEAP mini-projects under component 5.

Private sector. There are many private sector actors – small- and large-scale – operating in the agriculture and forestry sector of Laos. They are indirect LEAP partners simply through their links with the farming community, but may become LEAP partners in cases where they are involved in capitalisation of interesting experiences and good practices.

4.3 Project steering

4.3.1 Steering Committee

The implementation of LEAP will continue to be overseen by a Steering Committee. The committee will meet normally twice a year. Extraordinary meetings may be called if an urgent need arises. The composition of the Steering Committee and its mode of operation are given in Annex 12.

4.3.2 Project Management Team

A Project Management Team is in charge of strategic direction, executive management and coordination of all LEAP activities. It consists of the following five persons:

- National Project Director (NPD), Deputy DG of NAFES
- Deputy Head of the Extension and Information Division of NAFES (Dep Ext)
- Deputy Head of the Planning Division of NAFES (Dep Plan)
- Chief Technical Adviser (CTA)
- Technical Adviser (TA)

Continuity and gender balance are important considerations in the appointment of NAFES staff to the Project Management Team.

Formal meetings of the Team take place at least once every two months. The meetings will cover scheduling of activities, delegation of tasks, approval for major purchases and contracts, operational problem-solving and coordination with other projects and organisations. This includes agreement on collaborators, partners and consultants. Minutes will be produced for each meeting, including a summary of discussion and detail of all decisions taken.

Problems that cannot be solved by the Project Management Team will be deferred to the Steering Committee

Between meetings of the Project Management Team, day-to-day responsibility for operational decisions will be as shown in the following table.

Area of responsibility (showing relevant project components)	Responsible persons	
	NAFES	Helvetas
Coordination with MAF, SDC, other projects etc (all)	NPD	CTA
Financial management, incl. approval of contracts (all)	NPD	CTA
Management training, provincial meetings (C1)	NPD	TA
Development of M&E system (C1)	Dep Plan	CTA
Mechanisms for tech services in remote areas (C2)	NPD	CTA
LEA expansion and upgrading Master Trainers (C3)	Dep Ext	TA
Establishment of info units, produce info materials (C4)	Dep Ext	TA
Capitalisation mini-projects (C5)	Dep Plan	CTA

4.4 Role of Helvetas Programme and Head Office

Helvetas Head Office has the overall responsibility towards SDC for the implementation of the project in conformity with the agreement between Switzerland and Lao PDR, with the project document and with the contract between SDC and Helvetas.

The specific roles within Helvetas can be described as follows:

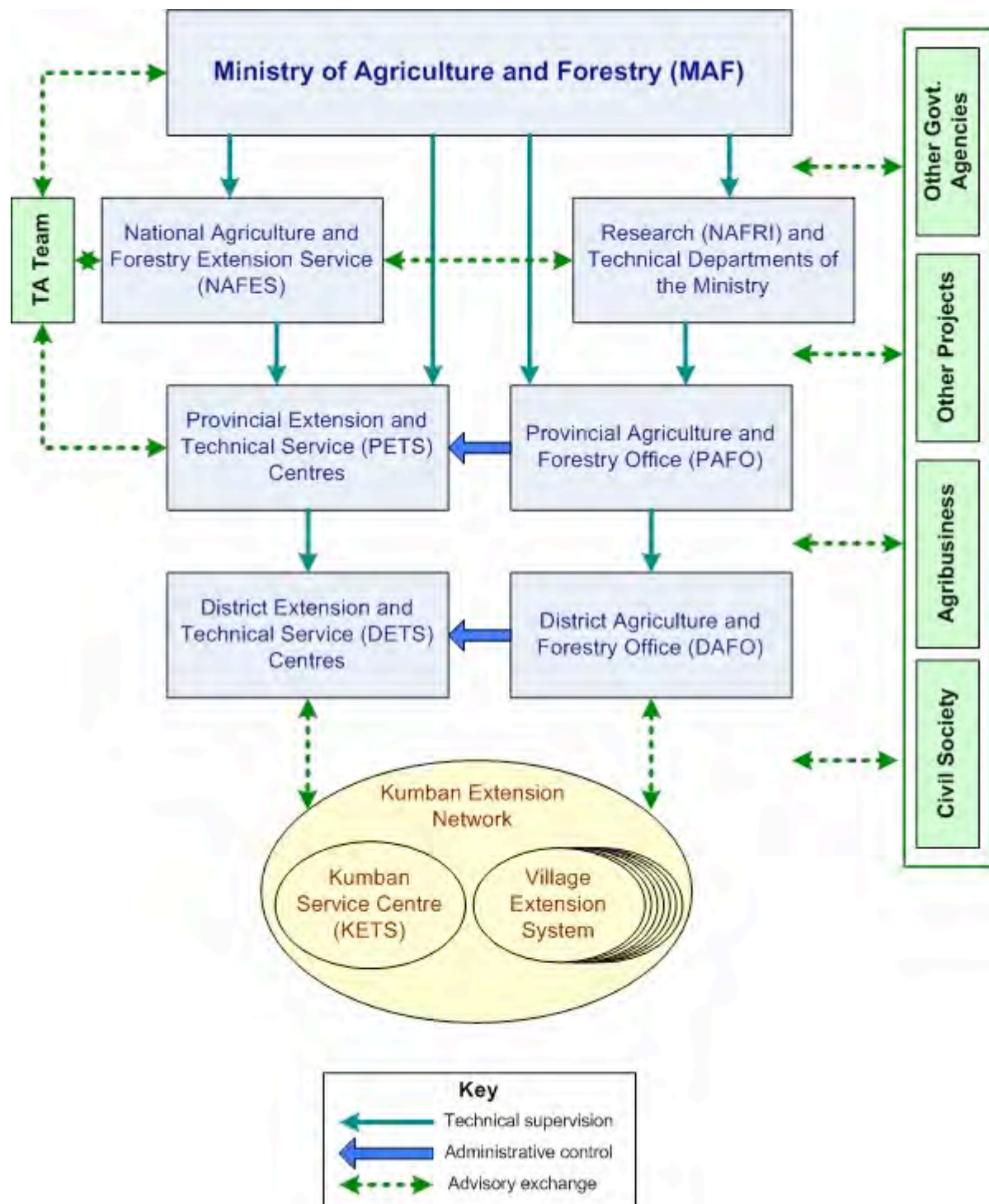
The **programme director (PD - Vientiane)** follows the development of the project through periodic interaction with the TA team of Helvetas and liaison with the SDC Country Office. The PD participates in strategic discussions, represents Helvetas in the respective Steering Committee, provides personal coaching to the project managers, assures conformity with internal Helvetas administrative procedures and a smooth flow of information.

The **programme coordinator (PC - Zurich)** follows the development of the project through periodic interaction with the PD, the annual project visit and participating in review processes. The PC reports to SDC in Bern on the progress of the project and also informs interested parties in Switzerland regarding the development and impact of the project. The PC – in coordination with the human resources department -is responsible for the recruitment and subsequent human resources management and development of expatriate staff as well as the identification, recruitment, thematic and administrative guidance of international consultants.

On specific occasions (new phases, reviews, evaluations, impact studies) the **thematic section** is providing thematic advice based on profound and specific experience, skills and knowledge and an own **knowledge management system** with a pool of resources persons, communities of practices and specific documents.

The **finance section** of Helvetas Head Office provides overall controlling services to the project, reports to SDC on the use of funds, consolidates and audits project accounts, and ensures the flow of funds between Switzerland and Lao PDR.

4.5 Overview of project actors and links between them



5 Controlling

5.1 *Project Monitoring*

When discussing monitoring in the context of LEAP, we have to distinguish between monitoring LEAP-funded activities and monitoring the implementation of the LEA in general. In Phase II, LEAP monitoring concentrated on supporting the Lao partners in monitoring LEA activities within the framework of LEAP, i.e. a mixture of both types. Consequently the project did not have a precise measure of the progress being made towards the achievement of the project objectives, nor did it have a full picture of LEA implementation across the country, especially where it had been introduced with the support of other projects.

Project monitoring in Phase IV will focus on the 5 outcomes and 18 outputs that have been specified in the Key Elements (see section 3 above). Qualitative and/or quantitative indicators have been specified for each objective and outcome. Progress towards these targets will be summarised in each semi-annual report, and assessed at each meeting of the steering committee.

The mean of verification for the targets are:

- Enumeration of outputs, including type and quantity of trainees, toolkits etc.
- Reports of project activities produced by staff, consultants, collaborators and partners.
- Routine field observations and interviews with staff and farmers

5.2 *Project Reporting*

The NPD and his staff prepare, with assistance by the TA team, semi-annual reports. These reports should contain activities conducted and outcomes achieved, an assessment of the progress made, emerging issues that require discussions and possibly adjustments in design and operational arrangements, a financial report, and a proposed work plan for the following half year. These reports are submitted to the steering committee and provide the basis for discussions at the steering committee meetings and decisions on changes by the steering committee.

5.3 *Project Evaluation*

The project will annually review its performance in a participatory process involving all relevant actors, and adjust strategic and operational directions if necessary. This annual review process may be accompanied by an external facilitator who would also function as an external sounding board.

Towards the end of year two, the self-assessment will be combined with a light external review, with a particular look at the progress regarding government extension and financial management systems (component 1) and at the long-term funding prospects.

Early in year 4, (2011), a participatory external review will be contracted by SDC to pave the way for planning phase V.

5.4 Extension Monitoring

Strictly speaking, the development of an M&E system for NAFES is part of LEAP's capacity-building efforts (see component 1) rather than part of the project control procedures. Nevertheless, the importance of the system justifies some comments.

In phase IV, LEAP will assist the Lao partners in establishing a monitoring system that works at all levels from the villages and kumbans, over district and provinces up to the central level for all LEA-related activities. These activities will be centred on the Planning Division of NAFES, with links to the Planning Department at MAF.

LEAP has already invested considerable efforts in developing a participatory monitoring system. But the STAR system promoted by LEAP is – to date - not appreciated nor used very much. The project will identify the exact reasons for this and, based on the findings, adjust and further elaborate the system or develop a new system that will be included in the toolkits under component 1.

The project will also build on the pilot Kumban Database (KB-DB) that was tested during the Alignment Phase as a means for integrating information about the LEA coverage, the operationalisation of technical service centres and emerging agribusiness opportunities.

