

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

Final Independent Project Evaluation of the
**Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and
Food Security Project (PALAFS)**

LAO K46
Lao P.D.R.

August 2014



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2014

This evaluation report was prepared by an evaluation team consisting of Mr. Sebastian Behrle. The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides normative tools, guidelines and templates to be used in the evaluation process of projects. Please find the respective tools on the IEU web site: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation.html>

The Independent Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime can be contacted at:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500
1400 Vienna, Austria
Telephone: (+43-1) 26060-0
Email: ieu@unodc.org
Website: www.unodc.org

Disclaimer

Independent Project Evaluations are scheduled and managed by the project managers and conducted by external independent evaluators. The role of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) in relation to independent project evaluations is one of quality assurance and support throughout the evaluation process, but IEU does not directly participate in or undertake independent project evaluations. It is, however, the responsibility of IEU to respond to the commitment of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in professionalizing the evaluation function and promoting a culture of evaluation within UNODC for the purposes of accountability and continuous learning and improvement.

Due to the disbandment of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) and the shortage of resources following its reinstatement, the IEU has been limited in its capacity to perform these functions for independent project evaluations to the degree anticipated. As a result, some independent evaluation reports posted may not be in full compliance with all IEU or UNEG guidelines. However, in order to support a transparent and learning environment, all evaluations received during this period have been posted and as an on-going process, IEU has begun re-implementing quality assurance processes and instituting guidelines for independent project evaluations as of January 2011.

© United Nations, August 2014. All rights reserved worldwide.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This publication has not been formally edited.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Executive summary	v
Summary Matrix of Findings,.....	ix
I. Introduction.....	1
Background and Context	1
Evaluation Methodology.....	3
II. Evaluation Findings.....	5
Design	5
Relevance	6
Efficiency.....	7
Partnerships and Cooperation	8
Effectiveness.....	9
Infrastructure Development	10
Impact	15
Sustainability	16
Crosscutting Issues	17
III. Conclusions.....	20
IV. Recommendations.....	21
V. Lessons Learned	23
 <i>Annexes</i>	
I. Terms Of Reference Of The Evaluation	25
II. List of stakeholders interviewed.....	36
III. List of documents reviewed	37
IV. Project Log Frame with Indicators.....	38

ACRONYMS

AD	Alternative Development
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
COLAO	Country Office Lao P.D.R.
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DCDC	District Commission for Drug Control and Supervision
DHO	District Health Office
DLWU	Lao Women's Union on district level
GoL	Government of Lao
HRDI	Highland Research Development Institute
IEU	Independent Evaluation Unit
IGM	Income Generating and Marketing (Groups)
LAG	Livelihood Activity Group
LAK	Lao Kip
LCDC	Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NPD	National Project Director
NUDP	Northern Uplands Development Programme
PCDC	Provincial Commission for Drug Control and Supervision
PRRA	Participatory Rural Rapid Appraisal
PADF	Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund
PALAFS	Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RD	Rural Development
UNODC	United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crime
USD	United States Dollar
VHW	Village Health Worker
VSCG	Village Savings and Credit Groups
VVW	Village Veterinary Worker

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security (PALAFS) project (LAO/K46) was one of several Alternative Development and Drug Demand Reduction projects in Northern Laos that are run by UNODC in partnership with the Lao Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC), and the Thailand Royal Project Foundation (RPF) through a sister project which is based in Oudomxai province, Lao PDR. The project was built on the experiences and implementation structure of a German-funded predecessor project, the Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund (PADF) project (LAO/I32) (2007 to 2010), extending its activities to 16 target villages in each one village cluster in Khoua, Samphan and Mai districts. The project had a run time of 27 months, from October 2011 to December 2013. Grant funding amounting to US\$ 1.200.000 was made available by the government of the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg.

The project's expected main outcomes were to achieve a stable food security situation through the introduction of improved agricultural development,, to reduce opium demand and supply by successful treatment of opium addicts and increased farm productivity, and to enable reliable government and strengthened community services through enhanced capacity and increased local participation. The final independent project evaluation was carried out in April and May 2014 by an external consultant. It included the review of available project documents and interviews with national and local stakeholders and implementing counterparts. All villages except two were visited for group interviews of village functionaries and for validation of project information. The evaluation was challenged by a lack of significant data. A monitoring system feeding into the Logframe indicators was not in place, and an end-line survey has not been conducted. A part of the implementing staff could not be interviewed because four months after project closure, they had moved on to new responsibilities and were no longer available.

Evaluation Findings

Design: The project followed UNODC's approach to Alternative Development: Drug Reduction activities were combined with a broad range of Rural Development activities. However, in the case of K46, the multitude of activities, implemented within a short time frame and with limited technical capacity, proved to be challenging for the project.

Relevance: Most of the project's many activities; especially infrastructure development and service provision were highly relevant to the target group. Poor initial analysis of the socio-economic and cultural context diminished the potential of some activities though.

Efficiency: Overall efficiency is assessed to be high. Costs for technical assistance have been low, but so has its scope and competence. Thus, high efficiency has been achieved partly at the expense of quality and sustainability. The project has focussed on delivering inputs without adequate consideration of capacity development issues concerning organised knowledge transfer, future service provision and market linkage.

Partnership and cooperation: K46 was designed to operate within a network of partnerships with other governmental and development organisations and projects. The level and success of the project's

cooperation and coordination was closely correlated to its physical location. Khoua-based, the project had excellent relations to the district government and to other projects based there. Activities were complementary and overlaps could be avoided. Cooperation was less successful with the district governments in Mai and Samphan districts and with organisations without a representative office such as in Khoua. The project did not attempt to create partnerships with the private sector that might have increased efficiency and sustainability.

Effectiveness: In general the project has been highly effective in achieving its output targets. Almost all activities have been carried out as planned. However, as mentioned before, the focus on output targets has obstructed the transformation of outputs into useful and sustainable outcomes.

Impact: The high relevance of the project's interventions compensated partly for weaknesses in project implementation, ensuring good overall impact. The project succeeded well in contributing positively to the target villages' development towards a modern, interconnected society.

Sustainability: The difficult geographical conditions together with the very low level of formal human capacity made it difficult to ensure the sustainability of activities that require organised and formalised follow-up action. In addition, the short time frame of the project limited its prospects of building complex social structures. Accordingly, the project had its best results in activities that were based on the provision of tangible outputs.

Cross-cutting issues

Poverty reduction: Operating in some of the most remote villages in districts classified as amongst the poorest of the nation, the project had a very strong poverty focus and was successful in contributing to the economic development of the target areas.

Gender equality: The project has taken little interest in gender issues. Gender mainstreaming as promoted within the UN system, has not been carried out. One of the project's activities though – clean water – had positive impact specifically on girls and women who traditionally are responsible for fetching water.

Innovation: Although the overall design of the project was conservative, some of the featured activities – new crops, greenhouses and fruit orchards – were innovative.

Environmental protection: None of the project's activities is considered to have mentionable, immediate negative effect on the environment. Road connection and intensified agricultural practices will probably contribute to increased environmental degradation of the area in the longer term.

Conclusions

From these findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The experience from this project shows that opium demand and supply reduction can be very successful, if the local government is committed in its supervision and enforcement role.

Though, it is crucial to the success of a project to balance its scope of operations with its implementation capacity.

Approaches applied successfully in one location cannot easily be transferred to other locations. The cultural and socio-economic context has to be analysed carefully before activities are put into execution. Especially innovative approaches need continuous revision during their implementation.

The experience of the K46 project raises the question whether the time for Alternative / Rural Development programs in their traditional design is over, and whether certain modifications would be required to improve such programs' record of widespread efficiency, quality and sustainability issues.

Recommendations

The evaluation has a number of recommendations targeted towards UNODC's set-up of similar projects. AD projects may gain in efficiency and sustainability by narrowing down operations towards a smaller number of identified core components, and consider cooperation with other organisations having complementary fields of expertise. Working on fewer locations while maintaining or even increasing the number of covered villages will reduce the need for coordination and capacity-building, and hereby contribute positively to the overall efficiency of the project.

UNODC should make sure that sufficient capacity is available to provide technical assistance during implementation and for local capacity-building. Knowledge transfer processes should be planned carefully – formal training events cannot stand alone, but must be supplemented with continuous supervision by skilled experts.

