



Mid-term Assessment Mission SURAFCO III Final Report



Vientiane Lao PDR
October/December 2018

1. Table of Content

<u>1. TABLE OF CONTENT</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>2. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>3. BACKGROUND</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>4. INTRODUCTION REMARKS AND METHODICAL APPROACH</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>5. ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO DAC-CRITERIA</u>	<u>8</u>
5.1 RELEVANCE	8
5.2 EFFECTIVENESS	9
5.3 EFFICIENCY	10
5.4 IMPACT	10
5.5 SUSTAINABILITY	11
<u>6. MAJOR FINDINGS ACCORDING TO PROJECT OUTCOMES</u>	<u>12</u>
6.1 STATUS OF PROJECT OUTCOMES (OUTCOME1-3)	12
6.1.1 OUTCOME 1	13
6.1.2 OUTCOME 2	15
6.1.3 OUTCOME 3	17
6.2 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	19
6.2.1 "KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND EXCHANGES"	19
6.2.2 GENDER	19
<u>7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	<u>20</u>
7.1 CONCLUSIONS	20
7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS – DAC MATRIX	23

2. Acronyms and Abbreviations

BAFC	Bolikamxay Agriculture and Forestry College
BMO	Business Membership Organisation
CAFC	Champasak Agriculture and Forestry College
CCU	Carrier Counselling Unit
CD	Curriculum Development
CHF	Swiss Francs
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAEC	Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperatives (former NAFES)
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DOLSW	Department of Labour and Social Welfare
DEWATS	Decentralized Water Treatment System
Gol	Government of the Lao PDR
HAFL	School for Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences of Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland (former SCA)
HRD	Human Resources Development
IG	Income Generation
IT	Information Technology
Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
LWU	Lao Women's Union
LYU	Lao Youth Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MIC	Maintenance in Charge
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFC	Northern Agriculture and Forestry College
NAFRI	National Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NTC	National Training Council
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
OSDD	Organisation and Staff Development Department
SAFC	Savannakhet Agriculture and Forestry College
SCA	Swiss College of Agriculture
SCM	Steering Committee Meeting
SKAT	Swiss Resource Centre and Consultancies for Development.
SURAFCO	Support to the Reform of the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College in Lao PDR
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
TA	Technical Assistance/Technical Adviser
TIC	Thangon Irrigation College
TOR	Terms of Reference
VTI	Vocational Training Institute
WS	Workshop

3. Background

Project basics and history

In September 2009, the Swiss Government launched the “Support to the Reform of the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College” (SURAFCO) project at the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC) to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry’s (MAF) strategic efforts to build up a new type of human resources and contribute to increased graduates’ employment in line with the requirements of the public and private agricultural job market.

The “Support to the Reform of the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College” (SURAFCO) project is part of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) **Agriculture and Food Security** domain. The project is implemented through **HELVETAS** Swiss Intercooperation in close partnership with the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC) situated in Luang Prabang (with CTA and PM stationed in Vientiane) and four vocational colleges countrywide: Champasak (Champasak Agriculture and Forestry College - CAFC), Savannakhet (Savannakhet Agriculture and Forestry College - SAFC) Bolikhhamxay (Bolikhhamxay Agriculture and Forestry College - BAFC) and Thangon (Thangon Irrigation College - TIC). Over the last 10 years, HELVETAS has been supported through sub-contracting, assistance in curriculum development by **HAFL**, School for Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences of Bern University of applied sciences, Switzerland (former SCA) and in infrastructure development by **SKAT**, the Swiss Resource Centre and Consultancies for Development.¹

While NAFC has been supported already since the beginning of SDC support to MAF, the other 4 colleges got first partly involved during the phase 2 of SURAFCO and became full project partners since 2016.

During **phase I**, the NAFC was built up as the model college under the MAF reform. SURAFCO’s first phase (3 years) focused on 1) Improvement of student selection and motivation, 2) Teachers’ upgrading, 3) Curriculum development, 4) Establishment of partnerships, 5) Improvement of infrastructure and 6) Improvement of the management system. In **phase II** (4 years), these results were consolidated and the project started to work more closely with the other 4 colleges under MAF. During phase II SURAFCO has for example successfully extended the curriculum development process and the campus management approach from the NAFC to the other four colleges. The second phase continued the best practices of the first phase with four components: 1) Upland partner networking and capacity outreach; 2) Good education quality relevant for the uplands at NAFC and spread to other colleges; 3) Transparent, effective and gender-sensitive college management; and 4) Increased employment of graduates supporting upland development. Phase II started to transfer experiences and provided partial support to the other four colleges in the reform process, namely in curriculum development, and selected management and teaching topics.

Now in **phase III** (about 4 years), SURAFCO is supporting all five agriculture and forestry colleges. The project has been continuing to strengthen them to gradually adhere to quality standards approved by Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES).

The main focus is to observe and to better respond to demands of the labour market. It is foreseen that SURAFCO activities will result in an overall increased education quality and lead to better qualified human resources for the agriculture and forestry sector. SURAFCO phase III has the task to further strengthen management structures and systems that will still be functional once the project finishes,

¹ Source: ToR/SDC October 2018

focusing on self-sustenance. In order to cope with ongoing changes even after the intensive reform process, the colleges and MAF will further develop and strengthen their capacities in institutional management. Furthermore, one expected result of the project is to assure that functions that are still relevant after the life span of the project are institutionalised to positions within the organizational set-up of the colleges and of MAF.

Goals and targets of SURAFCO III

“The overall project goal by 2020, reads as follows: ***“By 2020, with NAFC in the lead and with regular exchanges amongst all colleges under MAF, all five colleges are gradually adhering to Quality Standards for Higher Education to ensure the development of skilled human resources that respond to the needs of a modern market based agricultural sector.”***²

There are three main outcomes and a cross cutting topic of Phase III:

Expected outcome 1:

Quality teaching based on skills and student-centred learning approach and responding to demands of the labour markets is implemented in all 5 colleges;

Expected outcome 2:

College management ensures effective and systematic school administration and further development of the educational quality;

Expected outcome 3:

Infrastructure and equipment offer basic conditions for teaching and learning in all 5 colleges.

Crosscutting topics: “Knowledge Sharing and Exchanges”: All 5 colleges regularly exchange on good practices, lessons learned, and innovations that improve the quality of education.

The NAFC is in many areas more advanced than the other colleges. It will continue to be a nucleus for innovation also in phase III. Given that NAFC is more advanced and experienced in taking up new ideas, new approaches and tools should be developed and tested at this college first and then transferred to the other four colleges.