As with any monitoring system, there is a dilemma between the desire to have a practical system and the urge to collect as much information as possible. The failure of past efforts suggests that the system at NAFES should start by being *as simple as possible*. Better to have a system that collects information on 2 or 3 indicators from every Kumban, than a system that collects information on 20 or 30 indicators from only a handful of locations. Once a simple system is operational, the number and type of indicators can be increased.

5.5 Extension Outcomes and Impact

The monitoring of any extension system inevitably focuses on activities and outputs. It is also important, however, for the Government and donors to pay attention to outcomes and impact.

It is at the level of *outcomes* that the project will attempt to strengthen the accountability of the extension service towards the rural community. Stakeholder consultations will be held at three levels: village, kumban and district, to give local stakeholders a say in the planning of extension activities *and* for them to assess outcomes.

The efforts made by LEAP to measure the *impact* of the LEA during Phase II and the Alignment period were generally unsatisfactory, but lessons were learned that can be applied during phase IV. It is now recognised that reliable impact data cannot be drawn from the monitoring system, nor can impact be assessed in a one-off study. Instead, the project will support a series of independent studies, starting with

baseline data collection in selected communities within the first 6 months of Phase IV, followed by at least two surveys in the same communities at intervals of one year.

Indicators will be identified from the following categories:

- Production and income
- Food security and nutrition
- Organisation and empowerment

Data for all indicators will be disaggregated according to gender, ethnicity and wealth category.

The impact assessment will be mandated to a team of experts (local and international) and involve key persons from the Project Management Team. The results will be presented at Steering Committee Meetings *and* shared more widely to provide lessons to the Government and development partners about the contribution of extension to the achievement of policy goals.



Illustration: Poor access to inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and vaccines is a big problem for farmers living in remote areas. LEAP will explore innovative ways of solving this problem under component 2. The project will not directly supply inputs to farmers, nor will it encourage the Government to play this role, but it will test procedures for the assessment of input chains, and develop ways of facilitating collaborative action among Government, private sector and community stakeholders.

6 Risks

Sustainable funding

LEAP provides funding for field allowances and fuel expenses of involved Provincial and district staff during the LEA introduction process in areas where no other donors/projects can be mobilised. This is done under the assumption that the more the LEA proves its effectiveness and relevance, the motivation of the provinces and districts to allocate operational funds to extension will gradually increase, as they see the benefits not only for villagers directly, but for the local economy in general. Also village development funds, revenue from community forest management etc. are envisaged to contribute to funding the extension system on a longer term. There is a risk, however, that the economic conditions are such, that benefits of extension are not very evident, or that province, district and village decision makers have other priorities, with the consequence that once LEAP support is terminated, the available operational funds for extension drop to the current very meagre level, which is not conducive for regular, effective extension work in villages. To minimise the risk, LEAP will continually engage the Lao partners and the other donors in a dialogue on sustainable funding issues and options

Quality and overstretching of human resources

The rapid expansion of LEA in phase II has affected quality. Although, phase IV emphasises the need for quality, due to pressure for further expansion and overstretching of the available human resources, quality may again be at risk. In all the components of this project document there is substantial latitude regarding the quantity of work to be done. The project management will have to take care to set priorities well and to defend an adequately slow speed.

Insufficient Master Trainer capacity

At present, NAFES has eight LEA Master Trainers who are the real implementers of LEAP, and their capacity has been totally overstretched. Already in phase I and throughout phase II there was a discussion between the LEAP and the government that more Master Trainer capacity is required, however, the number was reduced instead of increased. Also, only a few of the MTs are experienced and senior persons, which is essential to have good credibility in provinces. There is a risk that again the GoL will not be able or willing to deploy more adequate human resources. LEAP will in the first year of the new phase put a lot of emphasis on building MT and information management capacity in the Provincial level, as a basis for good quality expansion in the following years, and to reduce dependence on National MTs. This is in line with the decentralisation principles of the government. The additional local staff in the TA team constitute some additional human resources available for project implementation at all levels.

Failure to reach the poor

LEAP will give special attention to enable LEA+ to provide beneficial services to the poor, through

- the selection of kumbans for establishment of service centres under component 2

- the selection of Districts for further expansion of the LEA under component 3
- the selection of topics for new information materials under component 4
- the selection of cases for capitalisation under component 5.

Despite these efforts, there is however the risk that efforts to reach poor communities will still fail, because a) there are no suitable experiences for capitalisation, b) field staff are unwilling or unable to work in remote areas, c) the needs of poor communities are not prioritised by local authorities compared to more commercially-oriented extension. In case of lack of suitable experiences, LEAP will fund exploratory action research to identify and develop such experiences. To ensure mainstreaming of experiences, components 3 and 4 will transform good practices into information materials and training activities. Further options for working in remote areas will be considered, such as paying stipends to volunteers from ethnic minorities. Further, the project will encourage the use of wealth-segregated monitoring and evaluation will show successes and failures in reaching the poor.

Lack of commitment for systematic extension management at central level

Building extension management functions into the LEA system (component 1) appeared already in the project designs of phase I and phase II under the label of NAFES organisational and institutional development. However, the planned activities were not systematically implemented. Consequently, the project will shift attention to strengthening management at the provinces and districts, which is far more relevant to the delivery of extension services.

Inadequate transparency in management of the expansion process by GoL

Latest by the end of 2009, the administration and financial management of regular LEA training activities should be fully transferred to GoL actors. There is a risk that there will be all kinds of pressures resulting in insufficient transparency in the allocation of funds to districts and the selection of villages to be covered by LEAP funds. By assisting NAFES, PAFO/PETS and DAFOs in establishing sound and transparent management procedures and building the necessary capacity, this risk should be minimised.

Decline of support for LEA

Although there are a range of cases where other donor-funded projects have funded and are funding LEA expansion, there is a risk that this support for the LEA may not continue. The project and the government will undertake a whole range of activities to mobilise support for LEA, but donors tend to change priorities frequently, and existing projects will be completed and new ones come up, possibly with different goals. Without the collaboration of other projects, the LEA expansion will be largely limited to what can be funded from LEAP resources and thus the speed will be slow. Apart from continuous support to LEA-related policy dialogue, LEAP will equip the provinces with evidence and instruments to promote the LEA with projects in their area.

7 Budget summary

All figures in Swiss Francs (CHF)

Lines of Activity	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Operational Cost						
C1 - Strengthen Management	79,970	100,390	100,640	73,640	18,870	373,510
C2 - Technical Services	20,914	124,978	116,878	34,678	9,264	306,712
C3 - Training Services	92,814	207,378	228,878	157,378	38,314	724,762
C4 - Information	45,408	93,316	94,316	91,216	35,908	360,164
C5 - Capitalisation	57,763	116,276	133,276	108,276	24,913	440,504
Administration	46,965	103,630	103,630	103,630	56,665	414,520
Project Steering	38,510	41,400	40,000	44,600	20,670	171,180
Total operational costs	382,344	787,368	817,618	613,418	204,604	2,791,352
Technical Assistance Cost						
C1 - Strengthen Management	19,899	39,273	44,584	44,584	19,374	167,713
C2 - Technical Services	11,146	39,798	33,963	33,963	14,064	132,932
C3 - Training Services	24,422	37,174	37,698	32,388	16,194	147,876
C4 - Information	21,767	43,534	43,534	54,680	24,422	187,936
C5 - Capitalisation	19,899	45,633	51,469	51,469	25,734	194,204
Administration	58,831	102,542	133,942	126,542	83,431	505,288
Project Steering	19,637	28,127	33,963	28,127	16,981	126,835
Total TA	175,601	336,080	379,151	371,751	200,201	1,462,783
Operational +TA	557,945	1,123,448	1,196,769	985,169	404,805	4,254,135
Overhead at 13%	72,533	146,048	155,580	128,072	52,625	553,038
TOTAL PROJECT COST	630,477	1,269,497	1,352,349	1,113,241	457,429	4,807,173

Annex 1: Logical Framework

Hierarchy of Objectives	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Development Goal: To contribute to a high level of food security, reduced poverty in rural areas, inclusive economic growth, better productivity and profitability of agriculture/forestry through effective extension services	- Improvements in food production, income and nutrition in accordance with the goals and targets of the National Social Economic Development Plan - Improvements in access to services, participation and empowerment for rural people in remote areas in accordance with the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy	Impact Study	- Extension staff are willing and able to work with poor communities in remote areas. - The ongoing 'commodity boom' does not dilute efforts to improve household food security
Project Objective: To contribute to the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that is capable of benefiting poorer households and communities and reaches male and female farmers equally	- The strategy for introduction of the Lao Extension Approach has been completed in all Provinces - The LEA has been modified in accordance with the policies and strategies of the ministry of Agriculture - At least 70% of trained extension staff are satisfied with training and coaching received - At least 70% of production group members believe support received from extension workers has a measurable and significant added value to their livelihoods - Production group members include on average of at least 30% women and 30% poor households as active participants	External Review	- Continued support by MAF for the principles of the Lao Extension Approach - Availability of Government staff to implement activities at all levels. - Willingness of communities to allow participation of women
Outcome 1: Managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge and skills required to effectively plan and organise their work.	C1.1 Improved procedures for planning, managing and monitoring extension services have been adopted – at least partially – in <u>at least 5 Provinces and 25 Districts</u>. <i>Qualitative: planning and management of extension is carried out in a programmatic manner that integrates activities of different projects</i>	Project progress reports Stakeholder meetings	- Organisational structures and mandate are not drastically changed - New procedures and tools are actually used by provincial and district staff
Outcome 2: Technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.	C2.1 Procedures for facilitating a) the supply of inputs and credit, b) the development of market chains and c) the establishment of community-managed service centres, have been developed and/or tested in remote kumbans of <u>at least three provinces</u>. <i>Qualitative: community representatives are involved in decision making regarding activities of technical service centres.</i>	Project progress reports Stakeholder meetings	- Other projects are willing to collaborate on community-based activities - Extension managers or staff are willing to play a facilitating role for input supply and marketing - Local authorities are willing to allow community-managed KETS.