Gender-mainstreaming and the setting-up of an adequate monitoring system according to UN-standards should be mandatory for each project. It would be an advantage if UNODC had a central quality control team that could support its affiliated projects in living up to such quality standards.

SUMMARY MATRIX OF FINDINGS, EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings ¹	Evidence (sources that substantiate findings)	Recommendations ²
Key recommendations		
1. K46 featured too many activities to be carried out within too short time and with insufficient technical assistance	Some of the activities, especially in Mai and Samphan districts, where the project was less present, were observed to have low quality of implementation. (Observation, result of interviews, project documents)	1a) Future projects should focus on a small, but well-defined number of core activities; consider cooperation with other organisations. 1b) Allow longer project runtime for activities that imply the building of services and social structures. 1c) Ensure that technical competency available for implementation is sufficient.
2. The analysis of the specific socio-economic and cultural context, incl. gender issues, was not sufficiently incorporated in the design of some of the activities.	Some activities had poor results mainly due to flaws in the original design. (Observation, results of interviews, project documents)	2a) Activities should be designed with consideration of the socio-economic framework, and the design should be revised continuously during implementation. 2b) Gender-mainstreaming should be included in the design, monitoring and implementation of all projects in line with UN policy.
3. Severe lack of data and information on outcome and impact level.	Project monitoring did not comply with UNODC standards. (Project documents)	3a) Projects should have monitoring systems consistent with UNODC standards. 3b) Ensure consistency between indicators and monitoring.
Important recommendations		
4. Most Village Savings and Credit Groups are unsustainable without continuous, sustainable support services	None of the VSCG is able to operate without external support; a support structure is not in place. (Interviews with VSCG committees, district support	4a) New projects should not engage in community finance activities, unless they can ensure long-term support.

¹ A finding uses evidence from data collection to allow for a factual statement.

² Recommendations are proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a project/programme; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources. For accuracy and credibility, recommendations should be the logical implications of the findings and conclusions.

	staffs)	
5. Coordination and supervision was not sufficient in Mai and Samphan districts.	Activities in Khoua were in general very successful, while in Samphan and Mai many of the activities failed or were implemented poorly. (Observation, interviews with villagers and district staffs)	5a) The number of project locations should be reduced according to a project's capacity to closely coordinate and supervise implementation.
6. The project was biased towards cooperation with the government and other projects resulting in quality and sustainability issues. Alternative partnerships with the private sector were not considered.	Without close supervision and technical guidance, the quality of implementation by government counterparts is at risk. (Observation)	6a) Alternative partnerships with private or cooperative organisations should be considered especially for service provision and economic activities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background and context

The UNODC country programme for Lao P.D.R. comprises Alternative Development and Drug Demand Reduction projects in three provinces in Northern Laos: Oudomxai, Phongsaly and Houaphan, all of them with the Lao Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC) as co-ordinating agency. In Phongsaly province, the Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund (PADF) project (LAO/I32) was running from 2007 to 2010 with a total budget of US\$1,881,100 provided by the German Ministry for International Cooperation. The project objective was to contribute to the reduction of drug abuse, the elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation and the promotion of participatory strategies of Alternative Development in 30 villages of Khoua and May districts and to reduce opium addiction in 21 villages in Samphan district.

Upon its completion, UNODC extended its activities to a second project, the Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security (PALAFS) project (LAO/K46) with grant funding amounting to US\$1,200,000 from the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg. The project objectives were to consolidate and complete certain remaining activities of its predecessor PADF project as well as to build on its achievements, experiences and lessons learnt by expanding activities to additional 16 new villages in Khoua, Mai, and Samphan districts.

The project had the overall objective “to enhance/improve/support the capacities of the Government of Lao PDR and target communities in sustaining opium elimination through alternative livelihood, food security, reducing drug demand, deforestation and degradation in Khoua, Mai and Samphan.”

Its five expected main outcomes were:

Outcome 1: “Stable food security situation achieved in target households through the introduction of improved agricultural development linked to markets.”

Outcome 2: “Increased productivity of former opium growing families and communities with the elimination of opium production and successful treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of opium addicts.”

Outcome 3: “Reliable social and economic support services from government staff delivered to support AD activities of target communities.”

Outcome 4: “Enhanced capacity of Phongsaly Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security (PALAFS) staff and provincial/district counterpart staff in support services delivery. Target communities are strengthened in project implementation, operation and maintenance.”

Outcome 5: “Project management, provincial/district/community mobilization and coordination developed and improved to empower local participation.”

To achieve these outcomes, a broad range of activities resulting in 17 main outputs have been carried out (see the in the annex).

The project document was signed between the Lao Government (Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision/LCDC) and UNODC on 15th September 2011. First funds were received late October 2011.

An initial Participatory Rural Rapid Appraisal (PRRA) and baseline survey was conducted in October 2011. Its results were validated with the communities and used in a planning and budgeting workshop (28th November – 1st December 2011) that was attended by project staff and district counterpart staff. At this workshop, a work plan and a project budget for 2012 and 2013 were prepared.

To assess the progress of implementation, to identify problems and solutions, share learning and experiences and identify the focus for the remaining period of the project, the project organised stakeholder workshops in the three districts in October 2012, followed by an in-house Mid-term Review in late October to early November 2012.

The project also organised a Tripartite Review Meeting on 6th February 2013. Participants came from LCDC, PCDC, the DCDCs, related provincial departments and international development projects. The meeting acknowledged the progress and outcomes of the project so far and recommended a no-cost extension of LAO/K46 from October to December 2013 in order to carry out a final evaluation that originally was planned to be done jointly with another UNODC project. The meeting also proposed to prepare for a third project phase for another 2 years. The mentioned extension was subsequently approved by UNODC Vienna, thus LAO K 46 ended on 31st December 2013.

UNODC recruited an international independent evaluator in April 2014 for a 30-day assignment in April and May 2014.

This independent evaluation of LAO/K46 is a final project evaluation which seeks to assess achievements, outcomes and the overall impact of the project to determine good practices and lessons learned. The assessment uses the following evaluation criteria: design, relevance, efficiency, partnerships and cooperation, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and crosscutting issues (see the annex). Based on the findings, the evaluation provides concrete recommendations.

The evaluation of LAO/K46 has been undertaken in April and May 2014 by an international consultant with extensive experience in Rural Development and with in-depth understanding of the local cultural and political context. An evaluation mission to Laos was undertaken from 27th April to 14th May 2014. After an initial briefing with country office representatives and counterparts from the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC), the consultant spent 14 days in the project area for interviews with former project stakeholders and village visits. Upon his return to Vientiane, UNODC representatives provided additional feedback to the consultant's presentation of preliminary findings. The consultant submitted the first draft evaluation report on 29th May and a second draft on 11th June that incorporated comments from UNODC and LCDC representatives. The draft evaluation report was finalised on 5th July. After further revision incorporating the comments from the UNODC Independent Evaluation Unit, the final evaluation report was submitted on 12th August 2014. A list of persons interviewed is available in the Annexes.

Evaluation methodology

Prior to the field mission, the consultant conducted a desk study of relevant and available documents (see Annex III). Upon his arrival to Vientiane, the consultant was briefed by representatives from UNODC and LCDC.

According to his ToR, the consultant's scope for field work and data collection was limited to the verification of existing information by stakeholder interviews and site visits to 6 villages. Because of a severe lack of data though (see next chapter), the consultant aimed at visiting all 16 target villages to validate information from the project progress reports by observation and to conduct Focus Group Interviews with the village administrations, with opium addicts and with the village plenaries (see Annex II for details).

During his field trip, he also conducted semi-structured interviews with former district counterparts in the three districts. During the entire field trip, he was accompanied by the former National Project Director. The NPD coordinated the field trip with the village authorities and with the district agencies involved. Since he was the only former project staff with in-depth knowledge to the project's context and activities that was available for this evaluation, he provided much information, and he was also present during interviews³. Due to his proficiency in Lao language, the consultant worked without translator.

The validity of all information was examined by triangulating results of the desk study, responses from interview and Focus Group Discussions and own observations.

Limitations to the evaluation

This evaluation met a number of limitations that have a negative effect on the documentation of its findings:

A consistent monitoring system was not in place; very few progress data beyond input and output level were available. A consistent database feeding into the project indicators has not been elaborated. Although a baseline survey has been conducted, there was no end-line survey to measure actual progress on household level.

