

Provincial Government Support – Houaphanh, Lao PDR

PI initially engaged with Houaphanh Provincial Government (HPG) in late 2007 on a bamboo value chain analysis project. HPG has recognised the strong potential of the bamboo sector for poverty eradication as well as HP economic development. As a result, HPG has worked with PI to carry out many planning activities such as primary base line survey, resource mapping and farmer environment enabling in preparation for a bamboo sector intervention project.

PI had been engaging with a small steering committee established by HPG to support the growth of the bamboo sector. PI has organized a series of stakeholder workshops throughout the province. Also study tours to China and Vietnam were organised for representative from HPG, investors, and farmers. At the same period, PI had worked with 12 villages from Sobbao and Viengxay district to participate in farmer resource capacity build and bamboo harvesting techniques.

In November 2009, PI formally commenced its bamboo sector intervention project in Houaphanh. The project contains six key components:

- Detailed Resource Mapping and Market accessibility of Bamboo Resource, aiming to have details of bamboo supply by species and location as well as market value from the source for competitiveness
- Full details and descriptive of Base Line Household Income Survey and Impact Measurement, aiming to understand how bamboo fits into the farming system, and to establish a baseline against the development of the bamboo industry and in particular its impact on incomes and poverty can be assessed, and to identify farm and village level constraints to the future development of the bamboo industry in Houaphanh.
- Bamboo Industry Policy Review and Change recommendation
- Farmers Market Linkage Pilot, aiming to pilot a competitive buying scenario for bamboo culms and shoots, in a small group of village
- Developing Expertise and Regional Networks for Houaphanh Province, aiming to support the linkage of Houaphanh province with leading benchmark practices in China and with the neighbouring provinces in Viet Nam, through visits by Houaphanh officials to other bamboo industries, participation in meetings and trade days in the region, visits to Houaphanh province by officials and experts
- Provincial Strategy and Planning and Review of Phase 1, aiming to enable and support the steering committee to develop a provincial strategy for bamboo, and to develop Industry strategy concepts and draft plans in consultation with experts from China, and Viet Nam as required by Houaphanh.