Outcome 3: The Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery.	C3.1 The LEA is operational in <u>at least half</u> of the Districts on the Government's list of <u>72 Poor Districts</u> . <i>Qualitative: participation of women and poorer households in extension activities is significantly increased.</i>	Project progress reports Stakeholder meetings	○ National and Provincial staff who were involved in previous phases of the project will continue to perform the functions for which they were trained. ○ District staff are willing and able to work with poor communities in remote areas.
Outcome 4: Extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.	C4.1: Relevant information materials on <u>at least 5 new topics</u> are supplied to staff in all provinces, while <u>at least 5 provinces</u> have established a system for improved management of information. <i>Qualitative: extension content is relevant to local needs and interests.</i>	Project progress reports Stakeholder meetings	○ Information materials reach the intended audience and are actually used
Outcome 5: Good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.	C5.1: <u>At least 10 cases</u> will have been disseminated that illustrate opportunities for extension delivery that meets the needs of women, the poor, or those living in remote areas; and <u>at least 5 cases</u> that address emerging opportunities and problems related to resource management and agribusiness.	Project progress reports	○ Potential partners will submit proposals that meet the agreed criteria

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge and skills required to effectively plan and organise their work.			
Output 1.1: Head of agriculture offices and service centres at Provincial and District level have a better understanding of roles, responsibilities and procedures for planning and management of extension services	1.1.1 Compile at least <u>three</u> new toolkits for planning and managing extension services based on organisational mandates, staff ToRs and a performance review. 1.1.2 Heads of <u>all</u> PAFOs and PETS receive toolkits and training in their use. 1.1.3 Heads of <u>all</u> DAFO and DETS are provided with toolkits.	Toolkits Interviews with Govt staff	New procedures are approved by NAFES
Output 1.2: Heads of service centres have opportunities to carry out planning in a coordinated and programmatic manner	1.2.1 <u>Annual</u> extension conference is conducted for <u>all</u> PAFO/PETS heads at national level. 1.2.2 <u>Annual</u> R & E planning meetings are held in <u>at least 5</u> Provinces. 1.2.3 <u>Annual or seasonal</u> extension partners meetings are held at the District level in <u>at least 25 Districts</u> by EoP.	Govt reports Interviews with Govt staff	Willingness for among Govt units to collaborate, join meetings

Output 1.3: A nation-wide system of monitoring extension activities is in operation	1.3.1 NAFES develops and maintains the Kumban Database, with information on <u>at least 200 kumbans</u> by EoP. 1.3.2 NAFES develops and maintains the Project Archive, including key documents from <u>all projects</u> based at NAFES. 1.3.3 Reporting procedures for PETS and DETS are agreed and implemented by <u>at least 5 Provinces and 25 Districts</u> by EoP. 1.3.4 Planning Division at NAFES produces <u>annual report</u> on extension delivery starting 2009.	Database Archive Govt reports	M&E data is submitted Other projects provide documents
Output 1.4: Options for financing the service centres and extension activities have been assessed	1.4.1 <u>Study completed</u> on financing options, and findings presented to national stakeholders. 1.4.2 Strategy for long-term financing of extension services is <u>prepared and agreed</u> by MAF and Ministry of Finance. 1.4.3 GoL-managed budgets are being used to fund LEA+ extension activities in 3 Provinces (a total of <u>at least 6 Districts</u>)	Study Govt reports	Agreement can be reached between MAF and MoF
Outcome 2: Technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.			
Output 2.1: Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the supply of inputs required by farmers in selected poor and remote areas.	2.1.1 Procedures for assessment of input chains and services are developed and tested in remote kumbans <u>in at least 3 Provinces</u>. 2.1.2 Based on the above assessment, Kumban level plans for improving input supply and services are <u>agreed and progress monitored</u> by community representatives in the selected locations. 2.1.3 The experience gained from 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 has been <u>documented and disseminated to all</u> other Provinces.	Govt reports Interviews with Govt staff	See assumptions at outcome level
Output 2.2: Staff of PETS and DETS understand the options for rural savings and credit, and can offer appropriate advice to farmer groups.	2.2.1 Best practices for rural savings and credit are <u>identified</u>, and discussion carried out on the role of extension staff in these processes. 2.2.2 A savings and credit toolkit is <u>produced and disseminated to all</u> PETS and DETS.	Toolkit	Agreement can be reached on what is best practice
Output 2.3: Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the development of market chains in poor and remote areas.	2.3.1 Training in area-based development of market chains (AEDP) is <u>conducted</u> for PETS and DETS staff in selected areas (same as for 2.1). 2.3.2 The AEDP <u>process is implemented</u> at the kumban level, facilitated by extension staff.	Training report Interviews with Govt staff	Staff available to attend training

Output 2.4: Community-managed KETS have been established in selected poor and remote areas.	2.4.1 Cases of facilities managed by community representatives at the inter-village or kumban level are identified (anywhere in Laos), <u>documented and assessed</u>. 2.4.2 Consultations are carried out in selected areas (same kumbans as for 2.1. and 2.3) leading to <u>community-owned plans</u> for construction and management of low-cost facilities that will expedite extension activities in the area. 2.4.3 The construction of <u>up to 6</u> community-managed KETS are co-financed by EoP. 2.4.4 The utilisation of the centres is monitored, <u>documented and lessons learned are shared</u> with stakeholders at national level.	Case studies KETS centres Interviews with Govt staff Interviews with villagers	Communities want to manage centres at KET level
Outcome 3: The Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery.			
Output 3.1: The basic Lao Extension Approach has been introduced into all Provinces, in accordance with the strategy agreed by NAFES in 2005.	3.1.1 <u>Completion</u> of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 4 Provinces in 2006. 3.1.2 <u>Completion</u> of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 5 Provinces in 2007.	Govt reports Interviews with Govt staff	Provincial Trainers from Phase II are still in available to implement LEA activities
Output 3.2: An improved version of the LEA has been introduced into selected poor and remote areas.	3.2.1 <u>Complete</u> the testing of procedures for planning and managing LEA+ (kumban based, opportunity oriented, menu-driven) as started in the Alignment phase. 3.2.2 Document and disseminate the procedures for LEA+ <u>to all PETS and KETS</u>. 3.2.3 Support further expansion of LEA+ in <u>at least 20 Districts</u> by EoP based on a competitive procedure that focuses on poor and remote areas.	Govt reports Interviews with Govt staff Interviews with villagers	PAFOs agree to the menu startegy Access to remote areas is feasible
Output 3.3: The technical content of training carried out under the LEA has been greatly expanded.	3.3.1 Curriculum development workshops are conducted in <u>at least 5 Provinces</u>, in areas covered under 3.2 in a manner that promotes 'extension for everyone'. 3.3.2 PAFO and PETS staff provide training and back-stopping <u>to District staff</u> who are implementing new training modules. 3.3.3 The benefits of new training modules on farmer production and income <u>are assessed</u> through both participatory M&E and independent impact studies.	Curricula Interviews with Govt staff and villagers Impact studies	Relevant technical information is available, ie. tested and documented Accurate baseline data will be collected

Output 3.4: The pool of LEA trainers has been expanded and upgraded	3.4.1 Training of trainers workshops for <u>at least 60</u> new staff by EoP from Provinces and Districts in support of outcomes 3.2 and 3.3. 3.4.2 Refresher training carried out for <u>at least 40 Provincial</u> and District staff originally trained under Phases I and II. 3.4.3 Advanced skills training for <u>at least 5 NAFES staff</u> in areas relating to training methods, curriculum development, and HRD. 3.4.4 <u>Institutionalizing</u> a process for certifying LEA Master Trainer.	Training reports Interviews with Govt staff Certification records	Master Trainers at National level are not overwhelmed with too many other duties
Outcome 4: Extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.			
Output 4.1: Information services have been institutionalised within the extension structure	4.1.1 Guidelines for establishment and management of information units within service centres are <u>developed and disseminated</u> across the country. 4.1.2 Information units are actually established in <u>at least 5 Provincial and 10 District</u> service centres by EoP, each with trained staff, links to other actors in the information system, and a set of basic materials. 4.1.3 The concept of a 'call centre' is tested in <u>at least two</u> of the supported centres, and the results are monitored and evaluated.	Guidelines Info Units Govt reports	Continued cooperation with the Information Division of NAFRI PAFOs appoint information focal person who stays in position
Output 4.2: Information materials for priority topics have been produced and disseminated	4.2.1 Priority topics are identified as a result of activities under 3.2 and 3.3, and an <u>annual production plan</u> is produced by NAFES. 4.2.2 <u>At least two</u> information products are developed and disseminated <u>each year</u> in accordance with the 'NICE communication strategy' that was tested in Phase II, involving staff at both national and provincial level. 4.2.3 A 'wisdom bag' will be supplied to <u>at least 200 kumbans</u>, the use and impact will be evaluated in selected locations by EoP.	Info materials Interviews with Govt staff	Willingness for among Govt units to collaborate
Output 4.3: The agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) at the national level has been enhanced	4.3.1 Advanced skills training for <u>at least 5</u> NAFES staff in areas relating to media production, ICT, and knowledge management. 4.3.2 Regular cooperation among the members of the Agricultural Information Management (AIM) working group, with <u>at least two</u> collaborative events per year	Interviews with Govt staff	Willingness for among Govt units to collaborate Online groups are not suppressed

	4.3.3 Production and dissemination of the NAFES newsletter <u>to all Provincial and District offices, at least twice per year.</u> 4.3.4 Collaboration with Agricultural Colleges and the Faculty of Agriculture at National University in curriculum development in <u>at least three topics</u> and information sharing related to extension 4.3.5 Continued support for online discussion groups with <u>at least 50,000 exchanges per month</u> (i.e. messages x members)	Curricula Newsletter websites	
Outcome 5: Good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.			
Output 5.1 Partnerships are established in order to capture good practices	5.1.1 Procedures and criteria for the management of a competitive grant fund are developed by project management and <u>approved by the steering committee.</u> 5.1.2 Proposals for mini-projects are solicited and appraised by project management, and grants are awarded to between <u>5 and 10 partners per year.</u> 5.1.3 Partners carry out field work, document their activities and share results in the form of reports, videos, exchange visits and workshops (<u>at least 10 such events per year.</u>	Project reports Interviews with partners Partners reports and outputs	Agreement is reached on procedures Activities are adequately documented
Output 5.2 Lessons from extension delivery are consolidated and compared	5.2.1 Thematic workshops are held once per year to share experiences among a range of projects and partners on a key issue approved by the project steering committee. 5.2.2 Consultants are hired to help organise the thematic workshop, including the <u>production of a report</u> that synthesizes the experiences that are presented.	Workshop reports Consultant reports	Meetings are well attended
Output 5.3 Innovative examples of extension are recognised by NAFES	5.3.1 Procedures and criteria for identifying innovative extension activities are developed by project management and <u>approved</u> 5.3.2 Nominations are solicited from Provincial and District Extension staff, scrutinised by a national committee which <u>selects the winners</u> 5.3.3 Awards are given and <u>publicized</u>, and awardees make presentations at the national extension conference.	Govt reports Interviews with awardees	Provinces and Districts are prepared to submit nominations