Monitoring data and written information were available from project progress reports only. However, project reports focus much on the delivery of outputs and provide only limited information on outcomes and qualitative aspects.

The evaluation took place 4 months after the closure of the project, as the original plan was to evaluate K46 jointly with another project, K26. However, K26 received an extension, and a separate evaluation for K46 had to be organised with relatively short notice. Because of the delay it was not possible to meet or contact any of the former project staffs as primary sources of information, even though COLAO staff had tried to create a connection. Also the UNODC COLAO liaison officer responsible for K46 had left the organisation three months before project closure, and none of the country office staffs available had in depth knowledge of K46.

³ The potential biasing of villagers' responses due to the presence of a high-ranking government official during the field trip was openly discussed during the fine-planning of the field trip; however, the evaluation assessed the advantages of his involvement to outweigh possible negative influences. Not only did the NPD act inconspicuously without trying to influence the interviews, he also provided the consultant with valuable, critical information.

Due to high staff turnover within the cooperating government agencies, in several cases the district line agency coordinators had been replaced and the interviewed persons had only limited knowledge about the project.

The scope of the field mission to collect data was limited by time and manpower. Only the evaluator himself, assisted by the former National Project Director, visited the villages. A national evaluation consultant as mentioned in the ToR of the evaluation had not been recruited.

Field work was done during the onset of the rainy season. Villagers were busy with upland rice plantation and plenary meetings could not be organised except in one village, B. Phonethong. Road access was difficult; landslides prevented the physical visit to two target villages (Houai Anh and Thaeng Louang in Mai District).

The limitations were partly compensated by the perceived good quality of the conducted interviews due to the village respondents' openness, and the consultant's level of experience with Rural Development in Laos. Thus the field trip provided sufficient first-hand information from respondents and own observations to make the evaluator confident of the validity of his findings, even though certain details may lack validation.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Design

The Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (LAO/K46) was based on UNODC's 'Alternative Development' (AD) approach, that combines drug reduction with elements of Rural Development (RD) programs. This methodology acknowledges the need for rural communities to approach development from a wider perspective, including a broad range of development goals on areas like health, education, production and marketing, physical and social infrastructure.

Textbox 1. Evaluation questions - Design

1. To what extent were the specific project context and the expressed needs of the target group taken into consideration?
2. What was the basis for the selection of the project's target villages?
3. What was the quality of the logical framework approach, with measurable expected objectives, outcomes and outputs, performance indicators (including gender equality), targets, risks, mitigation measures and assumptions?

For its design, K46 could make active use of the experiences and lessons learnt gained by other AD projects in Northern Laos and, particularly, by its predecessor, the Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund (PADF) project (LAO/I32); the designs of most activities are taken over either from I32, or – like the Village Savings and Credit Groups, the greenhouses and the fruit orchards – from the very prominent Increasing Food Security and Promoting Licit Crop Production and Small Farmer Enterprise Development in Lao PDR and Myanmar project in Oudomxai (LAO/XSPK26). The elaboration of a baseline study that was based on socio economic data collection and PRA done by the PALAFS staff jointly with district line agency staff ensured good consistency with the beneficiaries' needs. During stakeholder workshops and a Tripartite Review Meeting beneficiaries had further opportunity to give feedback to ongoing project activities.

The administrations of the three neighbouring districts of Khoua, Mai and Samphan selected the 16 target villages according to their district plans, within three village clusters. According to the district representatives, poverty criteria had priority over drug-related criteria, because poverty and underdevelopment were seen as the main reasons for poppy cultivation and opium addiction. Two out of the three target areas in Samphan and Khoua districts actually had been drug-free before the onset of the project, and, to a certain extent, UNODC's core competence faded into the background.

The project was designed to employ a small team of project staff comprising only three technical staffs, one international and two national advisors, that each had to cover several topics. The project's time frame was limited to only 2 years.

Too many activities, implemented within too short time and with too limited technical capacity – these factors determined by design were one of the causes for the quality problems that are a constant issue in this report.

For activity planning, the initial analysis of the local context has been superficial. For instance, food security is confused with rice self-sufficiency; the cultural feasibility of the formation of Income Generating and Marketing (IGM) Groups has not been investigated, leading to blurred concepts.

The quality of the logframe is not impressive. Output, outcome and impact levels are confused at several occasions (e.g. 'drug free villages established' is outcome, not output; 'increased productivity of former opium farmers' is impact, not outcome). All activities and results in outcome 5 ('Project management, provincial/district/community mobilization and coordination developed and improved to empower local participation') are concerning project-internal processes, and are as such not outputs or outcomes of the project. The logframe contains 71 indicators: this is far too many. The quality of most indicators is low; they are either unspecific (e.g. 'staffs are able to deliver services'), difficult or impossible to measure (e.g. '10% increase in the volume of goods/commodities sold for outside market') or unrealistic (e.g. the main indicator 'household's income in the target communities will have increased by 50 %').

The overall assessment of the project design is medium.

Relevance

The K46 project was in line with the development priorities of the Government of Lao (GoL) as indicated in the 'National Drug Control Master Plan' (2009-2013), the 'National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy' (NGPES) and the seventh National Socio-economic Development Plan (2011-2015) as

Textbox 2 Evaluation questions - Relevance

4. To what extent do the activities implemented through the project reflect the UNODC and government policies and priorities?
5. To what extent is the project objective and assistance relevant to the needs of the target villages?
6. What are the comparative advantages of UNODC in implementing community-based

well as its commitment to reach the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

The project worked closely together with the local district governments to ensure that the selection of target villages and the implementation of activities were congruent with the respective district development plans.

Villagers expressed that most of the project's many activities had been highly relevant to the target group, especially infrastructure development and service provision; this coincides with the evaluator's observation. Poor analysis of the contextual, socio-economic and cultural

factors has diminished the potential of some activities though:

For instance, the communal fruit tree gardens were abandoned in all except in two villages. Soil and climatic conditions have not been investigated and showed to be not suitable for some of the tree species. The gardens were too large for trial plots, which caused work overload during certain periods. The concept of cooperative economic activities has no roots in the local culture; responsibility and ownership were not properly addressed. Fencing was crucial, but mostly failed, because most of the villages have a large number of free-roaming ruminants. Finally, even in case of an agronomic success it would remain doubtful whether it makes sense to propagate a highly perishable and bulky crop in these very remote villages. For the purpose of trial testing and improving the villagers' diet, it would have been more appropriate to allocate a small number of fruit tree seedlings to model households to grow them in their already existing kitchen gardens. Similar conceptual flaws – unsuitable climate, lack of labour and lack of market – also affected the greenhouses promoted by the project.

In the opinion of the evaluator, the project could demonstrate UNODC's core competence of drug reduction through Alternative Development by its close and successful cooperation with the district authorities in Khoua district. In Khoua and to a lower extent in Samphan district, the local government has taken good ownership of the project's drug reduction agenda and successfully transferred it to its villages. The understanding and commitment of the district and the village communities is crucial to achieve and sustain drug reduction. However, in these two districts the selected target villages were already on the brink of being drug-free, although opium remains a problem in other village clusters. While the good results in Khoua are an encouraging example for the policy of close partnership with and implementation through the local authorities, the issues of quality and sustainability to be elaborated later, also expose the weaknesses of UNODC's approach especially to economic development, centered on the public sector.

The overall score for the relevance of this project and its activities is: very high.

Efficiency

Despite the extremely tight schedule to implement its multitude of activities, the project did well in delivering its inputs timely and completely according to the plan. An exception concerned the delivery of cardamom seedlings – to some villages seedlings were sent outside the main planting season, and villagers in Mai district reported that the seedlings were already withering at the time of delivery to the village.

The project did not exceed the budget total. In general, fixed expenditures were lower than budgeted, which left substantially more funding to actual activities (**Error! Reference source not found.**) – a very positive deviation.

The overall level of expenditures according to the financial reports made available appears reasonable within what can be expected for a project operating on three locations with very remote target villages. Additionally to the project-internal financial procedures preventing implementing staff from dealing with payments, the local district committees were assigned a function of overall supervision.

Textbox 3 Evaluation questions - Efficiency

7. To what extent were activities implemented on schedule and within the budget?
8. To what extent were inputs available on time and in the right quantity?
9. What measures have been taken during project planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
10. To which extent have delivered inputs translated into outcomes that contributed to the attainment of the objectives?

