

# Best practices in forest governance and sustainable landscape approaches in Southeast Asia

## 1. Background

Landscape approaches (LAs) are environmental management or sustainability frameworks that attempt to configure multiple stakeholders' interests and coordinate actions towards the common objectives of sustainable development, conservation, and deforestation-free supply chains and commodities.

LAs involve collaborative action of stakeholders within a landscape that advances shared sustainability goals. LAs have gained significant footing in tropical forest countries, including in Southeast Asia, over the past years.

Jurisdictional Approaches (JAs) are a type of LA that advance shared sustainability goals where the landscape is defined by administrative boundaries and the approach is implemented with a high level of sub-national government and non-state actor involvement.

LAs, including JAs, share the following objectives and characteristics, in that they:

- Target a socio-ecological system that consists of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems;
- Aim to reconcile competing social, economic and environmental objectives;
- Involve collaboration among multiple stakeholders;
- Are implemented at a scale small enough to maintain a degree of manageability, but large enough to deliver multiple functions to stakeholders with different interests;

- Allow for monitoring of trends at a sub-national level against a set of agreed sustainability objectives.

LAs provide benefits over national or localised governance approaches as they are implemented at a level where stakeholders are familiar with the local context and able to make land use decisions over areas of significant sizes and across commodities, thereby reducing leakage concerns.

## Paper objectives

This analysis aims to:

- Assess the experiences of Indonesia and Lao PDR in their development, achievements, and challenges of LAs/JAs
- Distil insights and best practices in forest governance.

## Methodology

- The assessment is based on a literature review of published and secondary data, including programme documents and their evaluation reports, and interviews with key informants.
- Indonesia and Lao PDR were selected as case studies to provide insights into the application of LAs/JAs in Southeast Asia in different political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts.

## 2. Case studies

### Indonesia

In Indonesia, Jurisdictional Approaches (JAs) are the dominant Landscape Approaches in-country and have gained significant footing in recent years. A community of practice of JAs has emerged and, by early 2020, JA initiatives were underway in at least a dozen Indonesian provinces and districts.

Within the scope of this analysis, a few case studies and associated literature were selected among Indonesia's JAs and related processes to identify best practices related to the LA design process, objectives and targets, implementation, and monitoring.

## **PPI Compact in Aceh Tamiang**

**Location:** Aceh Tamiang District in the Province of Aceh

### **Targets:**

- Increase sustainable palm oil productivity by a third
- Act strongly on reforestation
- Ensure that 30% of independent smallholders will have official land certificates

### **Approach:**

- The targets were embedded in the Production, Protection and Inclusion Compact (PPI Compact), an agreement between the district government, NGOs, and business groups.
- In support of the PPI Compact, the district government has set up a multi-stakeholder platform to support with programme implementation and monitoring.

## **Central Kalimantan Roadmap for Low Deforestation Rural Development**

**Location:** Province of Central Kalimantan

### **Targets:**

- Transition to a zero-deforestation palm oil industry
- Reduce deforestation 80% below the historical average
- Increase smallholder palm oil production from 11% to 20% of the province total

### **Approach:**

- The targets were enshrined in a roadmap established to implement a Provincial Regulation on the sustainable management of oil palm plantations.
- To support the roadmap's implementation, a multi-stakeholder working group was formed to map and monitor data on oil palm cultivation and to certify the province's palm oil supply chain.

## **Green Siak Initiative**

**Location:** Siak District in the Province of Riau

### **Targets:**

- Reduce the level of damage to natural resources, especially with regard to peatland
- Create sustainable economic growth
- Tackle poverty through economic empowerment and job creation

### **Approach:**

- The targets were included in the Green Siak District Initiative, established in 2018 by the district government.
- To support implementation, a multi-stakeholder platform was launched and a road map developed that sets out clear targets and timelines, action plans, and the roles of various stakeholders to achieve them.
- In parallel, a group of palm oil producers, traders, and buyers formed an alliance called Siak Pelalawan Landscape Programme (SPLP) to let private sector support to Siak and the neighbouring district of Pelalawan.

## **Terpercaya Initiative**

**Location:** Nation-wide

### **Objectives:**

- Enable nation-wide jurisdictional sustainability tracking
- Promote legitimate, legally supported, and widely agreed sustainability principles at the jurisdictional level.

### **Approach:**

- A data platform was established under the Terpercaya Initiative permitting users to monitor and evaluate the performance of Indonesian districts according to 23 sustainability indicators.
- The indicators have been designed through a multistakeholder process to show whether districts are producing commodities in a way that is environmentally sustainable, inclusive, and respects human and labour rights.

## LAO PDR

The Government of Lao PDR has worked collaboratively with several development partners over the last two decades to pursue sector wide approaches to forests and land use with the common goals of promoting sustainable landscape management, sustainable production, and value chains of commodities such as timber and coffee, and to enhance the livelihoods of the rural poor. In the late 2000s, a working group was established comprising representatives from the government, development partners, and provincial governors to pilot landscape approaches (LA) in the northern, central, and southern parts of Lao PDR.

Within the scope of this analysis, case studies were selected among Lao PDR's LAs to identify best practices related to their design process, objectives and targets, implementation, and monitoring.

**Sustainable Coffee in Northern Lao PDR** (2017 to 2021, USD 1.76 million, a new upscaling phase is starting in 2022)

**Location:** 21 sub-projects in 18 districts of eight provinces (Hua Phan, Luang Namtha, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Phongsaly, Sayabury, Xaysomboun, and Xieng Khouang)

**Objective:** To introduce, improve organic and agroforestry coffee production, organise the farmers through collective processing and sales, and build trustworthy partnerships with buyers.