Major Activities

Outcome 1: Managers of extension activities at all levels (national, provincial and district) have the knowledge and skills required to effectively plan and organise their work.
Output 1.1: Head of agriculture offices and service centres at Provincial and District level have a better understanding of roles, responsibilities and procedures for planning and management of extension services
1.1.1 Compile at least three new toolkits for planning and managing extension services based on organisational mandates, staff ToRs and a performance review.
1.1.2 Heads of all PAFOs and PETS receive toolkits and training in their use.
1.1.3 Heads of all DAFO and DETS are provided with toolkits.
Output 1.2: Heads of service centres have opportunities to carry out planning in a coordinated and programmatic manner
1.2.1 Annual extension conference is conducted for all PAFO/PETS heads at national level.
1.2.2 Annual R & E planning meetings are held in at least Provinces.
1.2.3 Annual or seasonal extension partners meetings are held at the District level in at least 25 Districts by EoP.
Output 1.3: A nation-wide system of monitoring extension activities is in operation
1.3.1 NAFES develops and maintains the Kumban Database, with information on at least 200 kumbans by EoP.
1.3.2 NAFES develops and maintains the Project Archive, including key documents from all projects based at NAFES.
1.3.3 Reporting procedures for PETS and DETS are agreed and implemented by at least 5 Provinces and 25 Districts by EoP.
1.3.4 Planning Division at NAFES produces annual report on extension delivery starting 2009.
Output 1.4: Options for financing the service centres and extension activities have been assessed
1.4.1 Study completed on financing options, and findings presented to national stakeholders.
1.4.2 Strategy for long-term financing of extension services is prepared and agreed by MAF and Ministry of Finance.
1.4.3 GoL-managed budgets are being used to fund LEA+ extension activities in 3 Provinces (a total of at least 6 Districts)

Outcome 2: Technical service centres are functioning as a means for facilitating input supply and marketing in selected poor and remote areas.
Output 2.1: Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the supply of inputs required by farmers in selected poor and remote areas.
2.1.1 Procedures for assessment of input chains and services are developed and tested in remote kumbans in at least 3 Provinces.
2.1.2 Based on the above assessment, Kumban level plans for improving input supply and services are agreed and progress monitored by community representatives in the selected locations.

2.1.3 The experience gained from 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 has been documented and disseminated to all other Provinces.
Output 2.2: Staff of PETS and DETS understand the options for rural savings and credit, and can offer appropriate advice to farmer groups.
2.2.1 Best practices for rural savings and credit are identified, and discussion carried out on the role of extension staff in these processes.
2.2.2 A savings and credit toolkit is produced and disseminated to all PETS and DETS.
Output 2.3: Staff of PETS and DETS are able to facilitate the development of market chains in poor and remote areas.
2.3.1 Training in area-based development of market chains (AEDP) is conducted for PETS and DETS staff in selected areas (same as for 2.1).
2.3.2 The AEDP process is implemented at the kumban level, facilitated by extension staff.
Output 2.4: Community-managed KETS have been established in selected poor and remote areas.
2.4.1 Cases of facilities managed by community representatives at the inter-village or kumban level are identified (anywhere in Laos), documented and assessed.
2.4.2 Consultations are carried out in selected areas (same kumbans as for 2.1. and 2.3) leading to a community-owned plans for construction and management of low-cost facilities that will expedite extension activities in the area.
2.4.3 The construction of up to 6 community-managed KETS are co-financed by EoP.
2.4.4 The utilisation of the centres is monitored, documented and lessons learned are shared with stakeholders at national level.

Outcome 3: The Lao Extension Approach is operating across the country, with adjustments in methodology and content aimed at improving the quality of service delivery
Output 3.1: The basic Lao Extension Approach has been introduced into all Provinces, in accordance with the strategy agreed by NAFES in 2005.
3.1.1 Completion of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 4 Provinces in 2006.
3.1.2 Completion of the 3-year training and coaching process that was started in 5 Provinces in 2007.
Output 3.2: An improved version of the LEA has been introduced into selected poor and remote areas.
3.2.1 Complete the testing of procedures for planning and managing LEA+ (kumban based, opportunity oriented, menu-driven) as started in the Alignment phase.
3.2.2 Document and disseminate the procedures for LEA+ to all PETS and KETS.
3.2.3 Support further expansion of LEA+ in at least 20 Districts by EoP based on a competitive procedure that focuses on poor and remote areas.
Output 3.3: The technical content of training carried out under the LEA has been greatly expanded.
3.3.1 Curriculum development workshops are conducted in at least 5 Provinces, involving both extension and research staff, in order to expand the farmer training menu in areas covered under 3.2 in a manner that promotes 'extension for everyone'.
3.3.2 PAFO and PETS staff provide training and back-stopping to District staff who are implementing new training modules.
3.3.3 The benefits of new training modules on farmer production and income are assessed through both participatory M&E and independent impact studies.

Output 3.4: The pool of LEA trainers has been expanded and upgraded

- 3.4.1 Training of trainers workshops for at least 60 new staff by EoP from Provinces and Districts in support of outcomes 3.2 and 3.3.
- 3.4.2 Refresher training carried out for at least 40 Provincial and District staff originally trained under Phases I and II.
- 3.4.3 Advanced skills training for at least 5 NAFES staff in areas relating to training methods, curriculum development, and HRD.
- 3.4.4 Institutionalizing a process for certifying LEA Master Trainer.

Outcome 4: Extension staff across the country are being provided with information materials and services that improve the implementation of their work.**Output 4.1:** Information services have been institutionalised within the extension structure

- 4.1.1 Guidelines for establishment and management of information units within service centres are developed and disseminated across the country.
- 4.1.2 Information units are actually established in at least 5 Provincial and 10 District service centres by EoP, each with trained staff, links to other actors in the information system, and a set of basic materials.
- 4.1.3 The concept of a 'call centre' is tested in at least two of the supported centres, and the results are monitored and evaluated.

Output 4.2: Information materials for priority topics have been produced and disseminated

- 4.2.1 Priority topics are identified as a result of activities under 3.2 and 3.3, and an annual production plan is produced by NAFES.
- 4.2.2 At least two information products are developed and disseminated each year in accordance with the 'NICE communication strategy' that was tested in Phase II, involving staff at both national and provincial level.
- 4.2.3 A 'wisdom bag' will be supplied to at least 200 kumbans, and the use and impact will be evaluated in selected locations by EoP.

Output 4.3: The agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) at the national level has been enhanced

- 4.3.1 Advanced skills training for at least 5 NAFES staff in areas relating to media production, ICT, and knowledge management.
- 4.3.2 Regular cooperation among the members of the Agricultural Information Management (AIM) working group, with at least two collaborative events per year
- 4.3.3 Production and dissemination of the NAFES newsletter to all Provincial and District offices, at least twice per year.
- 4.3.4 Collaboration with Agricultural Colleges and the Faculty of Agriculture at National University in curriculum development and information sharing related to extension
- 4.3.5 Continued support for online discussion groups with at least 50,000 exchanges per month (i.e. messages x members)

Outcome 5: Good practices in extension are captured, examined and shared in a manner that informs the further development of a pluralistic extension service.

Output 5.1: Partnerships are established in order to capture good practices

- 5.1.1 Procedures and criteria for the management of a competitive grant fund are developed by project management and approved by the steering committee.
- 5.1.2 Proposals for mini-projects are solicited and appraised by project management, and grants are awarded to between 5 and 10 partners per year.
- 5.1.3 Partners carry out field work, document their activities and share results in the form of reports, videos, exchange visits and workshops (at least 10 events per year).

Output 5.2: Lessons from extension delivery are consolidated and compared

- 5.2.1 Thematic workshops are held once per year to share experiences among a range of projects and partners on a key issue approved by the project SC
- 5.2.2 Consultants are hired to help organise the thematic workshop, including the production of a report that synthesizes the experiences that are presented.

Output 5.3: Innovative examples of extension are recognised by NAFES

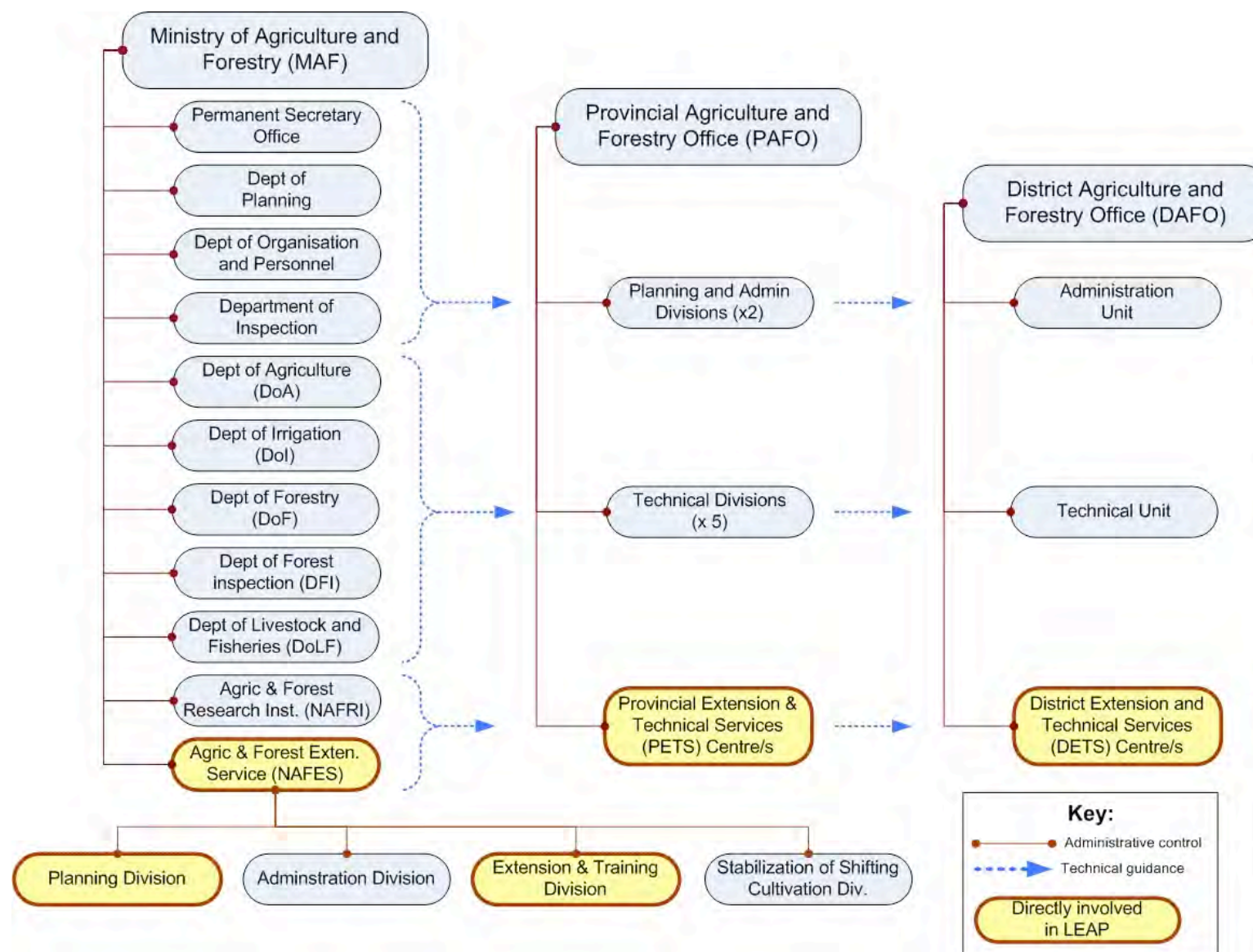
- 5.3.1 Procedures and criteria for identifying innovative extension activities are developed by project management and approved by NAFES
- 5.3.2 Nominations are solicited from Provincial and District Extension staff, scrutinised by a national committee which selects the winners
- 5.3.3 Awards are given and publicized, and awardees make presentations at the national extension conference.