Figure 1. Expenditure Control

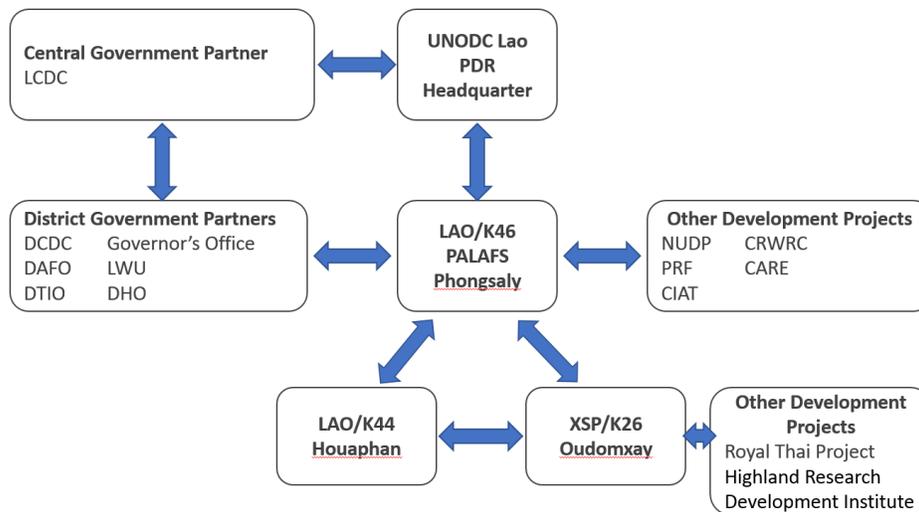
Category	Budget Line	Budgetted	Accounted	Deviation
1	Personnel	300,000	218,265	81,735
2	Travel	81,000	54,722	26,278
3	Other operating expenditures	168,000	174,892	- 6,892
4	Evaluation	-	30,000	- 30,000
5	Overhead HQ	138,000	138,195	- 195
6	<i>Subtotal fixed operating expenditures (1+2+3+4+5)</i>	<i>687,000</i>	<i>616,074</i>	<i>70,926</i>
7	<i>Subtotal capacity building (training & meetings)</i>	<i>105,000</i>	<i>94,915</i>	<i>10,085</i>
8	<i>Subtotal local grants and activity expenditures</i>	<i>408,000</i>	<i>490,614</i>	<i>- 82,614</i>
9	Total expenditures (6+7+8)	1,200,000	1,201,603	- 1,603

Overall efficiency is assessed to be high. However, this has been achieved partly at the expense of quality and sustainability. Costs for technical assistance have been low, but so has its scope and competence. The project has concentrated on delivering inputs with insufficient consideration of capacity-related issues like organised knowledge transfer, future service provision or market linkage. This issue is elaborated in the Effectiveness chapter.

Partnerships and cooperation

K46 was designed to work within a network of partnerships within the UNODC Laos network and with governmental and non-governmental international development organisations. Figure 1 gives an overview.

Figure 1. K46 Partnerships



The project had regular exchange with its fellow UNODC projects in Houaphan (K44) and Oudomxai (K26). Several of K46's trainings and study tours were organised and facilitated by K26.

The level and success of the project's cooperation and coordination was closely correlated to its physical location. Khoua-based, the project had excellent relations to the district government and to other projects based there (NUDP and CARE); coordination was smooth. Activities were complementary and overlaps could be avoided.

Textbox 4 Evaluation questions - Cooperation

- ii. Has the project actively cooperated with other relevant agencies, and how have activities been coordinated?

Cooperation was less successful with the district governments in Mai and Samphan districts and with organisations without a representative office in Khoua (PRF). Samphan officials complained about the unstructured ad hoc supervision of project staff.

The possibility of cooperation with the private sector is mentioned in the project document, in the context of marketing of agricultural products. However, there is no evidence that the project ever attempted cooperation with private sector partners.

Relying solely on the governmental system without investigating the possibility to cooperate with the private sector lead to backlashes caused by structural weaknesses of the Lao public sector as repeatedly reported during stakeholder interviews: chronic under-funding, low capacity, high staff turnover and lack of understanding for economic issues. Opportunities to increase efficiency and the prospects for sustainability by creating bonds with private actors were lost.

Effectiveness

As mentioned before, the project never developed a coherent data collection and monitoring system, resulting in a serious lack of verifiable progress data. The evaluation can report properly to only a small fraction of the log frame indicators.

An attempt to report to the log frame indicators partly based on the evaluator's estimation and own judgement, can be seen in the Annexes).

In general the project has been highly effective in achieving its output targets. Almost all activities have been carried out as planned. However, as mentioned before, its focus on output targets for a high number of different activities to be achieved within a short time frame, and its limited capacity for technical assistance and its lack of planned knowledge transfer have obstructed the transformation of outputs into useful and sustainable outcomes.

Even though a considerable number of trainings and study tours have been provided, not all of them had the desired effect. In general, villagers could hardly recall which trainings they had participated in, or any lessons learnt from them.

According to project progress reports, knowledge transfer has been intensive and well-organised for the agricultural trial activities of fruit orchards and greenhouses. With its sequence of trainings, study tours and supervised application of new knowledge these activities were well-carried out.

For other activities, the required knowledge transfer failed. With regard to the Village Savings and Credit Groups (VSCGs), neither staff nor villagers were able to do the very basic VSCG accounting correctly. The advisor in charge was not qualified enough. Referring to the Brief Intervention Training on Drug Demand Reduction, little added value can be expected from a four-tier Training of Trainers (country office →DCDC →village authorities →villagers) event - most of the messages will necessary be lost in the process.

For the implementation of a number of activities related to regular agronomic, veterinary and health-related) services, the project relied on existing expertise within the partnering district agencies without organising any capacity building measures; the assumed expertise has not been in place in all cases.

The Village Savings and Credit Groups are an example for the disproportion between physical inputs and capacity-building: The project invested seed money and substantial time spent by the respective district coordinators (Lao Women's Union and District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO)) and the project advisor for Community Development and Microfinance. These efforts resulted in promising initial

Textbox 5 Evaluation questions - Effectiveness

12. To what extent has the project achieved its foreseen objectives and results?
13. What were the difficulties/problems which affected the effectiveness of the project?
14. What lessons can be drawn regarding project effectiveness?

outcomes: Villagers raised own savings, took credits and paid them back with interest. A good payment discipline – a basic requirement for every Microfinance scheme – was established successfully. Nevertheless, beyond that point, the project failed widely in transferring the required technical skills to the VSCG committees and to the two district agencies that were expected to continue support and supervision of the VSCG after project end. The internal expertise within the project and its partners was insufficient, as the consultant had already pointed out during a review of UNODC's microfinance components, and there was no insight or plan how to acquire and organise such knowledge. Thus, at the time of the evaluation all of the VSCG were stuck and inactive since September (Khoua & Mai) resp. June 2013 (Samphan), left without a functioning accounting system and without a functioning support structure.

In the following, a concise description and rating of the main activities and their outcomes based on progress reports, stakeholder interviews and the evaluator's own observations is attempted. Figure 2. Activity Rating features a summary matrix with the evaluator's subjective ratings of the activities according to general assessment criteria.

Infrastructure Development

Road Access

Five target villages had pre-existing access tracks. A total of 58 kilometres of access tracks were completed for the remaining 11 villages to ensure that all 16 villages were connected to the regional road network. The new tracks are 'first generation' access trails: they normally don't allow all-weather access and they tend to be degraded by erosion and landslides within a few rainy seasons.

The quality of the tracks was good in Khoua and Samphan (even though villagers in Samphan complained, probably because they compared to the excellent all-weather regional road constructed by the Lao-American Project), but very poor in Mai. In Mai the road was barely visible at some sections. The trails to the villages of Houai Anh and Thaeng Louang were already barred less than one year after construction.

Villagers gave this activity a very high ranking for 'benefit', second only to clean water system construction. All villages reported an increased influx of traders and resulting increase of cash income mainly through the sale of previously unmarketable Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP). Also better access to health services and the convenience to get around were mentioned. Most of the trails will eventually face problems with landslides and erosion. Because a functioning road connection has high priority both to villagers and to the district government, this activity is rated to be fairly sustainable though.

