

Addressing climate change together

Tree planting activities at four secondary schools in northern Lao PDR

In Lao PDR natural forest areas heavily declined over the past few decades due to deforestation and forest degradation¹. Consequences of forest loss include extensive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a decline in the environmental benefits that forests provide (water and soil protection, etc.) among further. Amongst the people which are most affected by these negative impacts are women and ethnic groups, for whom the forests are a foundation to secure their livelihoods¹. The commitment to increase forest cover to 70 per cent by 2020 is included in high-level documents such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the national Forest Strategy to the Year 2020.

Since 2009, the programme **Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation (CliPAD)** is a vital part of the bilateral cooperation between Germany and Lao PDR, which supports the Lao Government in its readiness for the REDD+ process at national and sub-national level. In the project, GIZ is providing policy advice and capacity development measures to support the creation of a national and provincial REDD+ framework. Moreover, it provides incentives to local communities to participate in forest management and conservation efforts by engaging sub-national jurisdictions to develop and support strategies for reducing deforestation as well as REDD+ planning processes that enable Laos to get access to REDD+ performance-based payments. In

the frame of the support, GIZ handed in a Project Proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) which was successfully approved by the 24th GCF Board meeting in November 2019 to continue supporting Lao PDR in the Implementation of the Lao PDR Emission Reductions Programme through improved governance and sustainable forest landscape management.

The global programme (GP) **Risk Assessment and Management for Adaptation to Climate Change (Loss & Damage)** addresses climate change and related risks and impacts through its **Climate Risk Management (CRM) framework**. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the GP has developed the CRM framework with the objective to **manage risks along the entire risk spectrum** from short-term extreme weather events, e.g. storms or flood events to long-term gradual changes such as land and forest degradation. Climate-induced loss and damage such as the loss of biodiversity are averted, minimised and are being addressed. Instead of applying individual and standalone measures, the framework involves a combination of proven and innovative instruments. Climate smart agriculture, Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), climate resilient infrastructure are examples for tried-and-tested instruments and approaches. An effective CRM requires an **integrated, participatory and iterative approach** to manage climate-related risks along the risk spectrum and a joint understanding of adaptation by the organisational as well as economic ability of countries, communities and other stakeholders.

¹ Koch, S. (2016). The struggle over Lao PDR's forests: New opportunities for improved forest governance. Retrieved from https://www.giz.de/de/downloads/PG47_Page_04_13_KOCH.pdf (30 December 2019)



Left: Integrated rural development in Poverty Regions of Laos.
Right: Forest land near Ban Houaxiang in Xam Neua district.

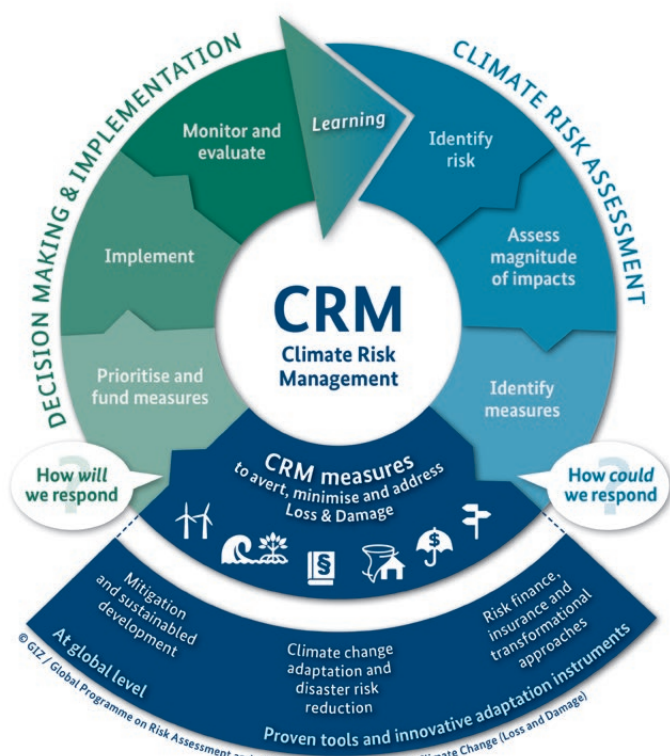


Figure 1: Climate Risk Management framework developed by GP Loss & Damage, GIZ 2018²

The CRM approach is composed of three essential steps, namely (i) risk assessment, (ii) climate risk management measures, (iii) decision making and implementation (compare figure 1). To **avert** loss and damage from climate change (L & D), mitigating greenhouse gases and sustainable development at global level remain paramount. To **minimise** loss and damage, the aforementioned smart mix of instruments that are already applied in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction is combined recognizing the context-specific conditions and options. These tools are then complemented by more innovative adaptation tools, such as risk finance and transformational approaches to **address** loss and damage. Since its development, the approach is being enhanced constantly and has been introduced and mainstreamed into partner countries and pilot regions through trainings and expert conferences. With **awareness-raising and EbA**, two integral components of the set of CRM measures and instruments has been applied in the context of the four schools in rural Laos.

Accompanying the expert conference “Building Climate Resilience – How can comprehensive climate risk management avert, minimise and address losses and damages?” that was held in Lao PDR in late November 2019, the GP Risk Assessment and Management initiated **tree planting activities at four local**

schools in rural Lao PDR that are implemented under the Village Forest Management Component of the CliPAD programme. The main goals are to **create “green environments”** around the schools and homes of the students and their families, and in that way, to **strengthen awareness and understanding regarding climate change**.