Annex 2: The contribution of extension to poverty eradication

As part of the development of Phase IV, project staff developed the following framework that illustrates – as simply as possible - the relationship between LEAP activities and the broad goal of poverty eradication. The framework will guide the further development of procedures and tools for extension planning and monitoring.

<i>The Route out of Poverty</i>
Where are we going? (Goals) • <u>MDGs</u>: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty (1), achieve gender equality and empowerment of women (3) • <u>Government</u>: The overarching development goal of the Lao PDR is to take the country out of the Least Developed Country status by the year 2020 (NGPES). • <u>SDC</u>: The Mekong Region Cooperation Strategy is well aligned to the Socio-Economic Development Plan of the Government, with a strong focus on poverty, minorities and gender mainstreaming. • <u>Project Goal</u>: To contribute to the development of a decentralised, participatory, pluralistic and sustainable agricultural extension system that is capable of benefiting poorer households and communities and reaches male and female farmers equally.
When will we get there? (Outcomes) • When agricultural and forestry extension services <i>reach</i> poor communities • When extension staff <i>understand</i> the constraints and opportunities of the poor • When extension content and methods are <i>relevant</i> to the needs and interests of poorer households • When poor communities have <i>organised</i> themselves to improve their bargaining position and capacity for collective action
How will we get there? (Strategy) • Adopt a spatial strategy that focuses the delivery of extension services on poorer districts, clusters and villages • Expand coverage at a rate that ensures the development of <i>quality</i> in service delivery (i.e. inclusive, participatory, needs-based and integrated) • Identify, validate and harvest 'good practices' as determined by benefits – potential or actual – for poorer communities and households • Upgrade the analytical, technical, managerial and facilitation skills of extension staff • Produce and deliver extension materials and information services that are based on the constraints and opportunities faced by poorer households • Monitor extension activities in a manner that allows impacts to be measured for different socio-economic groups
How will we measure progress? (Indicators) • Number of poor villages and households who benefit from learning projects • Proportion of women who derive benefits from learning projects • Number of poor clusters with active farmer associations • Number of District staff who are capable of facilitating the LEA to the satisfaction of the farmers • Number of District and Provincial managers using pro-poor planning and monitoring mechanisms • Number of Provincial staff who provide training and coaching to the satisfaction of District staff • Number of extension 'packages' produced by NAFES and provincial staff that address key needs of poor villages • Number of pro-poor experiences and good practices documented and integrated into the LEA menu

Annex 3: Schematic of MAF organisational structure



Annex 4: Financial management of the project

It is foreseen to hand over greater responsibility for financial management to the Lao partners. The planning team explored a range of mechanisms to put this into practice, but no feasible mechanism could be identified so far.

Thus a specialised consultancy is being carried out in the Alignment Phase to assist in exploring options, determining feasible mechanisms, assessing fiduciary risks and devising a transition process from the current system to a new one.

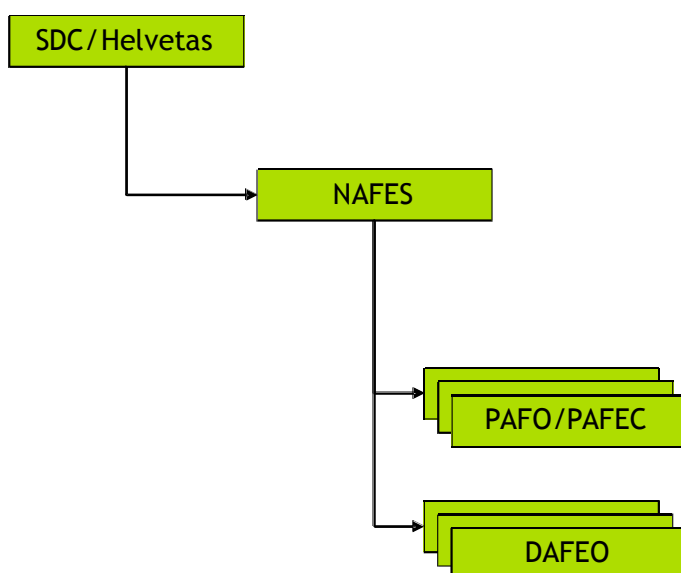
The objective in the ToR of the consultant is as follows:

The consultant will assess options and make proposals for the future financial management of LEAP taking into account the principles of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, effectiveness and accountability.

The outcome of the consultancy will inform further decision making by SDC and MAF, with new financial management mechanisms being introduced during the course of the project.

The following diagrams illustrate the findings of the planning team regarding various options are presented. Note that in all the diagrams there is no differentiation between SDC and Helvetas as source of the funds. In practice, it will depend on the contractual relation between SDC, Helvetas and the GoL, whether the funds go directly from SDC to the Lao partners (with the resources for TA going from SDC to Helvetas) or whether SDC channels the funds through Helvetas to the Lao partners.

Option 1



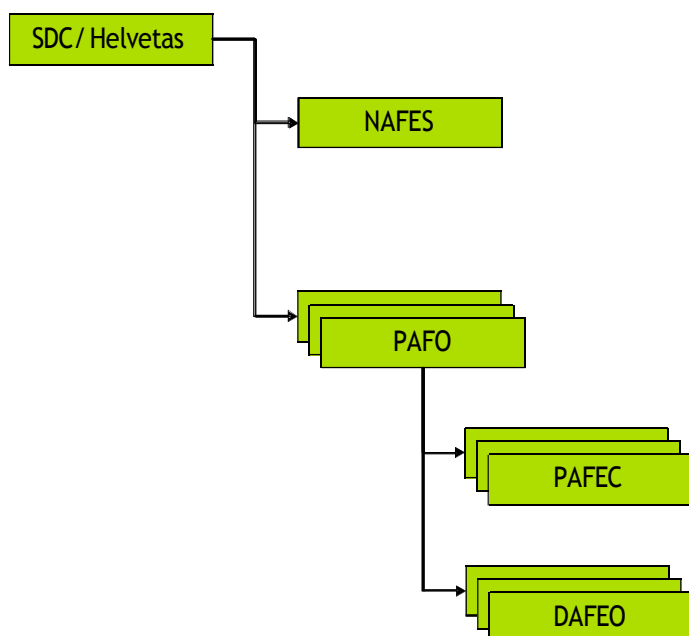
Advantages:

- Simple mechanism, preferred by NAFES
- Capacity to manage is more or less available
- Is close to the current system, where funds are transferred from LEAP accounts to accounts of all involved PAFOs and DAFOs
- Projects in NAFRI use this mechanism

Disadvantages:

- Is not in line with official GoL fund flow mechanism, though the resources from the Poverty Reduction Fund use exactly this set-up
- The Ministry of Finance rules this option out

Option 2



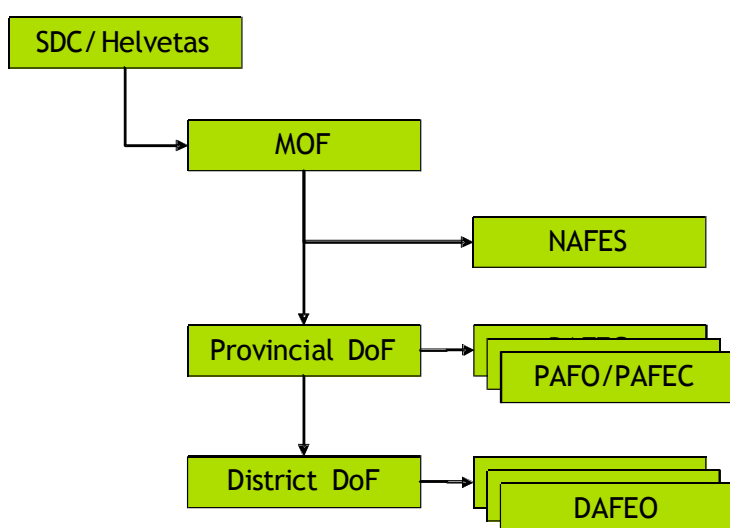
Advantages:

- This option is preferred by some of the Provincial offices
- Is half way in line with government fund flow channels
- Would give the provinces the real lead in managing expansion

Disadvantages:

- Success depends on PAFO management
- It is unclear how a reliable accounting and reporting system can be established

Option 3



Advantages:

- Is in accordance with government fund flow channels
- There is the possibility of earmarked grants (i.e. it does not necessarily imply budget support)

Disadvantages:

- Complicated to manage
- No interest of MOF because it would mean a lot of work for small amounts of funds

Annex 5: Financial participation of the GoL

In phase IV, the GoL's financial contribution to the implementation of the LEA will continue to be in the form of staff salaries, office infrastructure and management functions. The following table shows a rough estimate of the government contribution to LEAP over the four year phase.