The direct beneficiaries of SURAFCO are all vocational learners, the college staff and administrative staff at MAF related to HRD. Indirect beneficiaries are among others the private sector, provincial and district agricultural offices, extension service offices, farmers, producer groups, farmers associations, and in under conditions the TVET sector.”³

Socio-economic background

Laos is undergoing a rapid transition and continued economic growth, with an average of 7.5% growth of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 2010 and 2015 and close to 7% in the period 2016-2018. The Government of Laos (GoL) has determined agriculture development as a priority and has established guidelines to shift from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented agriculture. Projections are that by 2020, the GDP of the Agriculture and Forestry Sector would grow at the average rate of 3.4%, contributing 19% to the national economy. Although 35.8% of the employed population is active in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery⁴, agriculture remains the main employer and a main source of income for more than half of the population and it contributes significantly to rural poverty reduction. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has been implementing the “Strategy for the Reform

² ToR/SDC October 2018

³ Ibid

⁴ Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017, MPI LSB, June 2018, p. 48

in the Agriculture and Forestry Colleges towards 2020 in Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)" since January 2008, further developed in 2015 as "Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030", to improve the mid- and high-level diploma college education. This strategy states "to Improve agriculture and forestry colleges and schools under the management of the MAF for better school management and administration quality, improve the development of teaching-learning curriculum, upgrade knowledge of teachers at 100% according to the standards of the Ministry of Education and Sports aiming at building agriculture technician to have knowledge, capacity, merits and morals to serve the society and can be competitive in the region."⁵

4. Introduction remarks and methodical approach

Introduction

After two years of SURAFCO phase III SDC together with MAF decided to conduct a Mid Term Review (MTR) in order to assess the progress of the project with emphasis on issues related to the key topics of this final phase of SURAFCO: consolidation and capitalization. The MTR shall focus on relevant issues to achieve the planned outcomes and to ensure the sustainability beyond the project. This in context the objectives of the MTR are to:

1. apply the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project in terms of achieving its expected outcomes, outputs and results in regards to the project document (ProDoc);
2. assess the appropriateness of the interventions taking into account the exit strategy and considering the remaining life cycle of the project and beyond;
3. provide practical, realistic and actionable recommendations for the remaining period of the project and beyond."⁶

Methodical approach

The MTR team consisting of consultants from Lao-German Development Consulting Co., Ltd. (LGDC) has and SDC agreed to convene the MTR as a combination of desk studies, field work with interviews at all colleges and selected key stakeholders (PAFO, DAFO, companies).

The **desk study** has been focused on following reference documents:

- SURAFCO Project Document;
- Phase III Progress reports (2017-2018);
- Minutes from Steering Committee meetings and other relevant management meetings;
- Strategy for Reform in the Agriculture and Forestry Colleges towards 2020 in Lao PDR Agriculture Strategy 2011-2025;
- SDC Mekong strategy 2018-21;
- Final evaluation phase II SURAFCO, MTR of Phase II;
- Documents produced by the project such as: curricula, manuals, handbooks, assessments (farm and income scheme) and workshop reports and other relevant documents.

Furthermore, the desk study referred to relevant Lao development strategies and plans as well as to statistics, legislation and other relevant publications like:

- 8th National Socio-Economic development Plan 2016-2020;
- Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030;
- Education Sector Development Strategy 2016-2020;

⁵ Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030, MAF, 2015, p. 29

⁶ SURAFCO ToR

- MoLSW Vision 2030 and Labour and Social Welfare Development Strategy 2016-2025;
- Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017;
- Guideline for Implementation of Quality Assurance in TVET Institutions.

Field work /interviews /limitations

The LGDC consultants attached great importance to the field work and interviewing target groups and beneficiaries in order to gain an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the SURAFCO project. Therefore, an observation at the NAFC and all other colleges had been foreseen after the briefing with the contractor SDC, the MAF and the implementing agency HELVETAS. The detailed MTR time schedule is attached as annex 10.3. During the visits at colleges there have been opportunities to discuss with graduates, teachers and relevant stakeholders in agriculture, including enterprises, PAFO and more. The MTR team took of great importance to getting feedback not only from the vocational education side. In addition, it was intended to ascertain opinions on the efficiency, effectiveness and impacts of SURAFCO in particular from users and especially from agricultural enterprises. The consultants have therefore extended the time of their field work so that an unadulterated view of the effects and outcome of the project could be obtained. Respective contacts had been prepared and interviews carried out with the help of the colleges as well as the implementing agency HELVETAS.

Information collected during the field visits at all 5 colleges was then used to produce an overview of the current status of SURAFCO III, to develop recommendations for the establishment (or the update) of a qualified exit strategy for the remaining time of the project and beyond. A short questionnaire had been prepared and presented to the involved interview partners at central, provincial and project level in order to structure visits and meetings and with the aim to familiarise the target groups with the goals and intentions of the MTR (annex 1.2: Assessment Concept - Agriculture and Forestry Colleges in Lao PDR supported by SURAFCO (MTR - 2018)).

Limitations

Due to the limited time frame the mission was not able to collect and analyse additional information for assessing the impact of SURAFCO activities on the entire TVET system. For example, the mission could not:

- contact a large number of agriculture businesses in order to get information of the demand of companies;
- getting a detailed overview regarding existing parallel strategies and policies of VET in the Agriculture and Forestry (A&F) sector run by different players, especially by MAF and MoES;
- identify the impact of such parallel promotion of vocational education for and in respective provinces and districts;
- discussing policy directions at central and provincial level, etc.

Therefore, recommendations and outcomes of the MTR shall be further questioned and discussed with the aim of further detailing and operationalizing.

The DAC assessment usually includes a rating of the individual colleges and the entire project. The mission has waived a grading because it does not seem appropriate and goal-oriented at the present time. Instead, it has placed particular emphasis on identifying the different developments of the partner schools involved and making proposals for achieving the DAC criteria by the end of the project in two years.

Knowing that the Mission has not been able to carry out an all-encompassing investigation in the limited time available, we recommend that important questions and problems should be further

pursued and clarified at the various levels of project work and management. LGDC would be honoured to assist to such work requirements on policy and implementation level.

5. Assessment according to DAC-Criteria

5.1 Relevance

The Vision 2030 and the 10-Year Socio-economic Development Strategy (2016-2025) of the Lao PDR aim at ensuring self-sufficiency in food supply and beginning of export of agricultural products as well as the development of an agro-processing industry. This is challenged by the low development speed of agricultural production during the period 2000-2015 of 2,8% annually due to the traditional, often subsistence-oriented, small farm based and heavily depending on natural conditions form of agriculture. The 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) therefore set a target of 3,2% annual growth for the sector with the aim to contribute 19% of GDP in 2020.⁷ The plan focuses on qualitative development: "Agricultural productivity is still low and enhancing productivity is an essential ingredient for inclusive growth."⁸ The NSEDP states further: "Improve farmer productivity by establishing farm production, production groups, enterprises and the family model using modern techniques and technology in production to ensure the supply of agricultural products as inputs to processing industries and services quantitatively and qualitatively in order to add value to the products."⁹ These targets have set the framework for the "Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030". The methods to achieve these goals are described as mechanisation, increase of productivity, clean and safe agricultural production, use of modern technologies etc. which are all closely linked to better training of all people involved in agricultural production and processing, even if this is not explicitly mentioned in the strategic documents.

