

Concept Note

Inception Workshop for the Project

“Climate-Smart Crop Residue Management Practices in Lao PDR”

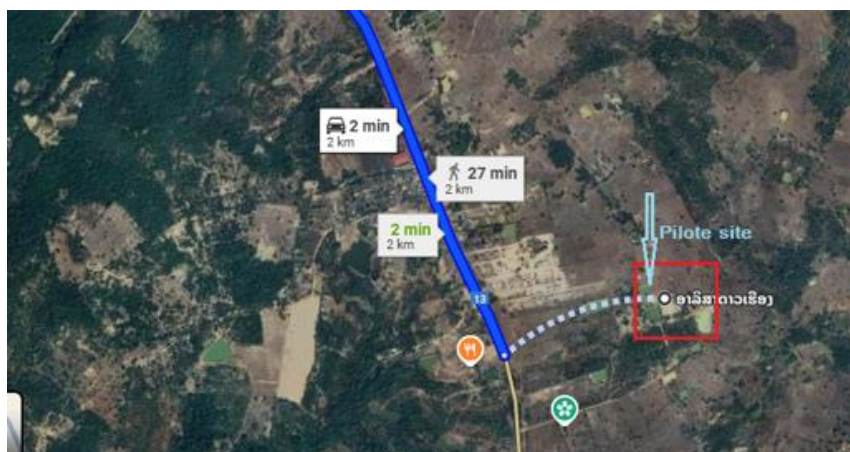
Savannakhet Province, 25 April 2025

1. Background and Rationale

Agriculture is the backbone of Lao PDR's economy, supporting over 70% of the population. However, unsustainable practices, such as crop residue burning, threaten soil health, contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, and harm rural communities through air pollution. Burning straw after harvest is widely practiced due to its perceived cost-effectiveness, but it depletes soil fertility, increases reliance on chemical fertilizers, and misses opportunities for income generation through value-added products like compost, fodder, and mushrooms.

The project, “Climate-Smart Crop Residue Management Practices in Lao PDR,” aims to address these challenges by promoting sustainable residue management practices. Building upon lessons from regional initiatives led by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the project will introduce innovative agricultural machinery and capacity-building programmes for integrated straw management. These efforts will empower farmers to adopt climate-smart practices, reducing reliance on crop burning while enhancing soil health and productivity.

Savannakhet Province has been selected as the pilot site due to its high concentration of small-scale farmers engaged in rice and maize production. Through collaboration with local farmer groups, extension workers, and policymakers, the project will establish a demonstration site in Kangphosi Village, Outhoumphone District. This site will serve as a hub for testing mechanization-based solutions, training farmers, and showcasing best practices in integrated straw management. (Location of pilot site: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/7grhvzZSd2Rv2TfX9>)



Key activities include identifying the pilot site, equipping it with machinery such as compost houses, reaper binders, and choppers, conducting field trials, and adapting machinery to local conditions and needs. The project will also organize awareness sessions, training programmes, and multi stakeholder dialogues to promote knowledge exchange and policy integration.

Expected outcomes include reduced crop burning, improved soil health, diversified income streams for farmers, and strengthened stakeholder capacities. By fostering systemic change, the project seeks to integrate climate-smart practices into national policies and support custom hiring businesses for agricultural machinery. Regional knowledge exchanges will further enable Lao PDR to benefit from experiences of other countries.

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this initiative contributes to poverty reduction, sustainable food production, and climate resilience. Through collaboration and innovation, the project aims to create a model of sustainable agriculture that benefits both people and the planet.

The project is linked to ESCAP's broader initiative on addressing the issue of air pollution. The outcomes of this workshop are expected to be reported to the Inter-Ministerial Workshop for Promoting Capacity Building to Address Air Pollution through Regional Cooperation in Vientiane on 28-29 April 2025.

2. Objectives of the Inception Workshop

- **Introduce the Project:** Present the objectives, scope, and expected outcomes of the project to all stakeholders.
- **Align Stakeholders:** Ensure that all partners, including government agencies, local communities, and technical experts, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- **Identify Pilot Site(s):** Confirm the location(s) for the pilot demonstration site(s) and discuss preliminary plans for equipping and operationalizing the site(s).
- **Facilitate Knowledge Sharing:** Provide a forum for participants to share experiences, challenges, and best practices related to crop residue management.
- **Plan Next Steps:** Develop a roadmap for implementing the project activities, including timelines, resource allocation, and monitoring mechanisms.

3. Organization and Participants

The workshop will bring together key stakeholders, including:

- Government officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Lao PDR
- Government officials from Savannakhet Province
- Representatives from the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- Representatives from the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and United Nations Country Team (UNCT)

- Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat
- Representatives from non-governmental organizations
- Savannakhet University
- Local agricultural extension officers
- Farmers and community leaders from the pilot site area
- Experts in agricultural mechanization and climate-smart practices

Estimated Number of Participants: 30-50 individuals

4. Tentative Agenda

Time	Activity	Responsible Person
23 April 2025 (Wednesday)		
Mr. Vilaysak and teams traveling from Vientiane to Savannakhet Province to prepare for the Inception Workshop		
24 April 2025 (Thursday)		
DAEC and SKU consultation meeting on initiative/ inception workshop on Climate-Smart Crop Residue Management Practices in Lao PDR, in Savannakhet Province.		
25 April 2025 (Friday)		
08:30 - 09:00	Registration	Organizing team
09:00 - 09:30	Welcome and introduction	MC/ Daophone
	Opening Remarks	DAEC, CSAM, SKU
09:30 - 10:00	Presentation on the Regional Initiative on Integrated Straw Management - Q&A (15mins)	CSAM
10:00 - 10:15	Group photo and tea break	All participants
10:15 - 10:45	Presentation on government policies and projects to promote integrated straw management and reduce crop residue burning - Q&A (15mins)	DAEC
10:45 - 11:15	Presentation on project overview of “climate-smart crop residue practices in Lao PDR” - Q&A (15mins)	DAEC, SKU
11:15 - 12:00	Group activity: Discussion on initial plans at pilot sites - What are the activities that you would like to see being implemented? - How will these activities benefit the people and the environment? - What is the expected role of the (i) government, (ii) community, (iii) United Nations in implementing these activities? - Are there any existing initiatives that are similar in nature that could also benefit from this project? - How will you measure the success of these activities?	All participants

12:00 - 13:00	Lunch	
13:00 - 14:00	Feedback session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summarizing group activity discussion before lunch - Any other challenges & opportunities for implementation or any other issues that the project team should be aware of - Q&A for further clarification, if any 	
14:00 - 15:30	Field visit to proposed pilot site	All participants
15:30 - 16:00	Closing Remarks	DAEC
16:00 - 17:00	[closed session] Discussion between DAEC, SKU, CSAM on next steps of the project	DAEC, SKU, CSAM
26 April 2025 (Saturday)		
Departure from Savannakhet to Vientiane		