
GIS IMPLEMENTATION IN A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR BOKEO, BOLIKHAMXAY, KHAMMOUANE AND VIENTIANE PROVINCE – LAO/030

The Local development programme for Bokeo, Bolikhamxay, Khammouane and Vientiane Province - LAO/030 - supports the Lao government's poverty reduction strategy for rural development. It focuses on the 14 poorest districts in four provinces, particularly 229 target villages with a population of 152 000, 73% of whom are ethnic minorities. At village level, the programme supports a wide range of community-led development activities based on village development plans, as well as improved access to education facilities, clean water, irrigation, and road connectivity. The programme also supports governance strengthening for poverty reduction at national and local level. This two-tiered approach, combining practical rural development with governance strengthening, means that government systems can be informed and improved through demand-driven priorities, field evidence, and actual practice. At the same time, practical development work can benefit from improved application of policies, programmes, regulations, and local planning.

The use of GIS within LAO/030 was based on prior use of GIS in the preceding local development project LAO/021 (2010-2016), which focused on a single province (Bolikhamxay). At the start of LAO/030, it was thus expected that the practical application of GIS would continue within LAO/030 and planned through a dedicated task/activity line in Result 1 (governance) of the TFD (T2A1: Improve the quality and use of statistics, GIS and other data sources).

Although use of GIS and mapping is still in its nascent stages with both the counterpart and responsible line ministries it was foreseen that LAO/030 could raise awareness on the importance of these systems through trainings and the piloting of GIS applications relevant to socioeconomic development planning and monitoring, land management.

The LAO/030 programme faced a few challenges that made the project staff adapt and learn from them. LAO/030 was primarily seen as a standalone local development programme which made it difficult for national scale-up of the standards it uses and promotes. Furthermore, GIS has mainly been used for data visualisation and has not generated new insights or led to new activities. It is also important to point out that the rotation of provincial and district staff trained in GIS has impacted the maintenance of GIS capacity and routines in the programme.

Nevertheless, there were key success factors to the implementation of GIS in LAO/030 programme. Integrating a dedicated task in LAO/030's logical framework ensured endorsement of GIS as a development planning and a visualisation tool by the counterparts since its use was linked to achievement of higher-level development results. In order to achieve this goal, simplified and standardised data collection and mapping were rapidly established for the use of GIS.

From this experience, lessons were learned and wrote down to ensure the continuity of the GIS work in the fifth Indicative Cooperation Programme. The use of GIS tools and spatial analysis during the next programme's formulation and inception phases could help prioritise the selection of target villages and districts. Thus, the planning and integration of GIS activities in the Technical and Financial Document ensures that both the means and the goals of GIS as a tool supporting local development are defined from the very outset.

Based on the lessons learned, recommendations were issued to improve and generate more insights from the GIS work. Among them was the combining of data visualisation with spatial analysis to provide in-depth analysis on the programme's impacts.

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