On the other hand, human resources development of personnel and civil servants has been defined as one of the major intervention areas in the Agriculture Development Strategy towards achieving the objectives. Activities in this intervention area are supported by the SURAFCO project, which goes beyond the strategic goal of human resources development for the MAF personnel and staff aiming at developing labour market relevant training. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) Master Plan 2030 expects for the period 2020 to 2025 an additional 901.000 people entering the labour market, of those 690.500 in the agricultural sector.¹⁰

By supporting the development and application of modern, labour-market oriented training contents in all five colleges the project is a master key to the achievement of the strategic goals of GoL. The focus on strengthening the management capacities of the colleges as well as the provision of necessary equipment offer basic conditions for teaching and learning in all 5 colleges and are set to ensure the continuity of work beyond the project time frame. The regular exchange on good practices, lessons learned, and innovations that improve the quality of vocational education among the five colleges facilitates the introduction of standardised training programs in the agriculture sector. In this context the project can be rated as highly relevant.

⁷ 8th NSEDP, p. 88

⁸ 8th NSEDP, p. 85

⁹ 8th NSEDP, p. 99

¹⁰ MoLSW Vision 2030 and Labour and Social Welfare Development Strategy 2016-2025, p. 18

5.2 Effectiveness

The objective of the project was the qualitative and quantitative improvement of demand-driven training at all five colleges under supervision of MAF. In general, the project, by following the three main outcomes and the cross-cutting topics, achieved remarkable progress in developing and implementing quality awareness in vocational education. This refers specifically to the fundamental improvement of training contents and pedagogical foundations (as for example the whole package curricula and modules, methods, teaching materials etc.). Furthermore, capacity development for teachers and school managers has been implemented successfully over the years, thereby improving the training standard of agricultural experts at college level as envisaged in the Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030 (see quote under Socio-economic Background, p. 6).

The fact that the project documents contains only few clearly defined numeric indicators may leave room for a more flexible and innovative project management, but also makes an assessment more difficult. Nevertheless, in accordance with the project's holistic approach substantial improvements beyond the development of teaching content, namely in teaching methods and approaches, have been found. The organisation of job fairs and attempts to reach out to respective local labour markets contribute to the positive outcome as well.

Regarding the delivered qualifications at the colleges the team found that mostly Higher Diploma courses have been carried out (please compare table 3 point 6.1). The TVET law in Lao PDR defines five certification levels from certificate level 1-3 (worker, semi-skilled worker and skilled worker) as the lowest levels to the diploma level and the higher diploma level as the highest one. The focus of the colleges on just one level of training – Higher Diploma – out of 5 remains at least questionable.¹¹

College management has been improved significantly at all colleges. The still existing differences in performance are mainly the result of unequal grants and funding periods when comparing NAFC with the other colleges. On the other hand, there is also to consider that the leadership and ownership of management staff makes a difference when it comes to the positioning of the colleges in the development context of the provincial administrations.

Interaction and communication between the colleges is one of the top advantages of SURAFCO's conceptual framework. Systematic knowledge sharing, exchange of best practices and expertise help all involved parties to overcome shortcomings at the school and provincial levels. In this context, the found low level of communication and cooperation with some of the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFO) can be seen as a missed opportunity for both sides and hampering a better integration into the local economic setting of the provinces¹².

Infrastructure and equipment support by SURAFCO has been either provided as planned or is ready for delivery. It became not clear why the process of implementation of the agreed infrastructure measures lacks behind the timeframe. Whether the colleges have delayed the technical proposals or the requests are not yet approved by MAF to finish preparation work in order to accelerate the construction of buildings as precondition for the installation of modern equipment as well as teaching and learning materials could not be clearly figured out.¹³ It seems that the colleges themselves should

¹¹ The so-called "mid-diploma level" does not exist in respective laws. It seems that this refers rather to bridging courses with the final aim to enter higher diploma courses.

¹² PAFO have no responsibilities for college concerns. Colleges are acting under the direct mandate of MAF.

¹³ This should be further clarified by Project management together with the Department of HRD at MAF.

do much more in following up their duties and to be more effective in improving the needed training facilities.

5.3 Efficiency

With regard to qualitative outcomes like curricula standards, teacher qualifications and improved school management the efficiency of the project measures can be rated as good. However, an appropriate assessment of quantitative outputs in relation to the inputs is not easy to make as no target figures have been set. As the financial situation of the colleges is one major aspect in assessing efficiency, efforts have been made to gather respective data. With the result that information about the financial situation of the colleges are difficult to collect. The situation is non-transparent and not systematic. In general, it can be stated that all four colleges suffer from chronic budget shortages.

Contradictory to the burning issue of financing nearly no income generating measures could be detected at the colleges and for the majority of the colleges preparing business plans seems not to be a priority.

When judging efficiency by the number of graduates there is much room for improvement. The quota of students set by MAF for the colleges is heavily underused with the trend to further decrease. The reasons are manifold, be it the outdated quota-system as such, the limitation to just one level of education, the decreasing chances to enter civil service, the low level of stipend paid by MAF or the very basic facilities and rustic conditions at dormitories (please compare point 6.1).

In general, the contribution of the colleges to labour market demand is important in itself but in kind of numbers rather limited as the annual output of approximately 700 graduates contrasts with the 551.000 employees in agriculture¹⁴ and the projected by MoLSW 690.500 new entrants for the period 2020-2025. The Economic Census II 2013 reported a total of 2.188 business units in agriculture, forestry and fishery¹⁵. These facts could lead to the conclusion that even if the demand in graduates at higher diploma level can be matched there remains a huge unsatisfied demand in qualified labour in this sector at lower levels. On top, the originally foreseen role of the graduates as “professional personnel who will guide people to cultivation”¹⁶ can’t be taken over by the graduates due to the GoL’s recruitment constraints.

5.4 Impact

The objective of the project stating that “all five 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 agricultural sector” has been – at the current status - partly achieved. Thereby the project contributed substantially to develop and introduce quality standards in the five agricultural colleges and to improve the management of the training institutes.

Having in mind the development towards a modern, market-oriented agriculture requested by the GoL strategies, the project target is fully rectified. On the other hand, there are some doubts regarding the overall Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy in the A&F sector as MAF understands the role of the five colleges mainly as providers of qualified civil servants for the agricultural sector, thereby largely excluding the demand of the labour market. This has obviously gained increasing attention in GoL circles expressed by MAF’s deputy minister Dr. Phouang Parisak at the 16th SCM in October 2018.

¹⁴ Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017, June 2018, p. 48

¹⁵ Economic Census II, 2013, LSB, October 2015, p. 81

¹⁶ Agriculture Development Strategy to the year 2025 and Vision to 2030, MAF, 2015, p. 10

However, the outdated quota system for enrolling new students and the general stop of employing new civil servants still reflect this dilemma resulting in decreasing numbers of students in the colleges. In this context, the relationship between supply and demand seems also worth further consideration as the “modern market-based agricultural sector” needs skilled labour on all qualification levels.

The five colleges under SURAFCO have sufficient capacities and potentials to offer training at all qualification levels defined by the TVET Law.¹⁷ This would help to expand the range on training offers nation-wide as well as to improve the utilization of the institutes’ capacities and to generate more income. As in recent years Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) providers under MoES, increasingly offering training in agricultural professions with an orientation to the labour market, are obviously intending to fill this gap, one could have expected a coordination of efforts between the two concerned ministries.