Item	Unit cost / month (USD)	No. of locations	No. of people	No. of months	Total
NAFES management staff	60	1	2	48	5,760
NAFES Master Trainers & admin	40	1	10	48	19,200
Provincial staff	35	10	2	24	16,800
District staff	25	35	3	24	63,000
Electricity cost of NICE	250	1		48	12,000
Office facilities in provinces and districts (maintenance, utilities)	50	45		48	108,000
TOTAL					224,760

Note 1: Staff costs include salaries and other benefits

Note 2: It is assumed that the involved provincial and district staff spend around half of their working time on LEAP-related activities

The above figures include only the direct contributions to LEAP activities, i.e. the costs associated with the LEA introduction process. This underestimates the full contribution to LEA implementation and expansion, including working time spent by provincial and district extension managers, as well as the cost of field staff in locations not directly supported by LEAP. Contributions to LEA expansion from other sources are difficult to predict and to quantify in advance and cannot be included in the calculations.

The following table shows the operational costs of the project over 4 years (excluding TA) and the Lao government contribution, which can be estimated at around 7.5% of the total.

	USD	Percentage
SDC budget for LEAP operations (excl. TA)	2'791'352	92.5 %
Lao government contribution	225'000	7.5 %
TOTAL operational cost	3'016'352	

Annex 6: Alternative funding options for operational cost of extension

The following table shows a range of mechanisms for funding the operational cost of extension. Some concern local sources and some donor sources. The sequence of the options is based on their importance (as perceived by the planning team). With each funding mechanism, its key characteristics, and some considerations on its chances for realisation are given. Note that no single mechanism alone is suitable for sustainable funding of extension. There will always be a combination of a range of different mechanisms. The challenge is to coordinate these in a suitable way and ensure that donor funds are not crowding out emerging local funding mechanisms on a long term.

Funding mechanism	Characteristics	Chances for realisation
<i>Farmers pay directly for services (e.g. for fuel and allowances of visiting DAFO staff)</i>	Currently it is illegal for public agencies to charge for their services. But partial payment for services by users is very desirable for a public extension system (encourages accountability and good quality, useful services), provided there are transparent mechanisms. Thus it should be explored whether the rules and regulations can be changed to enable user participation in extension funding.	Needs longer discussions at high level to prepare the ground for such a change. GPAR has to be closely involved in the discussions. The argument that the people are too poor for paying is not valid. Experiences from around the world show that farmers – also poor ones – are willing to pay for services if they are really beneficial for them. Services through production groups distribute the cost among a number of people and make the contribution of individuals affordable.
<i>Funding extension cost from village development funds</i>	Village Development Funds are established more and more, fed by a variety of sources. While these resources are often used for social infrastructure, they can be very well allocated also for extension activities that serve the interests of the whole community.	LEAP can support gaining experiences with suitable mechanisms early in the phase and then encourage the spread of these mechanisms.
<i>Funds from district and province budgets</i>	With economic development progressing, districts will increasingly have funds from their own sources (local taxes, forest revenue, electricity royalty etc.) which can be invested in extension. Also provinces will have increasingly own resources available. These public funds will increasingly focus on funding services with a high public interest (poverty reduction, environmental concerns), whereas services with mainly private benefits have to be increasingly funded by the concerned private actors.	On a short to medium term districts and provinces likely prefer to invest these resources to infrastructure and increasing staff salaries, and their contribution to extension will continue to consist mainly of staff and office cost. If extension proves its value, on a longer term the willingness to pay also for part of the operational cost likely increases.
<i>Donor patchwork</i>	This is the current financing mechanism for operational extension cost. A broad range of donor-funded projects and NGOs use government extension staff to implement their activities in particular areas and finance operational cost, staff capacity building and often top up salaries.	On a short term this is likely to continue, but it would be desirable to move to a more coordinated funding structure and LEAP will engage in dialoguing to achieve this.

Funding mechanism	Characteristics	Chances for realisation
<i>Donor basket or demand-side grant fund for extension</i>	A basket fund, through which donors who want to support extension channel their contributions, is a good mechanism for more coordinated donor interventions in extension. Such basket funds may be established at central, province or district level. They may either fund extension conventionally (funds flow directly to extension to implement their work plans) or as a demand-side grant fund (farmers submit proposals for extension service; if these are approved, they get the funds and pay the extensionist for his/her work).	Extension basket funds are a desirable option for Laos, and thus LEAP will assist the GoL in exploring such options. In view of the government's decentralisation policy, district and province level extension funds seem more appropriate than a central level one. Demand-side grant funds at district level are increasingly advocated as a helpful mechanism to channel extension funds to promising undertakings and may become a model for Laos in the long run too. Some existing district development funds operate on a similar pattern and may serve as first examples for such mechanisms.
<i>NAFES/MAF budget</i>	Once NAFES is recognised as a central extension resource agency and not primarily as a project implementation body, the GoL may see the need to allocate adequate resources for its functions.	NAFES is entirely dependent on MAF for official government funds. Currently it gets very little government resources because everyone relies on donors picking up the bills. As long as donors are there, there is very little prospect for change.
<i>Funding extension through membership fees of producer organisations</i>	This is a very effective mechanism for funding extension that is successfully applied in many places, particularly in Latin America. However, this requires a certain degree of formalisation of the organisations. In Laos there are currently only very few formal producer organisations.	LEAP can contribute to advance this mechanism by capitalising the available examples and including development of producer organisations into the LEA menu. Nevertheless this mechanism is a medium-to longer term option only.
<i>Funding extension by private companies</i>	Private companies currently pay for extension in various ways. They engage their own technicians who provide advice to farmers producing under contract, and they pay government staff for services to their suppliers.	LEAP will explore how the existing private sector mechanisms can be utilised to advance the LEA, e.g. by including LEA capacity building for the extension staff used by the private sector. Large companies may also be encouraged to fund extension operations in whole districts or a range of villages/clusters.
<i>Funding extension through value chain/commodity organisations</i>	Value chain or sub-sector organisations are bodies that include all stakeholders involved in a particular value chain or commodity (producers, processors, traders, etc.). All actors have an interest in getting adequate quantity and quality of a product from the producers and thus in services which ensure this. Therefore they are usually willing to contribute to paying for relevant extension services.	Value chain organisations are existing or emerging mainly for export products. Often the services required are too specialised to be provided by public extension and they will arrange and finance their own extensionists. But in some cases these organisations may work through government extension services and fund their operational cost.

Annex 7: LEAP contributions to policies of the Government and SDC

LEAP contributions to Millennium Development Goals

MDGs	How LEAP (phase IV) contributes
MD Key Issue: Governance	LEAP builds capacity for better provision of public services (extension) and for effective management of these services
MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	LEAP seeks to identify extension contents and processes that contribute to improving the livelihoods of very poor areas and people either through increasing income or food production
MDG 3: Gender equality and women empowerment	LEAP seeks to identify extension contents and processes that allow women to enhance their decision power and address their specific concerns LEAP will encourage preference to female staff to be included in capacity building
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability	LEAP takes care that extension contents it develops and supports are environmentally sound. It will also search for solutions in the case of environmental sustainability problems that can be addressed through extension

Contributions to key themes of the National Social & Economic Development Plan

<i>Theme in the NSEDP</i>	<i>How LEAP (phase IV) contributes to addressing it</i>
Rural economic growth, enhancing productive capacity of rural people	LEAP contributes to developing extension contents that enable farmers to enhance the productivity and profitability of their farm enterprises, which in turn is an essential element for rural economic growth.
Reduction of numbers of poor households and malnourished children, eradication of seasonal hunger	Extension contents responsive to poor households' and remote areas' needs and adapted to their capacities and resources help poor people to improve their status through more income or enhanced food production (staples, meat, vegetables)
Participatory planning and implementation	A participatory way of working is one of the core characteristics of the LEA. Although most donor-funded projects use participatory approaches, LEAP is one of the few actors that work on systematic institutionalisation of participatory approaches.
Improve productivity of agriculture and forestry through better technologies and access to markets	The extension contents developed with support by LEAP all aim at enhancing productivity through more effective production practices. In phase III emphasis will be given to identifying ways how the extension system can support farmers in enhancing access to profitable markets.
Promote commodities and commercial farming, diversify the rural economy and develop economic opportunities for poor people in remote areas	Extension contents developed under LEAP can include commodities and commercial products that fit in with small farmers' circumstances and aspirations, and so contribute to integration of poor people and remote areas into the market economy, though it is unlikely to directly promote

	large-scale commodities for export.
Improving access of women to extension, support to economic activities of poor women,	LEAP has in the past tried to reach women, but had only partial success. In the new phase it will put additional efforts in identifying ways how the extension system can reach women, particularly poor ones, and develop contents that support economic endeavours of poor women.
Gender-segregated needs assessment	The LEA stresses the involvement of women in extension needs assessment, and LEAP will in phase III look into whether the processes for this need to be improved to take women's preferences better into account
Gender-segregated data collection and monitoring	The extension M&E mechanisms to be developed as well as the project monitoring system include gender-segregated data. The crucial issue will be the interpretation of these data and corrective measures in case it is found that women are not reached adequately and not satisfied with the services they obtain.
Affirmative action in staffing incl. extension and increasing the number of women in capacity building activities	LEAP cannot directly influence the number of women in the extension service, and because of government restrictions to recruiting new staff, also the MAF has only limited possibilities to recruit more women. LEAP will continue to encourage its partners to give disproportionate preference to female staff for training.
Improve public service delivery	The chief purpose of LEAP is to assist the GoL to improve extension services and it is thus very directly contributing to this government concern.
Upgrading the level of professionalism and technical knowledge	Capacity building of extension staff at different levels is a core area of work of LEAP.
Enhance productivity and motivation of staff	LEAP contributes to productivity and motivation of staff by building their capacity to deliver useful services to farmers (extension staff with whom the planning team talked explicitly mentioned this as a benefit of LEAP). LEAP's contributions to field allowances and mobility cost also enhance productivity and motivation, but here the question of sustainability arises.
Modernising the management of services e.g. through ICTs	Component 1 aims at enhancing extension management at all levels, including more effective and systematic performance of management functions supported by ICTs (Management Information System, M&E). The project assists the extension with ICTs also in other ways, such as provision of computers to PETS and selected DETS centres, and using ICTs in information management.
Sound financial management	By exploring different mechanisms for funding technical service centres, LEAP contributes to sound financial management of public services.

