

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Wednesday, 2 June 2021 09:00 GMT +07:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Food Systems Summit 2021: Member State Dialogues in Lao PDR
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Dr. Phommy Inthichack, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/35946/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/35946/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Member State
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	Lao People's Democratic Republic

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

### PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18      16 19-30      145 31-50      63 51-65      3 66-80      0 80+

### PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

138 Male      78 Female      14 Prefer not to say or Other

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

15	Agriculture/crops	10	Education	10	Health care
12	Fish and aquaculture	2	Communication	5	Nutrition
10	Livestock	3	Food processing	5	National or local government
59	Agro-forestry	3	Food retail, markets	1	Utilities
11	Environment and ecology	5	Food industry	4	Industrial
2	Trade and commerce	4	Financial Services	36	Other

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	0	Workers and trade union
2	Large national business	0	Member of Parliament
3	Multi-national corporation	9	Local authority
2	Small-scale farmer	41	Government and national institution
0	Medium-scale farmer	2	Regional economic community
4	Large-scale farmer	45	United Nations
4	Local Non-Governmental Organization	3	International financial institution
28	International Non-Governmental Organization	6	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
10	Indigenous People	0	Consumer group
11	Science and academia	46	Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

### HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The organization of the National Dialogues in Lao PDR in preparation of the Food Systems Summit allowed a wide range of stakeholders – from private sector, NGOs, civil society organizations, development partners, the Lao Government and international organizations to actively participate and contribute to the discussions. In addition, the event provided simultaneous interpretation to allow non-English speakers to fully participate and contribute to the dialogues. This set-up reinforced the principle of ‘embracing inclusivity’ to ensure the inclusiveness of the process. Moreover, the multi-stakeholder approach enhanced the principle of ‘recognizing complexity’ as each actor brought in diverse perspectives on the complex elements of the food systems and identify the synergy and potential trade-off among them, thus enabling the stakeholders to ‘respect’, ‘mutually complement the work of others’ and to ‘build trust’. The profound discussions at the National Dialogues also helped to emphasize the need to ‘act with urgency’ as sustainable food systems are fundamental to tackle major challenges such as hunger, diet-related disease, insufficient working conditions or environmental degradation.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Based on the principle of ‘embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity’, the lead Ministry and UN Agencies held various discussions to agree on the four action tracks representing the core elements of the Lao PDR’s Food Systems and a workplan to ensure the broad multi-stakeholder engagement and contribution to the process. The preparatory work for the National Dialogues along the four identified action tracks were based on the principle of ‘complement the work of others’. Each of the four stakeholder groups produced a comprehensive background paper, which incorporated academic literature, inputs from various actors working in food systems and governmental expertise. This inclusive approach reflected the principle of ‘building trust’ and ‘being respectful’. To ensure that the National Dialogues have a long-lasting impact, various stakeholders made commitments, which promote a pathway to sustainable food systems in Lao PDR.

### DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Firstly, ensuring the Government’s strong engagement and ownership throughout the process is one of the key factors to ensure the success of the Dialogues. To achieve this, the lead UN Agencies would need to fully extend their support to the Government in a well-coordinated manner through various meetings, exchanges, and technical discussions with relevant line ministries. Secondly, the role of the moderator during the discussions is a crucial factor for the success of the event. We selected the moderators for the event based on their solid technical knowledge in food systems and further essential facilitation skills to ensure a meaningful conversation with clear-cut outcomes among the various stakeholders. Thirdly, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the discussions were shifted to an online conferencing platform, which required diligent preparations and an advanced technical set-up to ensure the most conducive environment for the virtual dialogues. These elements ensured an open and free discussion among key stakeholders, which was crucial for the success of the National Dialogues in Lao PDR.

# 3. METHOD

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The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

**DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?**

**Yes**

**No**

# 4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

## MAJOR FOCUS

Aiming on actions towards the achievement of healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems, the National Dialogues in Lao PDR were organized along four of the five action tracks suggested by the Food Systems Summit secretariat. The first action track focuses on 'Ensuring safe and nutritious food for all' particularly to the benefit of women, children, and the most vulnerable groups.

The second topic promotes 'Boosting nature positive production at sufficient scales' which aimed at strengthening a more sustainable agricultural production system that ensures Lao PDR is economically competitive in the region whilst not harming the ecology. A key focus of this action track was to tackle the high level of demand for safe, nutritious and environmentally sustainable food by taking advantage of Lao PDR's rich biodiversity.

The third topic enforces 'Advance equitable livelihoods and value distribution'. This is particularly relevant in Lao PDR's context where agriculture accounts for 70% of employment and 16.6% of the national GDP. This area focuses on ensuring that all people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized benefit from the changes envisioned in the National Dialogues.

The fourth topic aims at building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress which is crucial to mitigate the impacts of floods, droughts, storms, which often trigger secondary hazards such as landslides, forest and community fires. All these threats have negative effects on the food system, and particularly affect the most vulnerable and food insecure people in the country – such as, rural workers, women and children.