5.5 Sustainability

Project contributions towards enhancing the quality of training, improving the management structures as well as the provision of infrastructure and equipment lay the foundations for sustainability. This concerns especially

- the improved decision-making competences, cooperation and networking experiences of school managers and administrators,
- the better trained and prepared for their tasks teaching staff combined with modern curricula and training contents,
- the upgrade of the training facilities.

Nevertheless, achieving sustainability seems at the moment still being a challenge depending on a number of preconditions to be fulfilled during the remaining time of the project:

1. The shift towards labour market orientation makes its way also into the strategic orientations of MAF with regard to HRD in the agriculture and forestry section. This means opening the colleges for more non-quota students, considering other levels of education than HD, shift away from educating experts mainly for civil service offering good career options for graduates.
2. Improvement of the financial situation of all colleges until the end of the project (see specific proposals and recommendation for discussion in DAC Matrix under point 7).
3. Improvement of the living conditions of the students (stipend, facilities) and in this connection an improved image of the colleges in the society.
4. Better linkages with local authorities and societies.

One precondition for sustainability is a strong orientation towards cooperation with the business sector which is found in the project objective but not explicitly expressed in the respective GoL strategies. By pointing to labour market orientation, the project objectives are preparing the path in the right direction, but this is not properly reflected in long-term target of agricultural development of the GoL. Specifically, the orientation to educate administrators or experts for civil service is not able to produce sustainable results in a situation when GoL is consistently reducing the intake of new civil servants, just recently announcing a new reduction from 3.000 new staff in 2018 to 1.500 in 2019 with a clear priority for the education and health sectors.¹⁸ This development may further accelerate the

¹⁷ Law on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), No. 42/NA, Date:23.12.2013, Article 13

¹⁸ Vientiane Times, 27.11.2018, p.3

trend of reduced enrolment at agricultural colleges which would be in clear contrast to the policy of enhanced development of the agricultural sector.

6. Major findings according to project outcomes

6.1 Status of project outcomes (outcome1-3)

There have been many reasons and a long way to go in order to improve vocational training in the A&F sector from 2008 until today. With NAFC in the lead the transfer of basic documents, curricula, training materials and new teaching practices and project experiences based on SURAFCO's program results have made a big progress over the years. The participatory approach by transferring best practices and knowledge from the advanced to the less advanced colleges has been seen as a viable concept. Table 1 below provides an overview about the strengths and some important challenges with regard to the expected outcomes determined in the LogFrame of SURAFCO.

Table 1: Development status of expected outcomes

Expected outcome 1:	Status
Quality teaching based on skills and student-centred learning approach and responding to demands of the labour markets is implemented in all 5 colleges	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New curricula developed, approved by MoES and MAF and applied at all colleges • New teaching methods introduced and in process of implementation • Continuous teacher training activities • Tracer Study (OP 1.1) <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical term outside the college (OP 1.1.3) • Qualitative and quantitative analysis of labour market (OP 1.1) • Quality of practical teaching and practical assignments (OP 1.2.6) • Decreasing enrolment rate.
Expected outcome 2:	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School management structures functioning • Communication and cooperation improved • Knowledge management in place despite the different specific situation of each college. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful fund raising (according to the budget plan) (OP 2.2.1) • Introducing income generating measures (OP 2.2) • Implementing internal and external QA with regard to TVET (2.4.2) • Coordination with MoES and VTI's (OP 2.5.5)
Expected outcome 3:	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure masterplans approved by MAF/SDC (SURAFCO)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project contributions have been made as planned or are ready to be delivered Well managed practical farms at most of colleges <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining campuses at all colleges (OP 3.1.3) Refurbish infrastructure according to standards and masterplan (OP 3.1.2) (including equipment)
--	--

The current review takes into account that the assessed colleges had quite different starting conditions and consequently have acquired different working and managing experiences. In general, the working and learning conditions at colleges are acceptable or good, but the mission found considerable differences between the colleges, for example in terms of school management, income generating activities, infrastructure and equipment. (please also consult DAC fact sheets in annex).

6.1.1 Outcome 1

Quality teaching based on skills and student-centred learning approach and responding to demands of the labour markets is implemented in all 5 colleges.

Phase III sets the focus to shift away from curriculum development to improving the quality of technical teaching content, didactic quality, further strengthening of student-centred teaching and learning. The LGDC team shares the assessments of college managements that systematic taking up the responsibility of maintaining the relevance and quality of education is step by step developing. This in mind, Didactic Teams and Career Counselling Unit's (CCU's) have been set up in order to maintain such innovative real time-oriented processes offering services at all colleges and to assist graduates for job seeking. The enrolment figures we found at all colleges seems to be critical as shown in table 2 below:

Table 2: Enrolment development at colleges

College	School Year 2016 /17		School Year 2017/18		School Year 2018/19		Total Plan	Actual
	Quota	Enrolled	Quota	Enrolled	Quota	Enrolled		
TIC	184	74	243	137	219	92	646	333
CAFC	250	281	253	170	300	120	803	495
SAFC	215	291	215	193	215	138	645	518
BAFC	210	59	255	76	195	66	660	224
NAFC	160	295	215	170	215	110	590	440
Total	1.019	1.000	1.181	746	1.144	526	3.344	2.010
Total including Non-Quota¹⁹	-	-	-	-	-	281	3.344	2.291

Some reasons like the image of A&F occupations and the modest social conditions at the colleges (among others: water supply and the living conditions, dormitories and apprenticeship scheme) are ranking high to the decision making of parents and training seekers. But there are also other reasons like the inefficient quota system, the not always convincing image of TVET for users as well as the

¹⁹ Please compare table 4

competition with other training providers and programs e.g.: between MoES/Provincial Education and Sports Service (PESS) and MAF/PAFO which hamper the recruitment of students.

The low number of students results in a very comfortable student/teacher ratio (STR) at all colleges which is far lower than in comparable vocational training institutes under MoES. The average student-teacher ratio in MAF colleges is 1:7,5. This may be welcomed from a pedagogical perspective but from an economic point of view it is very questionable. The student/teacher ratio in the education sector of Lao PDR is regulated by a Prime Minister's Decree since 2012.²⁰ The decree determines a teacher/student ratio of 1:20 in TVET and 1:30 in higher education.

Table 3: Teacher /Student ratio

	Teacher		Enrolled Students (three years)	Teacher Student Ratio
	Total	Women		
TIC	54	26	333	1:6 (6,16)
CAFC	69	31	495	1:7 (7,17)
SAFC	49	28	518	1:11 (10,57)
BAFC	69	34	224	1:3 (3,24)
NAFC	80	21	440	1:6 (5,5)
Total	321	140	2.010	1: 6 (6,26)

In addition, we see the current focus on higher diploma certificates at the colleges as an additional problem affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the colleges.