Clean Water Supply and Latrines

Eight villages already had functioning water systems. The project provided gravity-fed clean water supply systems to the remaining eight villages and constructed totally 41 latrines to model families in nine villages.

The quality of construction was acceptable in Khoua and Samphan. In Mai, the first latrine pits were reported to be filled already. Water supply was ranked highest of all activities for its overall benefits; at the same time it is the activity that mainly affected women and girls, who traditionally are in charge with

fetching water for the household. The constructed latrines were in use, but not ranked having significant benefit to the village, as they only were available for some model households.

Agricultural, income generating activities

Promotion of galangal and cardamom

Galangal and cardamom are domesticated NTFP that have been introduced to the area for commercial production by a previous CARE food security project. Initial results have been very promising with good agronomic results and an unsatisfied market with presently very high farm prices.

The project distributed 160,076 galangal seeds/seedlings to 213 households in Khoua district. 264,000 cardamom seedlings were distributed to 528 households in all 16 villages. No mentionable technical support was given. Villagers reported that they had learnt from relatives and neighbouring villages rather than from project or DAFO staff how to grow these new crops. In Mai district, the provided seedlings were delivered in a wilted condition, and their growth was poor.

These two crops will probably boost farmers' income in the coming years, after they begin to fruit. They are highly suitable for local soil and climate conditions. Cardamom and galangal can become a good cash supplement to household income, even though the presently extraordinarily high market prices would drop to a lower level. On this background, villagers estimated the (future) benefit to be high. 14 villages want to expand their cardamom area and four villages the area with galangal.

Hybrid maize trial cultivation

This was a minor trial activity. The provided maize variety (totally 1,923 kg to 487 households) had good growth results, but at harvest time there were no traders interested to buy. Farmers said they would continue to grow as soon as there was demand.

Similar to other activities, the project was preoccupied with delivering material without much consideration of aspects of cultivation technique or market linkage.

Improved rice seed

Also the provision of improved rice seed was a minor trial activity. The upland rice varieties showed to be not suitable for the long season in Phongsaly's cool climate; they matured too early with resulting low yields.

Communal fruit tree gardens

The project and the villagers invested heavily in this activity – another innovative trial activity. Each village was endowed with between 300 and 600 fruit tree seedlings to be planted on a communal plot. This plot was meant to be a scion grove for later multiplication to individual households' plots. Three training sessions on fruit tree propagation were organised, one in each district.

The activity had little visible results, mainly because of flaws in the initial design. There was no consideration of the commonly known weaknesses of cooperative approaches to production. Ownership and responsibility were not allocated properly, resulting in poor maintenance: weed grew up and

ruminants broke through the fences destroying the remaining trees. For a trial activity, the plots were too large, requiring much labour compared to the unsecure outcome.

It was not considered whether these high altitudes and the leached soils would be suitable for cultivation, or whether an eventual crop of bulky and perishable fruit commodities would be marketable at these remote locations. The trainings on tree propagation were untimely, long time before the villagers could transform any learning into practice.

Only in three villages, the gardens are reported to be in reasonable condition: in these villages, the villagers had agreed on transferring ownership to the single families by dividing the plot into small parcels owned by the respective households.

Greenhouses to model farmers

Five green houses in four villages (2 run by model farmers and 3 by vegetable production groups consisting of each 15 members) have been constructed to test the technical and market feasibility of the green house technology that has proved to be successfully promoted by the K26 project in Oudomxai.

None of the greenhouses was operated when the consultant came by. Two greenhouses located near the mountain crest had been damaged by strong winds, and not repaired. During the rainy season, the availability of labour was limited. Obviously, the factors that caused the success of the greenhouse technology in certain parts of Oudomxai - high demand from nearby markets and farmers that already have given up shifting cultivation - are absent in the target area, making the observed problems of the activity predictable.

Vaccination schemes

The project made material and daily allowances available to the three districts' Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFO) enabling them to carry out full vaccination schemes to all animals in the target villages. Also funds for a 2014 vaccination program have been provided to the three districts.

However, a full vaccination programme was only carried out in Khoua; here DAFO has done similar programs already in earlier years, and trained Village Veterinary Workers (VWV) were in place to support the district veterinary. In Samphan the veterinary came only once per year to vaccinate dogs and pigs. Villagers could not observe a reduction in animal mortality. Also in Mai staff only came twice within two years; a large share of the large animals were not vaccinated, because the veterinary did not announce his visit, and the free-roaming animals could not be assembled in time

Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) and health-related activities

Drug Demand Reduction (DDR)

Totally 507 opium addicts have attended a 15-days centre-based detoxification course. DCDC in Khoua was regularly, several times per year, following up on the drug situation in the villages, while the other two districts were inactive. Long-term, post-detoxification treatment was not given in any of the districts. The UNODC country office in Vientiane organised Training of Trainers in Brief Intervention Treatment (BIT) in Vientiane for provincial PCDC and project staff, that subsequently was extended locally to the DDR teams on district level. DCDC then trained the Village Drug Control Teams.

The project organised drug awareness events on village level and at several occasions during festivals in the district capitals.

In Khoua and Samphan, the target village clusters had stopped opium cultivation already before the start of the project. Only very few opium consumers remain, all of them old people that are considered resistant to treatment. The interviewed village representatives without exemption expressed contentment about the fact that their villages had escaped the drug trap. They clearly recognized the connection between drug abuse, poverty and domestic misery. Even opium consumption by elderly addicts is tolerated; the village community would actively step in to prevent younger members from using drugs.

In the target villages in Mai district, in contrary, opium abuse continues to be common. The number of addicts has even slightly increased - a fact that is largely contributed to the district authorities' indifference. Even though experiences in Khoua and Samphan districts in particular as well as in the Lao P.D.R. in general are shining examples for that opium can be substantially reduced and even eliminated, the case of Mai district shows that good results cannot be expected without the active supervisory and law-enforcing role of the local government.

Medicine cabinets

Medicine cabinets equipped with drugs worth one million LAK each were provided to each of the target villages. The Village Health Workers in charge with the sale of medicine participated at training courses organised by the District Health Offices (DHO).

The cabinets are in use, and regularly restocked. However, none of the villages rated this activity to be significantly beneficial, probably because of villagers' previous access to alternative sources.

Training of midwives

The villages' traditional midwives have been invited to participate at trainings twice. There have been language issues for the Akha participants that do not understand Lao language.

Rice Banks and Village Savings and Credit Groups (VSCG)

Rice Banks

Each of the villages received material to build a rice store (excluding timber and bamboo) and an initial grant amount for purchase of rice that was expected to be added on by villagers' own contributions and interest payments (10 resp. 20% annual interest).

None of the villages had established written records on their rice bank. According to villagers' reports the rice banks are operating regularly in 12 villages, while four had run into problems at the time of the evaluation. Although villagers in 11 villages rated the rice bank amongst the four most beneficial project activities, the consultant is critical about the benefit and sustainability of the concept. Villagers acknowledged the easy availability of rice for consumption in periods of rice insufficiency – a very evident advantage after a failed 2013 rice season. However, the consultant wants to point out some critical points:

Rice banks do not address the problem of structural food- or rice-insufficiency on village or household level. Quite the contrary, in such situations rice banks either lead to an increasing debt level, or to the delinquency of households with consistently insufficient income.

On this background, in many villages the poorest, food-insecure households have no access to lending from rice banks, because they are considered unreliable.

Community-management is often weak (see also for VSCG) leading to poor recollection and/or elite capture.

Even well-performing rice banks tend to collapse, as soon as there are two consecutive poor seasons. The consultant has no knowledge of any rice bank in Laos that has existed for more than 4 years.

Storing rice as insurance stock after a good season can be more effectively done on household level.

Rice cannot be stored for more than one year. Lending from a monetary fund (like the VSCG) to smooth out consumption after a bad harvest would avoid this problem.

Village Savings and Credit Groups (VSCG)

This activity was amongst the project's high profile activities. In each of the 16 village a Village Savings and Credit Group has been initiated. Trainings and a study tour have been organised, and a considerable amount of one million LAK per household has been provided for seed capital. During the foundation process, villagers were accustomed to the requirements of regular savings and repayment of loans with interest. A team consisting of the responsible project advisor for Community Development and Microfinance, the respective coordinators from the District Lao Women's Union (DLWU) and the DAFO assisted the elected committees in conducting quarterly meetings.

