



Our community ranger on his patrolling mission in Hin Nam No National Park

Photo credit: ©GIZ/ProFEB

Protection and Sustainable Use of Forest Ecosystem and Biodiversity (ProFEB)

Context

Laos, a biodiversity hotspot, faces challenges due to deforestation and loss of biodiversity, primarily from agricultural activities, infrastructure developments, and illegal wildlife trade. To address these environmental issues, the government has pledged to increase forest cover to 70% through sustainable management and reforestation measures. However, challenges remain in terms of forest governance, sustainable forest-based value chains, and the involvement of local communities, particularly women, in these processes. The project aims to address these issues and enhance the livelihood of local communities while safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity.

Objective

Local communities, particularly women, are actively participating in strengthened, sustainable forest-based value chains, contributing to the conservation of forests and the green, sustainable, and inclusive growth of Lao PDR.

Approach

The project encourages inclusive multi-stakeholder processes for the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources and of biodiversity in:

- **Forest Policy:** Facilitating dialogues and enhancing the policy-making and legal-institutional framework for an inclusive, biodiversity-friendly, and deforestation-free forestry sector.
- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Empowering key actors in Laos for inter-institutional and transboundary cooperation in wildlife conservation and management of the Hin Nam No and Phong Nha-Ke Bang conservation landscape.

Project Title	Protection and Sustainable Use of Forest Ecosystems and Biodiversity (ProFEB)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Co-financed by	European Union
Project Region	Khammouan, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Houaphan, Sayaboury, Vientiane Province and Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.
Leading Executive Agency	Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry (MAF)
Duration	May 2021—March 2027

- **Education:** Enhancing research, training, and technical capacities for the improved use and sustainable management of forest resources in Laos.
- **Forest Landscape Restoration:** Building partnerships between various stakeholders, such as the private sectors, village communities, government agencies and civil society organizations to strengthen climate-resilient restoration of forest landscapes and biodiversity conservation.
- **Value Chains:** Establishing commercial partnerships to foster micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises for sustainable and competitive forest-based value chains.

Impact

ProFEB aims to foster green, sustainable, and inclusive growth through increased domestic production, processing, exports, national revenue, and decent job creation in forest-based value chains. It assists Lao PDR in reducing CO2 emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change by expanding protected, restored, or sustainably managed forests.

ProFEB's technical advice prompted the Government of Laos to submit an application to UNESCO, seeking World Heritage status for Hin Nam No National Park. UNESCO confirmed that the nomination satisfies all technical requirements, thereby initiating the evaluation process. If successful, this joint recognition will celebrate the exceptional biodiversity and natural significance of both parks, marking the first transboundary natural World Heritage site in Southeast Asia. ProFEB contributed to this journey by providing over a decade of support in the participatory management of the national park and sustainable development in the Hin Nam No region, as well as facilitating collaboration with Vietnamese partners.

The negotiation of the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance, and Trade Voluntary Partnership Agreement (FLEGT-VPA) has had a significant impact in Laos. It initiated important reforms in the forest sector, such as the development of a basis for a Timber Legality Assurance System (TLAS), a key tool for ensuring the legal and transparent supply of timber. The participative nature of the negotiation for the FLEGT-VPA partnership agreement has brought unprecedented involvement of the public and private sectors and civil society in forest governance, improving intersectoral cooperation in the development of the legal framework for legal timber supply. The forestry law of Lao PDR mandates the development of the Timber Legality Assurance System from 2019 for both domestic and all export markets. This will have an

impact on the timber supply for regional and international markets outside of the EU.

Gender Mainstreaming

ProFEB is promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of its work. This commitment is reflected in the development of gender strategies and action plans, and the mainstreaming of gender considerations in ministries and educational institutions. A key focus is on increasing women's participation at all levels and within the project team itself. We builds partnerships with civil society organizations, including the Lao Women's Union, to address intersectional inequity. Through these measures, ProFEB aims to create more inclusive and equitable forest value chains, contributing to sustainable and gender-responsive development in all sectors in Lao PDR.



About GIZ Laos

GIZ, as part of German Development Cooperation, has been active in Laos since 1993, mainly on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Currently, GIZ is implementing numerous projects in four core areas: a) rural development, b) conservation of nature and natural resource, c) sustainable economic development and d) good governance.

Please visit www.giz.de/laos for further information.

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Other important links
FLEGT: www.flegtlaos.com
Hin Nam No National Park: www.hinnamno.org
Lao Wildlife Heros: <https://laowildlifeheroes.org/en/>