The planting activities were carried out at local schools in the Districts Houameuang and Sam Neua in northern Lao PDR and so far, consisted of two sessions:

- 1. Training of students:** Forestry experts conducted a training with the students to teach them about climate change, adaptation and the importance of trees in a changing climate. They also gave practical instructions for how to plant and take care of trees. The training intended to provide knowledge to the students and to raise awareness on climate change, functions and importance of forests. Moreover, it aimed at actively engaging them into the planting and taking care for newly planted trees.
- 2. Tree planting ceremonies:** In the second session, spots for planting seedlings of Lychee, Logan, Mango, Caesalpinia, Samanea, Terminalia, Fritula and other native species trees were identified jointly and the provided seedlings were then planted by the students with support from CliPAD and REDD+ staff. The planted trees will provide benefits including fruits and shade in the future. Wooden cages were built to protect the trees from damage.

In total, **about 400 seedlings were planted** at the selected locations. Two colleagues of the GP and colleagues from the CliPAD programme together with roughly 300 students, the Deputy Director of REDD+ Division, Mr. Sombath Pangnasack the Chairman of the Head Office of the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO) Mr. Phouxay Phimsombat, and the school’s principal and teachers attended the ceremony at the secondary school of Ban Phiengdee, Houameuang District, Houaphan Province. During the ceremony, speeches given by the attending officials highlighted the **importance of forests and afforestation** in Lao PDR especially in order to **strengthen resilience to climate change**.

The students with support from their teachers will take care of the trees over the last months and coming years. All schools have access to water from streams; thus, irrigation is guaranteed. CliPAD will continue to support the schools with nursing the planted trees; in that way, the final sub-step of the third component of the CRM approach ‘Monitor and evaluate’ (compare figure 1) is taken care of. It enables an **ongoing learning process and strengthens the understanding of climate risk management** by training future generations.

² <https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CRM-Infosheet.pdf>



Paintings of pupils from Ban Hamtei School, Samneua District, Houaphan Province and Ban Phieng-dee secondary school, Houameuang District, Houaphan Province

Global Programme on Risk Assessment and management for Adaptation to Climate Change (Loss and Damage)

The most recent projections in climate research anticipate a significant increase in the frequency and / or intensity of extreme weather events as well as slow-onset climate-induced changes. Despite mitigation and adaptation, Loss and Damage (L & D) is expected to occur. To address L & D, appropriate measures are needed that go beyond conventional adaptation. L & D has been recognized under the UNFCCC and the topic especially gained importance with the establishment of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with climate change impacts (WIM). Against this background, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH with the implementation of the global programme Risk Assessment and Management for Adaptation to Climate Change (Loss and Damage). The programme aims to generate practical experience and recommendations in the field of comprehensive climate risk management to support the German development cooperation (BMZ) and its international partners in regions severely affected by climate change. The global programme has a term of eight years (Dec. 2013 – Dec. 2021) and operates pilot activities in different regions, e.g. the Pacific Island Countries, South Asia (India), Central America and East Africa (Tanzania).

To reach its goal the programme focuses on:

- i. Creating tried-and-tested guidelines on climate risk assessment and comprehensive climate risk management e.g. *conduction of climate risk assessments in partner countries*;
- ii. Enriching knowledge on climate risk and Loss and Damage in key sectors and on key topics e.g. *risk transfer including climate risk insurance, migration, non-economic loss and damage, resilient recovery (UNDRR Sendai Framework), private sector (SME), fisheries and coastal management*;
- iii. Enhancing capacities in partner countries as well as initiating and facilitating dialogue among stakeholders of different sectors and levels (local, sub-national, national and international) e.g. *training course on comprehensive climate risk management, events, publications*;
- iv. Supporting BMZ in the international climate policy debate under the UNFCCC e.g. *strengthening the German contribution to the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM)*.



Tree planting ceremony at Ban Phiengdee, Houameuang District, secondary school in November 2019

Climate Protection through Avoided Deforestation (CliPAD) and Implementation of Governance, Forest Landscapes and Livelihoods (I-GFLL) programme

The programme entails contributions from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and a co-financing contribution of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The aim is the implement of the Lao PDR Emission Reductions Program through improved governance and sustainable forest landscape management.

The project is expected to mitigate 5.6 million tCO₂eq from May 2020 until June 2024 and benefits 355,800 people in three provinces (Houaphan, Luang Prabang and Sayaboury) of northern Laos by promoting sustainable management of forests, landscapes and agricultural resources. Working together, authorities at national and sub-national levels as well as non-state actors, will improve conditions for the sustainable forest management and specifically for Reducing Emissions from deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

The project focuses on the following areas:

- Strengthening the enabling environment for REDD+ through three principal means: enhancing the availability of financing for a transformation in the way Laos manages its forest landscapes; revising and strengthening the legal and regulatory framework for forestry; and improving the enforcement of the new regulatory framework.
- Supporting deforestation-free agriculture and agro-forestry by enhancing productivity, increasing farmers' integration into agricultural value chains, and improving access to finance and private sector participation in economic activities that reduce pressure on forests.
- Supporting the implementation of sustainable forest landscape management (SFM) and forest landscape restoration (FLR) on over 1.5 million ha of degraded lands.

Published by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH	Responsible	Dr. Michael Siebert, Dr. Jens Kallabinski	
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	Global Programme on Risk Assessment and Management for Adaptation to Climate Change (Loss and Damage)	As at	February 2021	
	Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5	Design	W4 Büro für Gestaltung, Frankfurt	
	65760 Eschborn, Germany	GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.		
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