Compiled data on the VSCG are not available. The records in the villages were incomplete and confusing. Important records as cashbook, savings and credit book have been discontinued and record keeping was in most villages reduced to keeping the member booklets updated. A general ledger, income statements and balance sheets that are providing summary information and a certain proof for correctness have never been introduced. From the existing records, the consultant could conclude that the project teams actually had succeeded well in establishing regular meetings with good savings and payment discipline. However, already since mid-2013 the schemes have seen little activity, as support staff no longer came for their supervision visits.

During previous district-level meetings in 2013 the future operation of the VSCG after project end had been discussed. Documentation of these meetings was not available. It has apparently been decided to transform the groups into revolving funds without a savings component, based on one-year credit circles. That would make continued supervision more convenient to the assigned district officers. It was also decided that district officers in charge with supervision would receive appropriate remuneration from the VSCG (5, 10 resp. 15% of the annual VSCG profit).

Such a reduction of the scope of operations also entails an equivalent reduction of the value of the VSCG as permanent media for financial intermediation of savings and credits. Savings cannot longer be deposited and withdrawn to uphold household liquidity. Credits tend to become permanent, and in most cases eventually savings, interest and capital payment stop altogether.

Villagers express clearly that they want and need continuous supervision; at the time of the evaluation such support was not in place in any of the 3 districts. It is also questionable what use such support would be, as the project obviously has not succeeded in building sufficient expertise to even maintain basic records, and as the district staff trained by the project in two of the 3 districts have already moved on to other responsibilities. With reliable and strong support such VSCG can become sustainable institutions. It is unlikely that such support can be organised though, thus the chance to achieve sustainability is assessed to be low.

The consultant has previously in 2012 conducted a review of UNODC's microfinance components in its AD projects. The general problem of organising well-qualified support after project end has caused him to discourage further attempts to build village savings and credits funds because of their severe sustainability issues.

Figure 2. Activity Rating

Activity	Concept	Relevance	Quality of implementation			Benefit (acc. to villagers)	Sustainability
			Khoua	Mai	Samphan		
Access roads	Good	Very high	Good	Very poor	Good	High	Medium-high
Water Supply	Good	Very high	Medium	Poor	Medium	Very high	Medium-high
Latrines	Good	High	Medium	Poor	Medium	Medium	High
Galangal & Cardamom	Good	High	Medium	Poor	Medium	High	Very high
Maize	Poor	High	Poor	Poor	Poor	Low	Low
Rice seed	Good	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	None	None
Fruit trees	Very poor	Low	Good	Good	Good	Low	Low
Greenhouses	Very poor	Low	Medium	Good	n/a	Low	Med. resp low
Vaccination	Good	Very high	Very good	Poor	Poor	High resp none	High resp low
DDR	Good	High resp low	Good	Poor	Poor	High resp none	High resp low
Medicin cabinet	Good	Medium	Good	Good	Good	Low	Medium
Midwives	Poor	Medium	Medium	Poor	Poor	Low	Medium
Rice Banks	Poor	Medium	Poor	Poor	Poor	High	Low
VSCG	Medium	High	Poor	Poor	Poor	High	Low

Impact

The project had a number of positive effects on the livelihood of the target group. The overall rating for impact is 'good'.

Textbox 6 Evaluation questions - Impact

15. What are the intended and unintended positive and negative, long-term effects of the project?
16. What is the farmers' livelihood improvement after the assistance?
17. To what extent can any identified changes in the drug situation (drug use and production) be attributed to the project?

Although the good results in opium reduction in Khoua and Samphan are the results of previous efforts rather than those of the K46 project, villagers reported that they were confirmed in their desistance from opium cultivation and addiction, preventing families from falling into the trap of drug addiction.

Villagers reported an increase of their income through improved market access, as more traders come to the villages after road construction and

previously unsellable commodities (especially NTFP) can be traded now. Also the reduced mortality of farm animals in Khoua district had an immediate positive effect. The introduction of promising new crops as cardamom and galangal is expected to bear fruits for the first time in 2014. The additional

income allowed the villagers to buy more goods for consumption, thus improving their standards of living.

Better access to health services and health-related facilities (water supply and latrines) has significantly improved villagers' health situation; the population growth of 3-4% per year in villages undisturbed by migration can be seen as proof. According to interviewed beneficiaries, less sickness also improved the labour situation, leading to increased income and improved food security.

The rice banks have relieved the acute lack of rice after the 2013-season that was marked by drought and rodent infestation. Also the Village Savings and Credit Groups had a positive impact on the families by increasing their immediate financial scope, although this impact should not be overestimated⁴.

Unintended, immediate negative effects have been small. The unsuccessful activities have occupied resources that could have been used for other purposes. Road and market access tend in the long run to contribute to the increasing pressure on forest and other natural resources.

However, it can be expected that improved road access normally leads to increased pressure on natural resources. Maize cultivation, should it ever become a commercial success like for upland farmers in Oudomxai province, comes with a price tag: maize farmers in Oudomxai use much more land than before. Without suitable agricultural extension services, new, previously unseen technology (tillage of sloping land, use of herbicides and chemical fertilisers) has foreseeable negative environmental effects (erosion, water contamination with chemicals).

Sustainability

In the specific context of this project, it is very difficult to obtain sustainable results.

Textbox 7. Evaluation questions - Sustainability

18. What is the likeliness that the benefits from the projects will be sustained after the end of the project?
19. To what extent were services developed under the project likely to continue, be scaled up or replicated after the project funding ceases?
20. To what extent were the beneficiaries committed to continue working towards project objectives after its ends?

The climatic and topographic conditions make it difficult to develop infrastructure in the first place, and cause high tear to roads and other infrastructure.

The very low educational level of both the target group and within the surrounding society makes it difficult to establish processes depending on formal knowledge e.g. accounting and management in village funds. In addition, the low level of development of the civic society is an obstacle to processes that require organisation and formal cooperation. Even though there are strong bonds of mutual help within the villages and especially within

clans, there is no experience in formalising extended cooperation for the benefit of all partners.

⁴ The 2012 Microfinance review stated that 'compared to the 144 interviewed households total assets (2,7% of 54,9 million LAK in average) and their annual turnover (9,4% of 15,5 million LAK in average), the credit amount disbursed [1,5 mio. LAK in average] is considerable, but can in itself hardly be a determining factor for the household's economic situation. (UNODC 2012)

The government's ability to deliver services is increasing steadily, but it is still very low in terms of human capacity, quality and budget allocation. Concepts like the ones of K46, solely relying on the presupposed services of the government, like vaccination, agricultural extension or the continued supervision of village funds, to ensure sustainability, are likely to fail.

The often mentioned low quality of implementation has in some cases aggravated these pre-existing obstacles to obtaining sustainability.

Activities that have been accepted and actively taken over by the target population with no need for further intervention have good perspectives to be continued or even upscaled, hereunder the opium stop in Khoua and Samphan target communities, the cultivation of cardamom and galangal and the use of latrines.

Other investments will probably be sustained on a certain, lower level due to their high priority amongst the communities and the district authorities. This applies to the access roads and the clean water systems.

The consultant is rather pessimistic towards the sustainability of the rice banks and village funds created by the project. Rice banks get stuck with mass default, and so do village funds without sufficient supervision. It was the impression of the consultant that the motivation and qualification of the involved district agencies was not sufficient to guarantee the continued functionality of the Village Savings and Credit Groups.

Certain trial activities (fruit gardens, greenhouses) will not be continued in their promoted form, as they showed no success.

Because of the difficult circumstances and the project's failure to address them properly, the sustainability prospects of the project's activities are assessed to be medium to poor.

Crosscutting issues

Poverty Reduction

The selected target villages were very remote villages all located in districts identified as 'Poor' in the 'National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy' (NGPES) of the Lao government. Activities were designed to equally benefit all members of the communities. Certain piloting activities (greenhouses, latrines) were targeted towards resource-rich model families – which make perfectly sense for innovative initiatives.

The project designers did not properly understand the situation of the poorest households in the village, the relatively few households that were actually facing food-insecurity⁵. These households are typically elderly people without relatives or

Textbox 8 Evaluation questions - Crosscutting issues

21. To what extent has the project in its design and implementation been mainstreamed for cross-cutting issues: poverty reduction, gender equality, innovation, environmental protection?