Table 4: Level of training and share of non-quota students

College	Students (Total)	Of them Higher Diploma	Of them Diploma	C1-3	Non-Quota Higher Diploma Total/Female
TIC	363	331	2	-	30/9
CAFC	495	495	-	-	-
SAFC	598	518	-	20 (C1)	80/40
BAFC	303	224	-	-	79/30
NAFC	532	440	-	178/76 (C1)	92/43
Total	2291	2008	2	198	281/122

Furthermore, the table shows relevant developments which needs to be solved:

1. The Higher Diploma Certificate at MAF colleges are the most enquired qualifications by the training seekers as well as the public and private employers. The changing employment policy of MAF in the last years and the strongly limited employment capacities in the civil servants sector (in this case especially at PAFO's and DAFO's) leads in consequence to shift the training policy from the "civil service orientation" to a "market based training orientation" in the A&F sector, as mentioned by the Vice Minister of MAF at the SCM in October last year.²¹Consequently consulting and reorienting training seekers should be further improved

²⁰ PMO Decree on Teaching Staff: No 177/Gol, Vientiane Capital, April 5th,2012

²¹ Compare Minutes of 16th SCM dated October 11, 2018: Vice Minister of MAF: Dr. Phouang Parisak at SCM

for example through career counselling and job fairs, which are in some colleges already existing and which in fact become more adapted to the labour market.

2. 87,7 % of the students are quota students (the LGDC team found only a small share of non-quota students). There is a need to clarify the reasons of under-usage of the training capacity at the colleges. Colleges should be supported in order to be capable to efficiently manage their training capacities not only from the pedagogical perspectives but with a clear economic and business perspective (budget and income).
3. The share of lower vocational qualification programs at all agriculture and forestry colleges is very low. Only some activities which are mostly short training courses (C1-2) have been carried out (and mainly financed by other projects like GIZ VELA). This invites to provide more market relevant training offers including at all qualification levels (respective curricula should be provided, probably in cooperation with TVET institutions under MoES) and by that encouraging a more business-oriented management.

The "mid-diploma level", as it has been practised in some colleges, and which is used as an upgrading or bridging course of 1.5 years is certainly an acceptable measure for meeting a specific demand and ensuring a better use of training and teaching capacities. But it does not correspond to the qualification level of the TVET Law and should be therefore adjusted.

Labour market orientation

In general college managements are sensitized about a good balance of theoretical and practical training at their colleges. As a general orientation all colleges stated that the relation should not be lower than 40:60. The implementation is quite different. Some colleges understand practical training limited only to practice activities of college owned "farm units", others reach out for cooperation with agricultural enterprises thereby offering a much better labour-market relevant training. Practical exercises, experiments on campus farms and labs are certainly sound methods to gain skills, but there is no better way to gain practical competences than to cooperate with enterprises and to learn and work under real work conditions.²² Therefore we totally share the CTA's view of SURAFCO assessment saying that "quality of education is appreciated..., but much scope for improving practical teaching is needed".²³ Furthermore, the ProDoc sets as indicator: "At least 70% of all students have opportunity for a practical term with a relevant partner outside the college." This seems to be to some extend replaced by an orientation to better managed college-run farm units.

Each college shall be capable to establish functioning VET-cooperation networks with relevant enterprises. Here NAFC leads the way by having permanent partnerships with the Laos Buffalo Dairy Company in Ban Muang Khay, Luang Prabang, and the Northern Small Holder Livestock Commercialization Project (NSLCP), which promotes and implements among others innovative approaches and sustainable business strategies. This as a matter of fact should be further encouraged for other colleges to follow such promising cooperation initiatives with private and state-owned companies.

6.1.2 Outcome 2

College management ensures effective and systematic school administration and further development of the educational quality:

²² The answer regarding the question of the ratio between theory and practice at all colleges has been the relation is 40% /60 %, which could not be proved by evidences.

²³ Compare Minutes of 16th SCM dated October 11, 2018: Annex 3, CTA's Assessment of progress

The SURAFCO management and cooperation structure is of high complexity and functionality. The colleges as project partners of SURAFCO are subordinated under MAF. They are supervised and controlled as well as actively involved on three decision making levels. These are from the highest to the lowest: (1) Central /Policy level: MAF/Organisation and Staff Development Department (OSDD) and the Steering Committee Meeting (SCM), (2) Project Management level: MAF and HELVETAS and (3) Implementation level: Colleges and to some extend provincial authorities (without guideline competence – please refer to provincial level below)

Central level

The leadership and management structures are challenged to enhancing communication and cooperation capacities on different levels of action. MAF represented by OSDD is responsible for policy making, regulations and financing. All A&F-colleges are subordinated under MAF/OSDD. OSDD, replacing the former Division of College Management, has been established in order to manage HRD of MAF in a broader sense. This division is now among others responsible for the management of all five colleges.²⁴

Special attention will be given to transfer functions performed by the SURAFCO project staff (NPD, NPM, PIU) to positions within the organizational set-up of the colleges and of MAF (OSDD) and in some regard to provincial authorities.

Project Management level

The existing project management structure of SURAFCO III as well as the management instruments and documents elaborated and implemented by HELVETAS are of high efficiency and effectiveness (e.g.: SCM). The implementing agency HELVETAS together with the national management unit and NPD are doing an excellent and well recognized job in strengthening the college management. There are many useful instruments established in order to manage the project as well as to assist to leading structures on central and provincial level (MAF, PAFO etc.). Furthermore, the project collaborates with all five colleges and implements activities like joint workshops, job fairs, career counselling system, etc.

The mission found an inaccuracy concerning the ***educational quality*** measurement of outcome 2 which may have an impact on the self-understanding and positioning of the colleges in the Lao education system. While the overall goal of SURAFCO refers to “....*Quality Standards for Higher Education*”²⁵, which is supported by different statements in the ProDoc, the qualification level (Higher Diploma) obtained at all colleges is part of the TVET system and thereby subject to the standards of vocational education and training, regulated by the TVET Quality Assurance Manual of MoES²⁶. A cross-check with the Prime Minister’s Decree on Higher Education confirmed this. Art. 8 of this decree contains a certification level called “associate level” which is “equivalent to the higher vocational diploma of TVET”. The certificates issued by the colleges state Higher Diploma thereby confirming being part of TVET. The SURAFCO project management should clarify to what extend this would be relevant for the achievement of the project goals and outcomes.

Provincial level

The LGDC consultants found few, in some places no direct involvement of local (provincial) authorities in college management. The colleges report directly to MAF and there is no direct subordination

²⁴ Vice Director of OSDD, Mr. Petsamone

²⁵ SURAFCO III, Progress Report March – September 2018, p. 6

²⁶ Guideline for Implementation of Quality Assurance in TVET Institutions, MoES 2016

relationship of the college to PAFO like is it the case for all TVET institutions which are under supervision of the provincial authorities through the PESSs). Consequently, this leads to shortcomings with regard to efficiency and effectiveness of locally adapted college management. Furthermore, this situation is also not helpful to optimise and harmonise strategies and training measures between MAF and MoES and other providers in the respective provinces.