LEAP contributions to SDC's strategy for the region

SDC strategy	How LEAP (phase IV) contributes
Country Outcome 1: Countries in the region have a healthy, effective, efficient public administration accountable at all levels to its legislative counterpart in order to develop policies and provide services to meet people's needs.	
SDC Contribution 1.2: Effective decentralisation supported and capacity of the public administration on local levels strengthened, good practices scaled up.	LEAP directly builds capacity at in a number of villages, clusters, districts and provinces to manage and provide extension services. It also builds the capacity at central and the decentralised level to scale up the extension management and service provision capacity
Country Outcome 3: People participate increasingly in public decision making processes. (focus on collective, political rights)	
SDC Contribution 3.2: Strengthened civil society organizations able to influence policy dialogue / development / articulate people's needs	Production groups are a key element of the LEA and they are the ones which articulate extension needs
Country Outcome 4: Sustainable utilisation of natural resources of the respective governments enhances the quality of life and health of ethnic minorities and contributes to the decrease of poverty incidence in the Mekong Region.	
SDC Contribution 4.2: Agricultural and forest production systems that improve livelihoods of farmers and mitigate loss of biodiversity are practiced by up-land farmers	Identification and packaging extension contents that contribute to improving upland farmers' livelihoods and that are environmentally sound If practices that mitigate loss of biodiversity are developed by other actors, LEAP works to integrate these into the LEA
Country Outcome 5: Farmers' incomes have increased through diversification of different commercial crops and livestock production, and through improved market access and a stronger need based and adaptive extension and training system.	
SDC Contribution 5.1: Agricultural research, extension and education systems are well interlinked, addressing the different needs of women and men working in rural areas	Building an extension system that addresses the needs of men and women in rural areas is the very purpose of LEAP LEAP supports the development of effective collaboration mechanisms between extension, research and education (at college and University level) LEAP will put extra efforts in enabling the extension system to address the needs of women better
SDC Contribution 5.2: Farmers are profiting from service provision (extension) modalities, which include private public partnerships, and are linked to private agro-enterprises.	LEAP will contribute to enable the public extension system to assist farmers to link to agro-enterprises in a beneficial way
SDC Contribution 5.3: Pro-poor awareness is increased and reflected in agro-business development, through active participation in policy dialogue at national and provincial level	LEAP continuously engages in the policy dialogue regarding the need to ensure agri-business development is benefiting also poor people and areas, e.g. through the Lao-FAB internet discussion platform, and will engage in developing practical ways to put this into practice

Annex 8: LEAP and Kumban development

The kumban is a cluster of between 5 and 10 villages, with each District made up of between 5 and 10 clusters. As part of the GoL strategy for decentralisation, efforts are being made to strengthen service delivery at the kumban level. Although the kumban is not a fully established administrative layer in the Government structure, coordination of development activities is carried out through a committee that represents key ministries - agriculture, health, and education - and the security services. The head of the kumban committee is appointed by the Party and reports to the District Governor.

MAF is in the process of moving staff from DAFOs to technical service centres located at the kumban level. At the time of formulating this project, MSAF had a target to establish 300 cluster service centres by the end of 2009. In addition to those centres managed by the DAFO (referred to as 'DETS centres' in this document) it is expected that there will be a diverse range of service units managed by projects, the private sector and community organisations (referred to as 'KETS Centres').

Operational details for DETS and KETS - including planning, staffing, funding, and technical support - are all being developed. An important task for LEAP in phase IV is to assist NAFES in this process. The following initiatives have already been launched by LEAP during the Alignment Phase:

- a) creation of an online discussion group, including Government staff and foreign advisers from a number of different projects, to share information and ideas about kumban development;
- b) hiring of a consultant to carry out capitalisation of existing experience in working at the kumban level;
- c) piloting of a Kumban Database, to be further tested as part of the NAFES monitoring system
- d) modifications to the LEA process to move the focus of planning from the village to the kumban level as part of a system of extension menus (see Annexes 8 and 9).

In Phase IV, LEAP will carry out further capitalisation of experiences relating to kumban development under component 5. The results will feed into the development of toolkits and training for managers of technical service centres under component 1.

The aim of these activities is not to promote a blueprint for the operation of technical service centres, rather the project will promote a pluralistic and participatory approach that addresses the diverse needs of rural communities in a effective and sustainable manner that uses.

In selecting Kumbans for extension capacity building, the project will use a number of criteria including a) the Government's classification of 72 poor Districts, b) SDC's policy of avoiding areas where involuntary resettlement is being undertaken c) the availability of human resources, coming from the DAFO/DETS or through collaborating projects and partner organisations. Easy road access and high potential for commodity production will *not* be used as criteria, in view of the pro-poor emphasis of Phase IV.

Annex 9: The menu-driven strategy for improving the LEA

Rationale for using menus

A wide range of extension approaches have been tried in Laos over the past 50 years, with top-down technology transfer at one end of the spectrum and highly participatory community development at the other end. At both extremes there are problems with implementation. Technology transfer does not meet the needs of a most farmers, especially under the highly diverse conditions of Laos, but participatory approaches require a level of knowledge and skill that most extension workers do not possess.

Menu-driven extension is a 'middle way' that aims to provide an effective service to farmers while avoiding the problems associated with other approaches.



The Lao Extension Approach (LEA) was designed to be a participatory approach, but in practice it has offered farmers a very limited choice of learning projects (usually rice, pigs or chicken). Consequently, the LEA can be strengthened by explicitly adopting the concept of menu-driven extension. Rather than reduce the level of participation, the use of menus will actually increase the choices available to farmer and – at the same time – provide a framework for improved planning, management and monitoring of the Government's extension service.

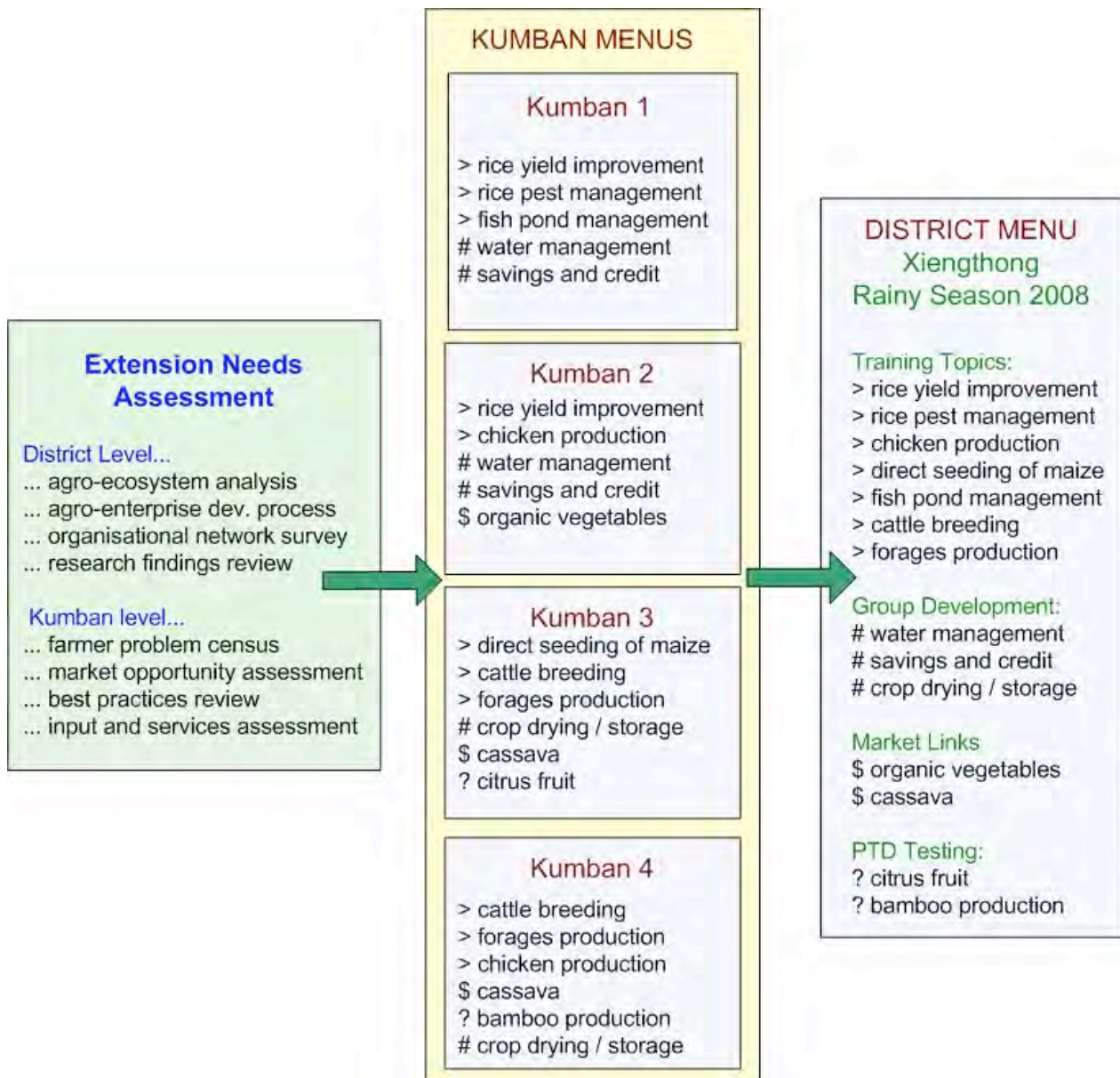
Capacity building for menu-driven extension

Many of the tools required to implement a menu-driven system are already available in Laos. NAFRI has been developing and testing FSR/E procedures for a number of years, with the Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AEA) manual providing a good summary of a process that can be used by research and extension staff at the District and Kumban level. Another area-based approach is the Agro-Enterprise Development Process (AEDP) that has been tested and documented by the SADU project.

Piloting of a menu-driven strategy for implementing the LEA started in March 2008 as part of the LEAP Alignment Phase. Workshops will be held in April in the selected Provinces to introduce tools and procedures. This will be followed by a series of needs assessment activities in each of the selected District/Kumban, including problem census, market census, partner census, and research census. By May, District Planning Meetings will be held to prepare the menu for each Kumban, after which village meetings will be held at which farmers select topics from the menu and form learning groups.

The pilot activities will be carefully assessed and procedures adapted before expanded implementation of the strategy takes place at the beginning of 2009.

Example of Kumban and District menus



Annex 10: Market access and agribusiness

There is a consensus that villagers need support in increasing the profitability of whatever cash crops and products they produce, gaining better access to markets and achieving better bargaining power vis-à-vis traders and processing companies. Although there is less agreement about *who* should provide farmers with this support, most Provincial staff are of the view that extension field workers need better knowledge on the functioning of markets and the economics of the main products in their area.