⁵ In 2009, the evaluation of a CARE project in Khoua and Samphan districts concluded on the basis of 166 household interviews,

widows/divorcees, or, in Mai target villages, families of opium addicts. They all have in common that they have insufficient labour available to sustain their own consumption. Typically, they rely on the support of the community, which normally is sufficient on a low level except in years of general hardship. Income-generating activities and credits in-kind or in cash as promoted by the project are labour-intensive and risk-increasing, and thus not suitable for the support of these labour-constrained, risk-averse households. Even though these households could benefit from health- and drug-related activities, rice banks and water supply, there is a certain discrepancy to the project's goals as prominently expressed in its title.

Gender Equality

Gender inequality in Laos is prevalent especially in certain ethnic minorities. Akha, and to a lesser extent Khmu and Thai Dam women and girls are bound to their traditional subordinate roles. Their rights to education, self-determination and equal influence on household decisions are severely restricted.

The project has not directed much of its attention to gender issues. Gender mainstreaming as promoted within the UN system, has not been carried out. The UNODC 'Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming in Alternative Development' (UNDCP, 2000) have not been consulted. Gender-segregated data are only available for some activities (trainings).

Two of the project activities though – access to clean water and education of traditional midwives – had women as their primary beneficiaries. In the opinion of the evaluator, two other activities can be considered having influence on the ongoing process of emancipation, promoting education and exposure to the outside world. The project has organised adult education classes in Khoua target villages, though not financed with project funds, but with private donation funds. There are no gender-segregated data on female participation or results though, so an actual effect on women can only be assumed. Road access is a precondition for increased interaction with the outside world and exposure to the less gender-discriminating lowland culture.

Innovation

The overall concept of the project has been following UNODC's approach to Alternative Development, which is a combination of drug reduction initiatives and general elements of Rural Development. Although the AD/RD paradigm is still valid, time is running out for large AD/RD projects, as they are prone to coordination and quality issues similar to the ones observed at K46. An increasing number of international organisations active in Rural Development (incl. GIZ, SIDA and Australian AID) are

Reducing the number of activities covered, or even specialising in a single one,

Reducing the number of project locations, but increasing the coverage of each location,

Partnering up with other organisations that have specific expertise on some of the supported activities, and/or specific work experience at the envisaged project locations.

The project promoted new, innovative crops and cultivation techniques: maize, fruit gardens and greenhouses. None of them resulted in immediate success, but may be taken up at later occasions and in ways that are better adapted to the local circumstances.

that 'the estimated share of households not 'having steady physical and economic access to healthy, nutritious food in sufficient quantities', actually facing a certain degree of undernourishment or malnutrition because of lack of access to food, was 2,3%' (CARE, 2009).

Environmental Protection

Although the consultant observed certain immediate effects of road construction and agronomic activities on the environment – like destruction of fields and forest, forest degradation and soil erosion –, none of the activities was considered to have serious environmental impact yet.

However, road and market access normally lead to increased pressure on natural resources like forest and land in the long term. UNODC is advised to be careful with its promotion of hybrid maize or similar annual crops demanding intensive arable cultivation. The heavy slopes of the target areas are vulnerable to erosion and surface water runoff of nutrients and pesticides.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The K46 project was building on the experiences of its predecessor project, the Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund (I32) by extending most of its activities to a group of new target villages. Despite the experiences from this and other UNODC AD project, some flaws in the design of the project had negative effects. The decision to operate in three districts increased expenses (reduced efficiency) and seriously affected the cooperation with the local counterparts in Mai and Samphan, and thus the quality of implementation in these districts. The failure of some activities – namely maize cultivation, greenhouses and fruit orchards – could have been prevented.

The selected 16 target villages belong to the remotest and most disadvantaged in Laos. On one hand, this selection made that most activities were highly relevant to the target group. On the other hand, the remote location with extreme climatic and very difficult topographic conditions made operations extremely expensive especially if seen in relation to the number of persons reached.

The high relevance of the project's interventions was partly compensating for weaknesses in project implementation, ensuring good overall impact. Generally, the range of activities fitted well into the actual needs and priorities of the villages as well as of the local district administrations. Hereby, the project succeeded well in contributing positively to the target villages' development towards a modern, interconnected society.

The difficult geographical conditions together with the very limited formal human capacity as far as it relates to the life in a modern society made it difficult to ensure the sustainability of activities that require organised and formalised follow-up action. In addition, the short time frame of the project limited its prospects of building complex social structures. Accordingly, the project had its best results in fields that were based on the provision of tangible outputs.

The technical support capacity of the project was not sufficient to ensure implementation on a satisfactory level and to build up local capacities. The number and qualification of technical staff were too low, and there was only little assistance from outside. The project relied widely on counterparts from the local district government agencies for implementation, without considering their actual qualification and with only very limited capacity-building. The public sector has general inherent weaknesses that reduce its suitability to provide services; in Laos, government services are still in a rudimentary state of development. The project faced problems with the high turnover of its assigned counterpart technicians that made coordination and training even more challenging. Unreliable local capacities especially in Mai and Samphan seriously affected the quality of most activities. In general, knowledge transfer processes were largely unplanned and probably little effective. The activities that attracted most attention (greenhouses, fruit orchards) unfortunately failed because of other reasons (no market linkage, overestimated local demand).

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The K46 project is closed and UNODC has no longer active structures in place in Phongsaly. The following recommendations are addressed to UNODC concerning other, ongoing or future AD projects in Laos or similar locations:

The scope of AD projects should be more focussed to ensure quality and to improve efficiency, by

- Reducing the number of project locations, and at the same time increasing the coverage within the location to include more target villages per location,
- Reducing the number of project activities carried out by the project itself,
- Partnering up with other organisations with good expertise on specific fields, and
- Emphasising on UNODC's core competence: drug demand reduction and law enforcement.

Project activities should be well-designed after a prior analysis of the cultural and socio-economic context in the target area. The design of activities, especially of pilot activities, should be continuously revised and adapted during implementation.

For each activity, an exit strategy should be considered from the very beginning. Activities that require ongoing support after end of the project should only be started up, if support of sufficient quality can be guaranteed. This is valid for infrastructure construction and, in particular, for village funds and vaccination services.

All activities should be gender-mainstreamed, starting with the design of a project and according to UNODC standards. That does not mean that necessarily all activities must have a gender focus, but sometimes it is the small details especially during implementation that can make a difference: Are women explicitly invited and encouraged to participate? - Do meeting times take regard of women's daily routines? - Is the meeting place close to their homes? - Is there a language issue that could prevent women from participating actively?

A well-organised and effective monitoring system that regularly measures project progress against initially developed SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) indicators, should be a matter of course.

Projects should make sure that sufficient capacity to provide technical assistance during implementation and to build local capacities is available on site. If not available internally, required expertise should be provided from outside in a planned way, e.g. through partnering organisations or part-time contracts.

Knowledge transfer processes should be planned carefully. Once-only training events tend to have little effect, and should not be more than introductory events for subsequent regular coaching and on-the-job training.

Alternative partnerships with private businesses and self-help organisations should be considered for processes and services that are difficult for the public sector to provide.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Successful drug reduction

The results of this project clearly show that the Alternative Development paradigm can be very successful in reducing drug supply and demand in a sustainable way.

However, the differences between the results in the three districts also demonstrate the local government's core role in supervising and enforcing drug control. If the local government is not committed to supporting the communities in their economic and social development as well as to strictly enforcing the regulatory framework, good results cannot be expected.

No blueprint approaches

Activities and approaches applied successfully in one location cannot be easily transferred to other locations with differing conditions. Under all circumstances, the cultural and socio-economic context has to be analysed carefully before put into execution. Especially innovative approaches need continuous revision during their implementation.

Is the time over for Alternative / Rural Development programs in their traditional design?

The recurrent message in this report concerns the overburdening of the project with a broad range of activities, as at the same time its time frame and the technical capacity were severely limited. This leads to quality issues. The project was not able to supervise all activities properly. Project staff, district counterparts and last not least villagers were overwhelmed by the sudden influx of resources.