College level

Due to the fact that all colleges are directly under the responsibility of MAF it seems that they are in some regard isolated within the provincial context. From the LGDC team's point of view, it seems that more individual assistance is needed on local and college management level (especially with regard to strengthening the 4 colleges joining phase III) in order to ensure the timely implementation of adapted measures and to be prepared for the future (sustainability). Further strengthening of modern college management practices is necessary with a focus on:

- Improving financial management and investments,
- Implementing the infrastructure master plan (short, medium- and long-term perspectives),
- Concentrating on cooperation with the business sector (MoUs and training agreements)
- Improving the management of college run farm activities (with effective business plan for farm use and income generation)
- Focusing on quality assurance including related capacity building activities for the teaching and management staff.

6.1.3 Outcome 3

Infrastructure and equipment offer basic conditions for teaching and learning in all 5 colleges:

The field visits have shown that there is a gap between plan and reality in implementing outcome 3.

While NAFC has already reached a good level of infrastructure, the other colleges are lagging behind plans. Most of the colleges seem to be in delay with that.

During the short time in the field, the mission could not get sufficient information to completely assess the very complex situation. Therefore, we fully share in general the progress report on Infrastructure development which has been approved at the SCM in October last year, which has been the starting point of the MTR:

"SC is somewhat disappointed that the colleges have not yet started with construction, and worries are shared that they should not wait until the last moment. The value of the Infrastructure Master Plans is questioned, since the government is not eager to take (large) loans for construction. However, it is understood the master plans are good instruments to indicate the needs of colleges for the longer-term future. It also guided the colleges in realistic expectations of student numbers. Furthermore, the master plans should not lead to excessive luxury construction, the colleges must plan according to their possibilities." The report ends with the obligation that: "all five colleges must submit their building plans as soon as possible to MAF and SURAFCO, to avoid any further delay."²⁷

Furthermore, the mission confirms the statement of the SURAFCO report: "Purchase of larger equipment remains pending partially because it is linked to the approval of the master plans which only recently has been done. Colleges lacking suitable workshops or laboratory space to install new equipment can now put forward their ideas for upgrading the facilities."²⁸

²⁷ Minutes of 16th SCM October 11, 2018: SURAFCO Phase III page 10

²⁸ SURAFCO III Report, page 13

Table 5: Yearly Operational Budgets (incomplete overview)

College	Budget year 2017/18		Remarks
	Budget planned (Billion LAK) 20117/18	Budget provided by MAF (Billion LAK)	
CAFC	5 Billion LAK	Up to 2 Billion	
SAFC	3 Billion LAK for Infrastructure Furthermore: 200 Million running costs and 270 Mio. Salaries	Up to 1 Billion (Salaries payed in full)	
BAFC	Total: 3,5 Billion LAK 2,0 Billion Construction 1,0 Billion Equipment Further: Salaries and up to 100 Million LAK running cost	Still pending! Up to 80% has been provided	The plan has been forwarded by BAFC Management since 4 years but still no answer
TIC	9 Billion LAK	Up to 5 Billion LAK	
NAFC	Total: 6 Billion LAK: Salaries: 2,5 Billion Equipment: 660 Million Expert costs (?): 200 Million	5,6 Billion LAK 2,3 Billion 660 Million 200 Million	Nearly all

Managers at all colleges clearly stated that budget constraints hamper the quality of training and sustainable outcomes of their institutions. There is a common understanding that quality of vocational education activities depends to a large extent on finances and resources from the government (running costs, maintenance etc.). If respective resources cannot be provided as it has been agreed within the planning documents, the quality can't improve. International studies show that there is a direct link in improving quality of training and the quality of current infrastructure including the provision of functional and modern equipment as well as good learning and living conditions of vocational learners.²⁹

“MAF and SURAFCO have approved one construction proposal per college, for which detailed plans are being worked out by architects:

- BAFC: improvement of the drinking water facilities on the compound, and upgrading of two dormitories (one for female, one for male students)
- CAFC: construction of an academic block of 4 classrooms
- NAFC: construction of a small office to host the CCU and the Students' Affairs Division
- SAFC: construction of an academic block of 4 classrooms
- TIC: construction of a workshop for Agricultural Machineries.”³⁰

The MAF/SURAFCO action and financing plan³¹ should be completely implemented. There is no other chance to make a difference and to achieve the expected quality outcomes without the full provision of the infrastructure development and renovations at all 5 colleges (735,375 USD from GoL and 880,000 CHF from SDC) as foreseen at project documents and agreements (including the Financial

²⁹ To learn more please compare MoES/LuxDev/LGDC:

³⁰ SURAFCO III Progress Report September 2018, page 14

³¹ Compare: 1. Agreement between SDC and MAF, 01.03.2017-31.12.2020), dated 23.02.2017; 2.

Agreement between MAF and SDC, dated 23. February 2017). Those budgets are determined to ensure minimum standards satisfying the basic requirements at the colleges only. Much more investments are needed in modernizing A&F training at the colleges and training places country wide in order to achieve the project projection supporting the reform “in the public and in the private sector of a modern market-based agricultural sector”.³²

MAF and local authorities need to play a stronger role in infrastructure provision and/or identify additional local, national and international resources to build the necessary and future-oriented infrastructure in the A&F sector of the country.

6.2 Cross-cutting issues

6.2.1 “Knowledge Sharing and Exchanges”

The program intents to exchange on good practices, lessons learned, and innovations with the aim to improve the quality of all 5 colleges. Appropriate activities have been introduced and practiced over the years with success. The approach, having NAFC in a central role in taking up new ideas, new approaches and tools to be developed and tested at this college first and then transferred to the other four colleges, is understandable but from the LGDC team’s point of view to be questioned at this stage.

Reasons for that are among others limitations in ownership, impression of inferiority versus NAFC by the other colleges, challenges in taking local circumstances into consideration (for example best practice in coffee growing techniques could be best prepared in the southern coffee growing region).

Much more motivation and responsibility of the other 4 colleges is needed! The approach to mainly - but not only (!) - use NAFC as best reference does not support automatically the improvement of self-confidence or a close cooperation on an even level among all partners putting the four other colleges in an inferior situation of junior-partners. It would be wise to strengthen the capacity to act of all partners and to develop a good ownership through individual assignments of tasks and/or research projects.

Regarding the regional orientation and profiling of the colleges in the context of A&F development in Lao PDR there should be a shift from the predominant centralised management and transfer of knowledge to decentralised and action-oriented management aiming to better mobilise local needs and potentials. This in fact should help among others to determine the process of specialisation of the colleges based on specific experiences and facilities, the local natural resources and their respective products (including a specification of occupations) in each province.

6.2.2 Gender

The project is actively including gender issues into all activities, however the ProDoc target “Female enrolment reaches >45%, ethnic enrolment of >40% is sustained, and drop-out rate for these groups is <10%”³³ could not be reached.

There are 850 female students enrolled at all colleges, meaning 37,1% of all students. For comparison: the share of women among all people employed in the A&F sector and the share of female learners in

³² Source: MAF/SDC-ToR: “Strategy for Reform in the Agriculture and Forestry Colleges towards 2020 in Lao PDR” (released in January 2008) to improve the mid-level and high-level diploma college education.

³³ ProDoc,, page 49

TVET stand at 47,9%³⁴ and 42,7%³⁵ respectively. This means that more efforts are requested to narrow the gap further.