Though the extension service cannot take care of all the market-related needs of all farmers, it should be able to provide smallholders with basic assistance such as group formation, price information and improved access to essential inputs. Exactly *how* the LEA can be helpful to farmers in this respect has been an issue under discussion among the development actors in Laos (notably on the LaoFAB discussion platform).

A range of experiences and approaches have emerged from different projects and the private sector, among them the SDC-funded SADU (in Xiengkhuang) and PARUA (in Sayaboury) projects. SADU has tested an agro-enterprise development process (AEDP) which can be used by extension staff to assess which products have good potential for farmers because of their market demand, and to identify and act on constraints along the market chain. This process is now mature enough to be shared with others. PARUA has experience with various semi-commercial products in very remote areas, and also generally on how DAFOs can work with villagers in areas with difficult access. The Helvetas projects PROFIL and PRORICE have marketing experiences with organic products and use a Participatory Market Chain Approach (PMCA) to analyse value chains and identify intervention points. Also the IFAD/GTZ project in Sayaboury deals with marketing aspects under its enterprise development component. Finally, LEAP itself supported a study on contract farming, in its role as the Secretariat for the GoL-donor Sub-Working Group on Agribusiness.

Potential topics to integrate into the LEA

Certain topics should be made available to all DAFEO staff. Other topics that are more specialised will be provided only to a limited number of future marketing Subject Matter Specialists who will support their colleagues when required. Potential topics are:

- Basic marketing and value chain know-how
- Simple instruments to analyse markets (e.g. Rapid Market Appraisal, PMCA) and value chains (steps and actors in the chain, quantities traded, margins at each step, power relations etc.) and to identify bottlenecks and opportunities
- How to design and implement appropriate responses to value chain bottlenecks and opportunities
- Processes to assist small producers to insert themselves into existing profitable value chains
- How to support small producers in their bargaining power vis-à-vis more powerful value chain actors (e.g. strengthen production groups, favourable contract farming arrangements, access to necessary information etc.)
- Economics of crops, animal and forest products produced in an area

- Quality and management requirements for particular cash products to get better prices (e.g. rubber for small farmers)
- Information about marketable products that have proven a success in particular areas or for particular people (women, upland areas, villages in remote areas, particular ethnic groups etc.)
- Market and price information

Steps for LEAP

- Under component 5, LEAP will continue to assist MAF and NAFES in the capitalisation of experience with regard to the role of public services in the commercialisation of agriculture. Particular attention will be given to methodologies and technologies that bring the benefits of the market place to poorer households, women farmers and communities in remote areas. This may include studies on how extension staff can support farmer associations and small-scale processing
- Under component 2, LEAP will support the integration of the LEA with the AEDP and/or other approaches that promote the development of market chains. Market studies that identify and clarify new opportunities for smallholders should become a standard part of the menu strategy.
- Also under component 2, the project will help to develop and test procedures for assessment of input chains and smallholder services. Laos has many examples of market chain studies that look at outputs, but there are very few studies of how inputs get to farmers. This is no less important for farmers in remote areas. The purpose of carrying out Farm Inputs and Services Assessments (FISA) is the identification of possible interventions - including measures to improve access to seeds, fertilizers, vaccines, equipment, credit and price information – and the clarification of the roles and relationships between extension staff, farmer groups and the private sector.

Annex 11: Possible good practices to harvest under component 5

Possible practices/areas	Projects/organizations
<i>LEA in upland areas</i>	
Improving livelihoods in upland areas Enabling provincial and district extension staff to tackle this	FORCOM
Exploring practical ways to implement the cluster approach (possibly in Xieng Khouang)	Nam Ngum Watershed Management project
Participatory Forestry Framework	SUFORD
<i>Administration of extension</i>	
Experimenting the new Government budget channel	Possibly with GPAR XK
Strategies for provincial funding and administration of extension	GPAR Xiengkhouang
Linkage of extension and Village Development Fund	SUFORD, Poverty Reduction Fund, IFAD-GTZ RLIP in Sayaboury, Kong Island
<i>Socio-economic aspects of LEA</i>	
Awareness on village rights relating to resource use, group formation and contracting	Village Focus International, Department of Forestry
Gender issues in extension	Capacity Building for Gender Mainstreaming in the Agriculture Sector
<i>Linking extension with market</i>	
Value chain approach for organic rice	Helvetas ProRice
Post-harvest practices for agro-products	Vocational schools
Marketing of sesame, ground nuts, organic cotton ...	IFAD-RDMA – Sayaboury
Value chain analysis	SADU – XK, LPB, ProRice
Participatory Market Chain Approach	ProRice, PROFIL
Broom grass production and marketing	PARUA – Sayaboury
Contract farming practices	Case studies done by LEAP in 2006-7, other companies such as Lao Sericulture in Xiengkhoang, vegetable exporters in Champasak, Thai peanut processing factory in Savannakhet, Lao Farmer Products, etc ...
<i>Others</i>	
To be identified	E.g. SIDA-funded projects

Annex 12: Mandate of the LEAP steering committee

1. The aim of the Steering Committee is to support all measures and actions with regards to LEAP, to oversee the implementation of the project, to draw insights from implementation experience, and to provide strategic guidance.
2. In particular the Steering Committee will:
 - supervise the project activities
 - discuss and approve the yearly plan of operations and the budget for LEAP
 - discuss and approve changes in the project document
 - discuss and decide on any other issue brought to the attention of the SC
 - take up any policy issues that arise from project implementation
 - facilitate contacts to other government or non-government institutions or donors
3. The SCM generally meets twice a year - or more often if deemed necessary – but at least once a year. It is recommended to have one meeting in June/July focussing on substantive or thematic issues, and one in November/December focussing on the workplan and budget.
4. The composition of the Steering Committee will be as follows:
 - The Director General of the MAF Department of Planning (chairperson)
 - The Director General of NAFES (vice-chairperson)
 - One representative of the NAFES Division of Planning (member)
 - Three representatives of provinces engaged in LEA expansion (members)
 - One representative of the MAF Permanent Secretary Office (member)
 - One representative of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (member)
 - One representative of SDC (member)
 - One representative of Helvetas (member)
 - The National Project Director of LEAP (secretary and resource person)
 - The Chief Technical Advisor of LEAP (resource person)
 - The Technical Advisor of LEAP (resource person)

Other resource persons (internal or external) may be invited as appropriate.

5. Invitations to the SCM are sent to all members at least 2 weeks before the meeting, together with a draft agenda. Draft reports and other relevant documents are sent at least 1 week before the meeting. Confirmation of attendance will be done by telephone at latest 2 days before the meeting.
6. The agenda will include:
 - Progress report
 - Plans for the next period (based on Yearly Plan of Operation)
 - Matters arising - discussion about what has happened as a result of the last meeting and any further action required
 - Anything else that the members wish to discuss
7. If no consensus can be reached, the respective decision will be referred to a higher levels of MAF or SDC.
8. LEAP submits to SC members the minutes of the SCM for comments within 10 days after the SCM. SC members have 10 days for their feedback; the final minutes are thus available latest 4 weeks after the SCM.
9. LEAP organises all facilities for smooth conduct of the SCM.

Annex 13: ToRs of Technical Advisers

1. Extension and Institutional Development Specialist / Chief Technical Adviser

The CTA will have the overall responsibility jointly with the Deputy General Director of NAFES for the implementation of the project and for ensuring high quality and timely completion of activities. The CTA reports to Helvetas. The CTA shall:

- a) Be responsible for correct financial management and administration of project components and activities to be implemented by Helvetas.
- b) Advise NAFES, collaborators and partners on the management of components and activities for which they are contractually responsible.
- c) Determine the needs for short-term TA by international and local consultants, engage suitable consultants (in case of international consultants via Helvetas head office) and facilitate and supervise their work.
- d) Guide and supervise all project-employed staff.
- e) Engage in a strategic dialogue with NAFES, other organisations and projects, in order to further develop and implement an improved version of the Lao Extension Approach (LEA+) that is both inclusive and pro-poor.
- f) Assist NAFES and Provincial staff in adopting improved planning and management systems. Of particular importance is the design of a workable M&E system under component 1.
- g) Liaise with other projects and experts to test methods and build capacity for technical service delivery under Component 2, including the development of well-defined links between training, input supply and marketing.
- h) Collaborate with NAFES, provinces, districts and other partners in identifying experiences and good practices to capture under component 5, and in designing the “mini-projects” to process and document them. Guide and supervise the implementation of the “mini-projects”.
- i) Contribute to activities under components 3 and 4 when required, particularly to the further strengthening of the agricultural knowledge and information system (AKIS) in a way that promotes decentralisation and pluralism.
- j) Stay in close contact with the Chairman of the Steering Committee, particularly with regard to institutional and regulatory problems that arise during the project implementation.
- k) Stay in close contact with the SDC country office with regard to strategic issues and any other relevant matters.

2. Training and Human Resources Development Specialist / Technical Adviser

The training and human resources development specialist will assist staff of the NAFES Extension and Information Division in ensuring the timely completion and quality of the activities related to the further development of training, coaching and information services. He/she will report to the CTA. His/her shall:

- a) Assist the NAFES Master Trainers in completing the implementation of expansion plans initiated in phase II (component 3)
- b) Assist NAFES and Provincial staff in expanding and upgrading the pool of LEA trainers (component 3) including the development of a certification system for Master Trainers.
- c) Assist NAFES in the planning of management training activities, including the development of toolkits on relevant subjects (component 1)
- d) Assist NAFES and Provincial staff in expanding the range of training modules and information products on technical and methodological topics, including liaison with relevant sources of expertise (components 3 & 4)
- e) Assist NAFES and Provincial staff in the establishment of information units at the National, Provincial and District levels, including systems for managing NICE and the testing of 'call centres' (component 4).
- f) Guide the Master Trainers at National and Provincial level in ways that will enhance the quality of the LEA.
- g) Guide NAFES, PAFO and DAFO staff in the development of methods to strengthen the Village Extension System and Kumban Extension Network.
- h) Contribute to activities under components 2 and 5, and to project steering and administration on a need basis and in accord with the CTA.

Annex 14: Budget

The Budget is shown in the following tables. All figures are in Swiss France (CHF).

14.1 Budget Summary by Line of Activity

14.2 Budget for Project Steering

14.3 Budget for Project Administration

14.4 Budget for Component 1 - Strengthening Extension Management

14.5 Budget for Component 2 - Strengthening Technical Services

14.6 Budget for Component 3 - Strengthening Training Services

14.7 Budget for Component 4 - Strengthening Information Services

14.8 Budget for Component 5 - Capitalisation of Extension Experience