

## Support to the reform of the Luang Prabang Agriculture And Forestry College in Laos (SURAFCO)

**Country/Region:** Laos, Luang Prabang

**Timeframe/Status:** September 2009 – August 2012

**Needs:** Formal education and agricultural extension play a major role in the Lao PDR Government strategy to modernise the agriculture and forestry sector in order to achieve food security and poverty reduction. Five agricultural colleges need to be reformed to better respond to the needs of the labour market and the objectives of the Government policy and the trainings must become skills-based.



**Objectives:** The Luang Prabang Agriculture and Forestry (LAFC), as a well managed centre for skills-based education and training in upland farming systems, offers an attractive study and working environment for students and teachers (taking into account gender and ethnic groups), is linked to a number of private and public partners, and its graduates are in demand for their theoretical and practical skills in the labour market.

The project focuses on six objectives:

- Improved student selection and motivation
- Better educated teachers
- New skills-based curriculum & student-centered teaching introduced
- National, regional and international partner networks established
- Improved infrastructure and equipment
- Modern management practices.

**Target groups:** Disadvantaged groups of students from poor and remote areas in the Northern provinces of Laos, with a growing number of women and students originating from ethnic groups, enrol in the college and contribute to its reputation in the labour market, through their theoretical, practical, technical, managerial and social competence.

**Focus / Activities:** SURAFCO was set up to assist implementing a reform process following the “Strategy for Reform in the Agriculture and Forestry Colleges towards 2020” in Lao PDR elaborated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The project is implemented by the Luang Prabang Agriculture and Forestry College (LAFC) with support of HELVETAS.

Helvetas gives technical advice and/or coordinates a set of activities in the following fields (selection):

- Support to overall organisational development and project coordination
- Financial Management: Helvetas administers the financial flows and provides regular financial reports.
- Support to the organization of trainings and workshops, quality education: Advanced skills training in teaching methods, workshops held on business development, workshops held with other colleges on further strategy of college reform in Laos, skills training for income generating (e.g. handicraft, farming) and workshops for teachers, advanced trainings in organizational development and management
- Support in monitoring and evaluation: Evaluation of students’ performances and elaboration of M&E schedule for teaching performance, outline of M&E for college activities and income generating, M&E system for teacher performance & international upgrading training, employer assessment of reputation and satisfaction with college
- Elaboration of support schemes for disadvantaged students and grants scheme for graduates
- Supervision of infrastructure development (Water supply system, dormitories, teaching facilities)

**Human and Financial Resources:** The tentative budget of the project is 4.65 m CHF for the first phase. 8 staff of Helvetas and international consultants.

**Implementing agency:** SURAFCO is implemented by the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC) with support of HELVETAS. Assistance in curriculum development is provided by SCA, the Swiss College of Agriculture, and in infrastructure development by SKAT, the Swiss Resource Centre and Consultancies for Development.

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**Useful Tools, Documents, Resources:** <http://www.nafclao.org/>