Nearly the half of all recruited staff and teachers are woman (Please compare also table 2 and DAC fact sheets in annex). Drawing from the experience at the NAFC, all colleges should further strengthen gender sensitive management practices that empower female students and staff, and develop good supporting systems for students from disadvantaged, especially poor and ethnic, background. During the field mission no data concerning the ethnic background of students have been provided but the 2013/14 tracer study shows that 42% of graduates NAFC of those years came from non-Lao-Tai ethnic background.³⁶

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

SURAFCO III has been designed to support strategic reform measures of MAF regarding human resource development in general and the enhancement of A&F colleges of MAF in particular. Therefore, the strategic position of SURAFCO III until 2020 and beyond should be actualised in line with actual policy orientations of GoL, the permanent changing labour market needs and the leading role of MAF in VET in the A&F sector in Lao PDR.

The national importance of the A&F sector for economic and social growth calls for closer cooperation and interaction between the public and private stakeholders (of MAF, MoES, BMOs etc.) aiming at harmonising and, if necessary, at streamlining existing VET policies and strategies in this sector (MAF, MoES, MoLSW). There is an urgent need to unify the parallel worlds of VET in A&F under MAF and MoES and to compare and, if necessary, to merge respective concepts and regulations. The elaboration and recognition of occupational standards and curricula shall refer to the national standard classification of occupations, VET personnel development shall be streamlined. The National Training Council (NTC) and MoES shall be approached with the aim to organize a National strategy and policy workshop on VET in the A&F sector.

While the labour market needs and developments seem not to be in the focus of provincial level (PAFOs and in some of the colleges), training needs shall be analysed and dealt with. Respective permanent working structures shall be established (for instant as the pilot model of TWGs/NTC)³⁷ and changes shall be made with regard to updated curricula and learning materials respectively.

Due to the fact, that the enrolment rate in all colleges is decreasing in the last three years, improvement of the image and attractiveness of vocational education in A&F sector shall become one priority of MAF and SURAFCO. Differences in living conditions and payments of scholarships for vocational learners (students) in the same training sector should be eliminated (MAF and MoES).

The current situation of dealing with budget constraints calls for more input and assistance in supporting college managements (in particular the 4 newcomers) with simultaneous focus on

³⁴ Lao PDR Labour Force Survey 2017, June 2018, p.48

³⁵ TVET Statistics 2017/18, DTVE

³⁶ Tracer Study of Graduates 2013-2014 from the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College (NAFC), p.2

³⁷ The National Council for TVET and Skills Development (short NTC) is the national consultancy body for all TVET and SD measures in Lao PDR, stated by TVET Law, dated December 23, 2013.

Trade working groups (TWG) are responsible professional expert groups by PMO decree for occupational standard setting and curriculum development. They are multi-institutional work structures from public and private stakeholders.

differentiation and a user-oriented view aiming to ensure the expected outcomes and sustainability of the program in a reasonable manner.

Given the fact, that NAFC is the most developed institution and it has the highest number of qualified and experienced staff, NAFC - or one part of the college - should be designated and further supported to be capable to act as a leading and service institution responsible for teacher training and action-oriented research in the entire VET sector of agriculture and forestry in the future.³⁸

Summarizing the above-mentioned findings, there are a few important points to be kept in mind in order to achieve the project outcomes and a respectable rating against DAC criteria:

- The reform of the colleges should be seen as a permanent process. The reform will not be "finished" at the end of the project but needs to be revised and improved from year to year.
- The reform requires the commitment of all involved stakeholders. Therefore, all forms of cooperation and coordination with public and private companies shall be further supported and recognized much more by superior institutions on central and local level (MAF, PAFO).
- The colleges need to acknowledge the importance of creating strong links with farms communities and business partners.
- The creation and dissemination of new knowledge about the local farming and forestry systems must have a high priority on the agenda of the colleges, and the involvement of students in this process opens great opportunities for all involved parties.
- Jobs in the private sector as well as self-employed graduates should be especially promoted, and be considered equally important and valid as jobs in the public sector.
- Smallholder family farms as the largest group of stakeholders in rural development in the Lao PDR should be acknowledged as equal partners in the emerging innovation processes.³⁹

SURAFCO management is on the right track but it seems that together with MAF the management on different levels of action should concentrate on the above-mentioned issues more intensively in order to keep the main intention of phase III and to ensure the expected outcomes in the time remaining until the end of the project. The major challenges of SURAFCO III for the remaining duration of the project and thereafter are, in short, the following:

- ***consolidation of achieved outcomes, best practices and efficient working structures,***
- ***harmonisation of the national VET scheme with regard to optimise VET the A&F sector together with the Ministry of Education and Sports (A&F expert group of OSSD and DTVET) as well as in the frame of the National Training Council (NTC),***
- ***sharing knowledge and best practices together with TVET institutions form MOES as well as with private stakeholders,***
- ***completion of on-going projects and infrastructure measures in the sense of counteracting agreed positions if necessary and further improving agreed inputs and outputs.***

Furthermore, a well-structured work procedure is needed in order to operationalize development priorities and activities relevant to policy and strategic work as well as with regards to the institutional

³⁸ The idea of having a national capacity development institute for VET in the A&F results among others from upcoming requirements of Industry 4.0 and should be further discussed at MAF and certainly coordinated with MoES and VEDI.

³⁹ Dominique Guenat: How is improved agriculture and forestry education instrumental for supporting family farming in Lao PDR?

and implementation level. The DAC-Matrix under point 7.2 offers a reasonable structure and some important recommendations and tangible ideation to update existing project documents (e.g. infrastructure masterplan etc.). It should help to elaborate if necessary - a road map or one operation plan to further improve a “progressive” exit strategy focussing on DAC-criteria and aiming to assist live and work of SURAFCO III in the remaining time period and beyond.



Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Lao PDR

7.2 Recommendations – DAC Matrix

DAC-Matrix: Supporting SURAFCO III targets and outcomes with regard to the achievement of DAC criteria
(Recommendations for the remaining time and beyond and tangible ideation for elaborating SURAFCO III - Exit Strategy)

DAC-Reference	Recommendation / Priority measure	Actions on different levels of Intervention				Time line and other remarks
		Project Outcome (C1-C3 +CI)	Policy Level MAF, MoES, MoLSW	Provincial authorities (PAFO, DAFO)	SURAFCO Management Colleges	
Relevance (Priorities)	(The extent to which SURAFCO responds to the priorities and policies of the country)					
A&F Policy and Strategy	Revising policy and strategy as well as goals and targets of VET in A&F sector	C1	MAF/OSD ⁴⁰ SCM	PAFO	Career Counselling	1 st quarter of 2019
	Identify and approve development priorities for VET in A&F sector		OSD	PAFO	Colleges SURAFCO	Ongoing
	Organize National Strategy and Policy Meeting on VET in the A&F sector (checking for consistency of VET with regard to the National Rural Employment Strategy as well as to the national TVET strategy and employment orientations)		MAF, MoES, MoLSW	PAFO, PESS, DolSW	Selected VTIs	2 nd quarter 2019
Enrolment and image of VET in A&F	Improving image and attractiveness of VET with the aim to increase enrolment significantly	C1	MAF SCM	PAFO	Colleges SURAFCO	Ongoing
	Review existing practice to offer training in the agricultural sector only at one level of qualification (HD)		MAF	PAFO	Colleges	Immediately