**Approach:**

- Contribute to the implementation of the Lao Coffee Development Strategy 2025 through the restructuration of the Conseil National du Café Lao (CNCL) under the Prime Minister's decision in 2018 and the appointment of the new CNCL secretariat in 2019.
- Register the Bolaven Coffee (or Café des Bolovens) as Geographical Indication (GI) to authenticate that it is produced in Northern Lao PDR, in the Boloven Plateau.
- Maintain the international certifications for Fairtrade and Organic, with a key requirement being that coffee must be shade-grown, with no conversion of forest cover allowed.
- Improve the Lao coffee sector and the Lao Coffee Association through a quality coffee production approach that respects the environment and fair commercial practices.

**Smallholder Forestry Program** (2013 to 2018, USD 3.46 million)

**Location:** Bolikhamxay and Khammouane province

**Objective:** To be both sustainable and profitable through i) gradually developing community-based reforestation of degraded and under-utilised land, and ii) using cash crops to cater for shorter term revenue streams while managing for longer term forestry expansion and profit through growth of industrial trees.

**Approach:**

- Establish a forestry business model in the areas managed by Mekong Timber Plantations using out-grower schemes in Bolikhamxay and Khammouane province. Mekong Timber Plantations is a tropical hardwood plantation company responsible for a 24 000 ha estate in the two provinces.

**Protection and sustainable use of forest ecosystems and biodiversity** (ProFEB)  
(2021 to 2024, EUR 8 million)

**Location:** Nation-wide with specific focus in Attapeu, Khamouane and Sayabury province

**Objective:** State authorities, civil-society organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector are working together to improve the regulatory and institutional framework for the conservation and sustainable use of forests and biodiversity in Lao PDR.

**Approach:**

- Establish better framework conditions for the implementation of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade - Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) between Lao PDR and the EU.
- Provide support for the transboundary World Heritage nomination of Hin Nam No National Park of Lao PDR in partnership with the Vietnamese authorities.
- Support the establishment of the Environmental Education and Awareness Lao PDR (EEAL) Alliance and develop the requisite capabilities among its members to carry out effective environmental education and awareness measures.
- Improve cooperation between the Lao Government, official development assistance (ODA) partners, and local people to effectively combat illegal wildlife trade.

## Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods Project (2021 to 2027, USD 57.4 million)

**Location:** Five priority landscapes comprising 8 provinces and one prefecture, 49 districts, 8 protected areas, 6 protection forest areas, and 13 Production Forest Areas across the country.

**Objective:** To promote sustainable forest management, improve protected area management, and enhance livelihoods opportunities in selected landscapes in Lao PDR.

### **Approach:**

- Invest in Natural Wealth and Resilience in Forest Landscapes
  - 2.3 million ha of forest area brought under management plans
  - 1.2 million ha of land area under sustainable landscape management practices
  - 10 million metric ton of net carbon dioxide equivalent emissions reduced
  - 144 000 people benefit from extension or outreach services
  - 30 productive assets built and maintained for improved resilience
  - 267 village conservation agreements approved and annually reported
  - 10 tourism agreements signed between tourism operators, local villages, and relevant PAs and other management authorities in targeted forest landscapes
  - 30 villages entering partnership agreements with environmentally and socially sustainable tree plantation enterprises
  - 200 households establishing and managing tree plantations
- Create Livelihoods Opportunities from Sustainable Forest Landscapes
  - 72 000 households using Village Development Funds for forest-smart livelihoods activities
  - 40 percent of the Village Committees Teams are women
  - 90 percent of target beneficiaries with a score 'Satisfied' or above on project interventions
  - 90 percent of female target beneficiaries with a score 'Satisfied' or above on project interventions
- Enhance Institutions, Incentives, and Information
  - 15 new or revised laws, policies, and regulations drafted and submitted to relevant authorities for approval

### 3. Best Practices in Applying Landscape Approaches – Lessons from Indonesia and Lao PDR

1. Reconciling national development goals and sustainability challenges at provincial level is complex. It is crucial that stakeholders pursue programmatic convergence of planning, policy, strategies, and programmes that in some instances can cut across sectors, landscapes, and institutional boundaries.
2. Securing buy-in and commitments from governmental leaders and ensuring that the process is fully embedded in governmental frameworks is key. A legitimate multi-stakeholder process can help build trust between different stakeholders and has proven to improve understanding of potential trade-offs among socio-economic development and environmental conservation goals.
3. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) or equivalent between lead participants can define the intent of the LA initiative. Goals should represent meaningful progress towards sustainability, be adaptive, and have stakeholder support.
4. Engagement from international market actors can help advance the implementation of LA and create the necessary incentives for a sustainable transition. Likewise, smallholder engagement and capacity building can ensure long-lasting success.
5. SMART monitoring indicators informed by robust data enable stakeholders to make credible claims about the LA's successes, attract support and investment, and inform broader policy processes.
6. LA initiatives require coordinated support for legal and regulatory reform, transparency, accountability, access to information, and most importantly the capacity to implement interventions at the targeted locations. In return, successfully implemented LAs have the potential to strengthen these aspects of sustainable landscape governance through meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Cover photo: Aerial views of Buluq Sen village, Kutai Kertanegara District. East Kalimantan. Nanang Sujana/CIFOR

---

**Disclaimer.** This briefing has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

© European Forest Institute, 2022