



Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Home gardening groups to boost nutrition in rural villages of Houaphan, Lao PDR. Photo © SDC/Toula HOOK.

SDC is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. In collaboration with other federal offices, SDC is responsible for the overall coordination of cooperation activities in developing countries, cooperation with multilateral institutions, cooperation with Eastern Europe, and the humanitarian aid delivered by the Swiss Confederation.

As a long-standing actor in the Mekong region, SDC aims at reducing poverty, supporting equitable and sustainable development, and fostering democratic governance. SDC aspires to support governments and non-government actors in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam (the so-called CLMV countries) to become equal and empowered partners within the ASEAN Community.

Located in Vientiane since 2006, the Swiss Cooperation Office and Consular Agency in Laos, has the mandate to coordinate Swiss cooperation in the Mekong region and the Laos country program.

SDC in the Mekong region

The regional programmes tackle issues of regional importance which cannot be addressed by one country alone. The portfolio supports institutions such as the MRC, RECOFTC, as well as support to the regional initiatives regarding migration, skills development and land governance.

Regional interventions at CLMV-level are combined with the country programmes of Cambodia and Lao PDR by working in the same three country level domains to ensure continuity as well as thematic complementarities and synergies.

SDC's activities all include the cross-cutting themes of gender equality, governance and climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

SDC in Lao PDR

SDC's overall goal is to contribute to building inclusive societies through equitable and sustainable development and democratic governance. To this end, Switzerland contributes to poverty reduction and inclusive and equitable development in Lao PDR.

SDC actively supports the Lao government's efforts to implement the National Social-Economic Development Plan and to graduate out of the Least Developed Country through three domain areas:

In the **Governance and Citizen Participation** domain, SDC focuses its program towards supporting the Lao Government to deliver more equitable and responsive public services for the poor and vulnerable, citizens increasingly participate in shaping more inclusive policies and to hold government agencies accountable for their actions.

In the **Agriculture and Food Security** domain, the core areas of support will improve food security, nutrition awareness, resilience, increase income and secure equitable access to and control over agricultural land, forest and water resources for small holder farmers.

In the **Skills Development and Employment** domain, program efforts will provide opportunities for women and men, in particular from disadvantaged groups, to develop better skills and benefit from gainful and decent employment and self-employment. Active private sector involvement will ensure relevance to employers and labour market needs.

Governance and Citizen Participation

Poverty Reduction Fund: (12/2016-06/2021, CHF 17,800,000). The support to the World Bank Fund aims at increasing participation and representation during local level planning and implementation of public investments and strengthen local government capacity to carry out and deliver these services.

National Governance and Public Administration Reform Programme - Governance for Inclusive Development Programme: (08/2017-07/2021, CHF 4,000,000). The project with the Ministry of Home Affairs, implemented by UNDP, aims to support the government's desire to strengthen its public administration's ability to achieve the goal of better service delivery (equitable, responsive, accountable), and promotes wider governance improvements with greater citizens' engagement.

Knowledge for Development: (06/2018-05/2021, CHF 3,100,000). The project implemented by the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Bern, supports the GoL with quality information to shape equitable socio-economic development and ecological sustainability, while fostering the accountability of decision makers.

Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and Rule of Law: (01/2017-03/2022, CHF 5,950,000). This project seeks to improve the inclusiveness of the development process in Lao PDR, focusing on three main intervention areas: improving the environment for the civil society, strengthening the National Assembly and enhancing the state of the rule of law. The project is a joint Switzerland, Germany and the European Union program implemented by GIZ.

Agriculture and Food Security

Support to the Reform of the Agriculture and Forestry Colleges: (03/2017-12/2020, CHF 5,100,000). The project, implemented by Helvetas and the Northern Agriculture Forestry College under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, supports the education reform of the agriculture and forestry strategy (2008-2020). All five national Agriculture Forestry Colleges are gradually adhering to quality standards in education to ensure the development of skilled human resources that respond to the needs of a modern market-based agriculture sector.

Lao Upland Rural Advisory Services: (12/017-11/2021, CHF 7,400,000). This project is a multi-stakeholder market-based approach to promote and establish a demand-driven pluralistic extension system to support inclusive agriculture value chains, which improve upland farmers' food security, opportunities and income in a fair, healthy and sustainable manner. The project is implemented by Helvetas/SNV.

Enhancing Nutrition of Upland Farming Families: (07/2020-06/2024, CHF 7,000,000). This project, implemented by SNV, follows a multi-sectoral approach to improve nutritional status of upland farming communities through improved feeding practices, household dietary diversity, improved access to hygiene and sanitation, increased access to nutritious food with a more conducive policy framework at sub national level.



Coffee Farmer's Association in Xieng Khuang, Lao PDR.
Photo © SDC/Toula HOOK.

Skills Development and Employment

Skills for Tourism: (08/2016-12/2021) CHF 9,000,000. The project is equally co-financed by Switzerland and Luxembourg, implemented by Ministry of Education and Sports and LuxDev, supports to improve the quality and expand the skills development programs in the tourism and hospitality sector. The project aims to increase employment and participation of Lao youth from disadvantaged groups to meet the needs of the tourism labour market.

Vocational Training and Employment Support Service: (08/2019-07/2023) CHF 8,6100,000. The project, is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the consortium of Swisscontact and the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts supports the Integrated Vocational Education System (IVET) in cooperation with Employment Support Services (ESS) to consistently bring people with poverty and disability, job seekers, disadvantaged people and other marginalized groups into employment, self-employment, income generation or back into the education system.