⁴⁰ Organization and Staff Department of MAF

	Applying apprenticeship payment scheme (scholarship scheme of MoES) in A&F colleges and informing the public respectively (information, media)		MAF/MoES / SDC	PAFO	Colleges / SURAFCO Management	Immediately
Labour Market relevance	Elaborate labour needs analysis for A&F sector with regards to identify local needs of provinces and regions	C1	MAF/SDC:	PAFO PESS DoLSW	Colleges SURAFCO HELVETAS	Developing time schedule 2019/20
	Carrying out labour market needs assessment (Decision making and processing ToR together with SDC)		MAF/OSD (HRD-Division)	PAFO/DAFO, BMOs	Colleges / SURAFCO /HELVETAS	Avoiding double standards and work
	Establish occupational standards (NOS) and update curricula with regard to the needs of the labour market		MAF/OSD (HRD-Division)	PAFO/DAFO, BMOs		Tracer Studies for Savannaketh and Borikhamxay Colleges
Standardisation Harmonisation Coordination	Harmonise A&F policy and strategy with MoES and if necessary MoLSW (responsibilities, training activities and others)	C1-3	MAF and MoES MoLSW	PAFO PESS DoLSW		2019
	Preparing coordination meeting (brainstorming between DTVET/MOES and DPO/MAF)		MAF/MoES/ NTC			2019
	Contacting NTC-PO and cooperating within NTC		MAF /OSD NTC-PO			2019
	Establishing coordination committee on provincial level under the lead of PAFO and transfer responsibilities for college management to provincial authorities	C2	MAF/OSD	PAFO/PESS	colleges	2019
Effectiveness: (Priorities)	(Achievement of objectives and development measures)					
Learning conditions and outcomes	Improving living conditions (dormitories, facilities) and social status of students (stipends as for TVET)	C1	MAF	PAFO, colleges		Immediately Informing colleges, parents and students
	Improving equipment and materials (especially with regard to workshops and laboratories e.g. CAFC and BAFC)		MAF	PAFO	SURAFCO, colleges	

	Enhance practical competences of vocational learners/graduates by increasing time for practical training		MAF	PAFO, BMOs,	Colleges, enterprises	
	Further strengthen farm units at colleges to increase practical work for students and generate income			PAFO	Colleges	
Employment rate and satisfaction of employers	Linking up with the business sector (public and private employers)		MAF	PAFO, BMOs	Colleges, enterprises	
	Creating cooperation structures with employers (Management Boards, MoU's etc.)		MAF	PAFO, BMOs	Colleges, enterprises	
	Conduct regular tracer studies for all colleges and offering on the job training for college staff to be able to conduct tracer studies regularly		MAF	PAFO	Colleges	
Efficiency: (Priorities)	Qualitative and quantitative output in relation to the inputs					
Infrastructure	Follow up priorities for infrastructure, construction or refurbishment (short-, medium- and long-term)	C3	MAF		Colleges	SURAFCO action plan: Annexes A-E
	Implementing endorsed Infrastructure Master Plans		MAF	PAFO	Colleges	
Income Generation	Increase income generation activities and ensuring transparency of use of generated income		MAF	PAFO	Colleges	Immediately
	Offering attractive short and long-term training courses for training seekers and workers against payments	C1, C2	MAF, OSD	PAFO	Colleges	
	Further develop farm units also under income aspects		MAF, OSD	PAFO	Colleges	
Quality assurance	QA units conduct internal or self-assessment and preparing colleges for external assessments	C2	MAF, OSD	PAFO	Colleges	
C1, C2						
Impact: (Priorities)	(The positive and negative changes caused by SURAFCO interventions directly or indirectly, intended or unintended)					
	Curricula and learning materials					

	Setting up NOS-Committee on national level and establishing NOS in A&F sector		MAF/MoES			
	Reevaluate existing curricula and training material with regard to national occupational standards for VET in A&F		MAF/MoES OSD/DVET/ VEDI	PAFO	Colleges	During 2019/20
	Comparing and, if necessary, updating existing training standards with regional standard setting (ASEAN/MRA)		MAF/ MoES / OSD ⁴¹ / DVET/ VEDI			
	Sharing experiences in occupational standard and curricula setting with other stakeholders		MAF/MoES/ MoLSW			
Sustainability: (Priorities)	Continuation after donor funding has been withdrawn (political decision, administration and financing)					
Leadership	Designing future strategy for VET in A&F sector in close cooperation with MoES and agriculture business sector		MAF MoES NTC	OSD / DTVET PAFO / PESS SURAFCO	Colleges	Coordination of DSPD/MAF DTVET/MoES
Financing	Improving financial management at central/provincial and implementation level		MAF/ OSDD	PAFO	Colleges	2019 ongoing
	Securing sufficient budgets to finance MAF HRD reform policy in A&F		MAF	PAFO		
	Establish clear procedures for financing colleges and introduce financing procedures for colleges to obtain income		MAF		Colleges, SURAFCO	
Harmonisation Standardisation	Initiating and supporting process of harmonisation and standardisation of VET in A&F sector country wide		MAF/MoES	PAFO /PESS		

Cooperation	Initiating PPP Campaign supporting leading companies ready to support VET in A&F sector		MAF, LNCCI, BMO	PAFO/DAFO / PESS	Colleges, enterprises	
Coordination	Clarifying lead functions and resources for VET in A&F		MAF, MoES, MoLSW	PAFO/ DAFO		
Defining roles and functions of central and local authorities	Strengthening roles and functions of PAFOs and DAFOs for supporting training at all colleges	C1-3	MAF/ Department	PAFO	Colleges	Coordination with PESS
	Assisting PAFOs in establishing provincial strategy and action plan of VET in respective provinces (linking central with local strategies and potentials)		MAF/OSD	PAFO/ DAFO		
	Further enhancing responsibilities for VET at PAFOs and DAFOs	C1-3	MAF/OSD	PAFO /DAFO	Colleges	
SURAFCO Project	Elaborating and approving a "Exit Strategy SURAFCO III" together with MAF and all project partners		MAF SDC	PAFO	Colleges	
SDC/HELVETAS	Ensuring sustainability of SURAFCO colleges (identify accompanying measures for colleges after 2020)		MAF/SDC	PAFO	Colleges	
	Guaranteeing financial support for implementation of agreed infrastructure measures		SDC/MAF	PAFO	Colleges HELVETAS	Respective Agreement with MAF ?
	Supporting process of standardisation and harmonisation for VET in A&F		SDC/MAF	PAFO	Colleges HELVETAS	National Workshop on VET in A&F
	Monitoring and Evaluating SURAFCO III (DAC-Final Evaluation)		SDC/MAF	PAFO	Colleges HELVETAS	



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Lao PDR