



**PROJECT AT A GLANCE**

**Title**

Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service  
Phase III

**Budget**

Current Phase:  
(12/2021-11/2025)  
CHF 5,585,500

**Partners**

Department of Agricultural  
Extension and Cooperatives  
of the Ministry of Agriculture  
and Forestry,  
with the technical support of  
Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation



**The Lao Upland Rural Advisory Service (LURAS) phase III promotes a demand-driven pluralistic extension system, involving various service providers including self-determined farmer organisations. It has been established to support inclusive and resilient farming systems and agribusiness, which in turn creates fair and sustainable incomes for the local vulnerable communities.**

**PROJECT LOCATIONS**

Houaphan, Luangprabang,  
Oudomxay, Xaisomboun and  
Xieng Khouang

**BACKGROUND**

Laos is an agriculture-based country in transition. Farmers require additional knowledge, skills and access to resources to organize themselves within the ongoing agricultural socio-economic changes.

The 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021-2025, is centred on a green growth strategy including promotion of climate resilience actions as well as clean, safe and sustainable agriculture.

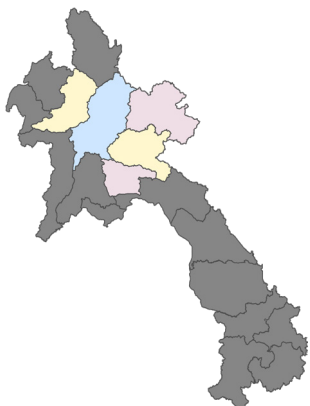
With this, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has promoted the implementation of the Green Extension concept, an approach developed under the previous phase of LURAS.

Green Extension is a type of rural advisory service which supports the scaling up of sustainable agriculture by facilitating socio-ecological learning processes with farmers.

Laos' progress in reducing the poverty rate has been impressive, yet uneven, with small farmers and members of ethnic minorities living in remote areas continuing to be vulnerable. Farming families in the upland areas of Laos still lack additional knowledge, skills and access to critical resources to innovate and organize themselves in the context of a rapidly changing market economy, extreme climate change and the COVID-19 outbreak.

Smallholder farmers in the uplands, especially youth and ethnic minorities, will continue to be the primary beneficiaries of LURAS activities.

LURAS will collaborate with a range of partners from Government, the private sector and civil society to improve the profitability and sustainability of agricultural production, processing and marketing activities carried out by farming families and producer organisations. This will involve community-based learning activities in selected districts and institutional capacity building at the provincial and national levels.



## OVERALL GOAL

**A demand-driven pluralistic extension system, involving various service providers including self-determined farmer organisations, has been established to support inclusive, resilient farming systems and agri-business, which in turn creates fairer and sustainable incomes.**

## OBJECTIVES

LURAS Phase III strives to achieve four outcomes:

Green and sustainable agriculture, including climate resilience in line with the Government's Agricultural Development Strategy and National Strategy on Climate Change is promoted by extension services.

Rural youth and farmers' organisations have greater income and employment opportunities through engagement with markets for healthy and high-value products.

Responsible investment, fair contracting and value adding for the benefit of all partners is increased through enhanced relationships between agricultural producers, companies and the government.

Decision-makers and policy makers have improved access to information and opportunities for dialogue that supported green and sustainable development in the agriculture sector including climate resilience.

## STRATEGY

LURAS is in line with Switzerland's International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024 and the Climate Change and Natural Resource Management portfolio objective of the current Swiss Cooperation Programme in the Mekong Region 2022-2025.

The aim is that "people, in particular young people, women and disadvantaged groups are more resilient to climate change and disasters, have more secure and equitable access to natural resources (land, forest and water) and manage them sustainably".

In addition, phase III will contribute to SDGs 10, 13 and 17, and make a significant contribution towards the achievement of the development policies of the Lao government, in particular:

- The 9th National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP) 2021 to 2025;
- The GoL's Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to 2030;
- National Strategy on Climate Change of Lao PDR.

The comparative advantage of LURAS in Green Extension, agri-business promotion and knowledge exchange platforms will complement

other SDC projects such as the Vocational Training and Employment Support Service (VTESS) Project in terms of skills development and employment.

The Enhancing Nutrition of Upland Farming Families (ENUFF) project will also benefit from the extension materials and action research of LURAS to promote the diversity of agricultural products for better nutrition.

## APPROACH

The key strategic elements for the intervention of Phase III are (a) promoting innovation through Green Extension that was developed in previous phases, which has helped small farmers to increase incomes and improve product quality; (b) creating decent employment and income opportunities for rural youth through the Agripreneurs for Green Rural Enterprises and Employment (AGREE) scheme; (c) supporting win-win partnership between farmers and responsible enterprises; (d) focusing on value chains for quality products with stable premium prices such as specialty coffee and forest tea; and (e) implementing the community-based adaptation to climate change through the Climate Resilient Extension Development (CRED) process.

## EXPECTATIONS

The project expects that about 2,500 farming households will be directly involved in learning and marketing activities during Phase III. With 10% (25,000 households) of the targeted northern provinces having access to new information that could contribute to livelihood improvements.

The AGREE scheme for Young Agripreneurs, developed in earlier phases, will be expanded to provide business start-up opportunities across ten provinces.

Partnerships between farmer organisations, small enterprises, processing companies and prospect exporters will be strengthened.

The Farmer Agribusiness and Market Engagement Centre (FAME) of the MAF will be operationalized, including training facilities and demonstration areas for processing.

Moreover, policy dialogues will be carried out on key issues related to sustainable agriculture, agribusiness and climate resilience.



Front Photo: Member of the Keoset Coffee Cooperative in Xieng Khouang, Lao PDR. Photo © Touravanh/SDC

Back Photo: Phousan Tea harvester in Laungprabang, Lao PDR. Photo © Helvetas