Since food systems are multifaceted and dynamic, the National Dialogues in Lao PDR set an overall focus on the understanding of food systems in all its complexities – particularly the interlinkages between topic areas. The emphasis on trade-offs and synergies between topic areas was key and enabled a wide range of stakeholders to determine the national pathway towards sustainable food systems by promoting an integrated and inclusive approach.

### ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

Through the National Dialogues on Food Systems, the participating stakeholders had an open platform to exchange their diverse views and perspectives on Lao PDR's food systems. In particular, the National Dialogues provided them an opportunity to discuss food systems from different perspectives and to identify opportunities and challenges; to acknowledge and identify synergies and possible trade-off among the four topics; to acknowledge the importance to have all stakeholders on board to collectively tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities while making sure no one is left behind; to learn from good practices and policies as well as to benefit from each other's lessons learned; to collect and to strengthen the commitments from stakeholders for collaborative actions on the pathway towards sustainable food systems.

Main findings on 'Ensuring safe and nutritious food for all' include that growing reliance on store bought food is leading to an increased consumption of unhealthy, processed foods. This is exacerbated by poverty, though even people with sufficient money might not buy healthy foods. Moreover, deforestation and infrastructural mega-projects are cutting off supply of food to people who still engage in 'traditional food systems', such as foraging and subsistence farming. Many people lack the necessary knowledge of healthy foods.

With regard to 'Boosting Nature Positive Production at Sufficient Scales' key findings entail that green agricultural practices are more expensive and require research, development investment, funding, education and training, including the upskilling current agricultural workers Laos PDR has a rich biodiversity is well placed to take advantage of the demand for safer foods while high levels of pesticide use are threatening public health and the environment. The main findings on

On 'Advancing Equitable Livelihoods and Value Distribution', the National Dialogues emphasized the existence of significant food-system related barriers for women and girls' livelihoods, especially in terms of decision making and access to leadership positions.

Lastly, 'Building Resilience to Shocks Vulnerabilities and Stress and Ensuring Sustainable Food Systems' showed that Laos PDR is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with over 90% of farms having the potential to be adversely affected by environmental issues – this affects vulnerable groups the most. Moreover, large areas of land are still contaminated with unexploded ordnances (UXOs).

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

The National Dialogues revealed diverse insights on food systems in Lao PDR. Regarding topic one 'Ensuring Safe and Nutritious Food for all', the organizers and panelists identified the need to gain a better understanding of nutritional issues, food behaviors including the perspective of the consumers as well as the interaction with the food and social environment to influence behaviors and taste preferences (cost/marketing, availability etc.). Education is key to incentivizing consumption patterns and behavior that has a positive impact on healthy nutrition choices. Moreover, greater nutrition focus in financing and public policies, particularly in agriculture are key. Large agri-businesses bring the risk of taking up large swathes of land and can contribute to environmental degradation. Small- and medium-sized enterprises need access to financing and capacity-building resources to support improved production of safe and nutritious foods. This will also help generate higher incomes for the population, improving access to safe and nutritious food. In order to continue the work of the National Dialogue creation of an inclusive, multisectoral mechanism, which will plan and coordinate action in developing a balanced and inclusive food system in Lao PDR.

### ACTION TRACKS

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

Topic two 'Boosting Nature-Positive Food Production at Scale' highlighted the need for increased funding in research and development and extension to underpin agricultural innovation as well as upskilling initiatives for farmers and producers accompanied by the implementation of regulations, standards, mechanization, modern irrigation techniques and technologies including a focus on post-harvest processing. For instance, and consistent with international trends, Lao PDR is pursuing the implementation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) as a minimum standard across all production systems to be adhered to by small producers and private enterprises.

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate



## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Topic three 'Advancing Equitable Livelihoods and Value Distribution' highlighted the need for generating and improving opportunities for decent work, incomes, and social safety support with a focus on ensuring universality of access to quality incomes, social support and wellbeing, and finally, with a forward-looking intention of mitigating risks to increase resilience for all livelihoods. For example, IFAD, FAO, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry commit to reducing the gender gap and mainstreaming gender related issue, by ensuring equity and/or empowering women in their interventions.

### ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
✓	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation		Data & Evidence
✓	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

Topic four 'Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress' underpinned the necessity of undertaking a comprehensive Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) of agriculture - encompassing crop, livestock, fisheries and forestry - and dependent livelihoods to guide planning of resilience building in food systems. Moreover, the stakeholder encouraged the mainstreaming of climate-smart, green and sustainable practices into project planning, research, extension, investment decision-making and community engagement.

### ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

### KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Please see section 3 for an overview of the areas of divergence, which emerges during the Member States Dialogue in Lao PDR.

### ACTION TRACKS

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# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

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## ATTACHMENTS

- **Synthesis Report : Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems in Lao PDR**  
[https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Synthesis-Report\\_NFSSD-2021--Lao-PDR.pdf](https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Synthesis-Report_NFSSD-2021--Lao-PDR.pdf)