UNODC is not alone in facing this challenge. However, in order to overcome this challenge, other Rural Development projects have introduced elements like:

A structured sequencing of activities. Basic infrastructure development is a suitable and relevant entrance activity to development. Other, often more complex activities, like village funds or the introduction of new commodities, should be initiated only after certain preconditions are in place.

Longer time frames. Especially such complex activities often need a long time horizon, because they require long-term capacity development.

Narrowing down the number of activities. No project can develop expertise on so many different fields at the same time.

Building of specific expertise and capacity beyond the time frame of the project. Often, locally applicable capacity and knowledge on specific development topics are not readily available, and projects commit themselves to building up expertise for use by other organisations.

Reducing the number of project locations by, at the same time, increasing coverage per location. Each separate project location requires distinct capacity for coordination and technical assistance.

Networking, coordination, cooperation or outsourcing. Rather than running several projects, each covering the whole range of RD activities in different target villages of the same district, some organisations cooperate by contributing their specific core expertise to a less specified group of target villages.

ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EVALUATION

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Table 1. Overview of the project

<i>Project number</i>	<i>LAOK46</i>
Project title	(LAOK46) Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)
Duration	(LAOK46) October 2011 to December 2013
Location	(LAOK46) Phongsaly Province, Lao PDR
Linkages to Country Programme	Result area 3: Sustained elimination of illicit opium cultivation Result area 4: Reduced drug use, the spread of HIV among drug users, and the harm caused by both
Linkages to Regional Programme	Result area 4: Reduced drug abuse Result area 6: Reduction, Elimination and Prevention of Illicit Crop Cultivation
Linkages to Thematic Programme	3.4 Alternative Development which comes under Theme 3: Prevention, treatment and reintegration and alternative development.
Type of evaluation (midterm or final):	Final Independent Project Evaluation
Time period covered by the evaluation:	LAOK46: October 2011-December 2013
Geographical coverage of the evaluation:	Phongsaly province
Core Learning Partners (entities)	Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision (LCDC), Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry, Lao Women's Union, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Prime Minister's Office (Poverty Reduction Fund Department), Government of Luxembourg, UNODC COLAO, IEU

The LAOK46 Project-Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security (PALAFS) supports the efforts of the Government of Lao PDR and former opium poppy cultivating communities in sustaining opium elimination through a community centred approach that addresses alternative sustainable livelihoods development, food security, drug demand reduction, vulnerable communities and income generation in the province of Phongsaly. The project links production of agriculture produces and handicrafts, credit, processing and marketing more effectively by strengthening the existing capacities of local institutions and communities. They seek to deliver the required services and improve access for the village communities to these services with the overall aim of preventing farmers from returning to the practice of opium cultivation in the province that previously had the highest rate of poverty, opium production and consumption in the country. Drug demand reduction is an

important issue and this is addressed by the support to drug civic awareness raising, community-based treatment of opium users as well as drug counselling and rehabilitation.

The project draws on lessons learned from successful applications of micro credit schemes implemented by UNODC in other projects as well as utilize successful models and schemes from other international development partners that implemented related projects in other parts of the country.

LAOK46 project has been working in 16 different target villages in 3 districts of Phongsaly (province since October 2011).

This project responds to the development priorities of the Lao PDR currently indicated in the National Drug Control Master Plan (2009-2013) and the seventh National Socio-economic Development Plan (2011-2015) as well as attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The project utilises a community-centred, participatory approach that can ensure the direct involvement of beneficiaries in the target districts. The cooperation and involvement of local government authorities is integral to UNODC's partnership approach.

(c) Justification of the project and main experiences / challenges during implementation, if any;

From 2006 to 2012, South East Asia has seen opium poppy cultivation more than double. In the Lao PDR opium poppy cultivation areas increased from 1500 ha in 2007 to 6800 ha in 2012. To ensure the sustainability of opium elimination, the government of the Lao PDR has developed a Comprehensive National Drug Control Master Plan 2009-2015 and has extended its period to 2015.

The project supports the National Drug Control Master Plan 2009-2013. It addresses the sustained elimination of illicit opium production and consumption by focusing on developing food security and poverty alleviation through a community centred development approach.

The project applies an integrated approach providing alternative livelihood development in particular the technology transfer and skills training leading to increase farm productivity, linkages with markets, complementing this by improving basic village infrastructure development (access tracks, water supply and latrine, small irrigation scheme) and access to micro credit/finance.

The province of Phongsaly previously had the highest rate of poverty, opium production and consumption in the country. In the target area of the project opium elimination has been sustained. However, alternative development support remains limited and requires immediate expansion.

In order to facilitate the expansion, it would be important for this evaluation to identify lessons learnt as well as best practices that could serve as models for the country and in other countries such as Myanmar, which is facing similar challenges. The south-south technical assistance cooperation between the Thai Royal Project Foundation and the Lao PDR is an important best practice.

The major challenges the project is facing are the increase in opium cultivation in the non-target villages in the province, the remoteness and isolation of the target villages, extreme poverty as well as diversity of cultures and languages.

It is therefore intended that the independent project evaluation for this project is conducted before the project end.

This aims to evaluate the project's progress and achievements considering the challenges faced. The recommendations and comments made by the evaluation team will contribute to better implementation of the extended Drug Control Master Plan 2009-2015 (approved on 3 October 2013 during the High Level Illicit Drug Sector Working Group meeting) as well as the design and development of the proposals for new projects.

(d) . Project documents and revisions of the original project document;

No project revision of LAO K46 has taken place to-date.

(e). UNODC strategy context, including project's main objectives and outcomes and project's contribution to UNODC country, regional or thematic programme;

The project is in line with the objectives and results listed under Theme 3 of the UNODC Strategy 'Prevention, treatment and reintegration, and alternative development'. The activities have been specifically designed to contribute to the reduction of drug abuse, the elimination of illicit opium poppy cultivation and the promotion of participatory Alternative Development strategies. The three main objectives of this theme are: (i) the reduction of opportunities and incentives for illicit activities and gains, and the reduction of drug abuse; (ii) effective prevention campaigns, care and reintegration into society of drug users; and (iii) foster and strengthen international cooperation based on shared responsibility that would lead to the promotion of preventive alternative development in collaboration with the Government.

This project contributes to the "1,100 village action plan" for the post opium scenario and the national drug control master plan adopted by the Lao Government in 2006 and 2009. It contributes directly to the Government's National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP).

The project links to the Regional Thematic Programme Outcome of: Prevention, treatment, reintegration and alternative development; Regional Programme Framework Outcome 6.1 'Illicit crop cultivating communities have access to alternative livelihood programmes; and UNODC Country Programme Framework of Output 3. Alternative Development and Sustainable Livelihoods Sub-Programme 4. Prevention, Treatment, Rehabilitation and HIV/AIDS Sub-Programme.

(f). Reference should be made to the background information list (Annex 1), which encompasses materials to be used by the evaluator for the desk review.

- Project document including Logical Framework
- Semi-annual and Annual Project Progress Reports
- Tripartite Review meeting reports
- Rapid Rural Appraisals (RRA) Reports
- Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific
- Country Programme for Lao PDR
- National Drug Control Master Plan (2009-2015)
- Seventh National Socio-economic Development Plan (2011-2015) ☐ Project Workplans

2. DISBURSEMENT HISTORY

Table 2. Disbursement History

	Overall Budget (Oct. 2011- Dec. 2013)	Total Approved Budget (Oct. 2011- Dec. 2013)	Expenditure (Oct. 2011- Dec. 2013)	Expenditure in % (Oct. 2011- Dec. 2013)
LaoK46 Project	1,200,000	1,194,335	1,146,766	96%

3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation requirement is stated in the project document and it is required by UNODC. The project is going to finish in December 2013. The objectives of the evaluation are to: assess the project based on the evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability. Learning and sharing experiences from this evaluation is also very crucial across all UNODC projects that are working in the northern provinces. The results of the evaluation will contribute to the improvement on project implementation and management of the new proposed project phase.

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION: October 2011-December 2013

The evaluation for the LAO K46 project will cover Phongsaly province (Khoua, Mai and Samphan districts) which have been operated from October 2011 to December 2013. The project covers all target districts in the province as for sufficient data and information that will contribute to the whole picture of the project.

ANNEX II: EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Table 3. Main questionnaires to be used for the evaluation

	Relevance
1	What was the basis for selecting the target villages for project interventions?
2	To what extent do the activities implemented through the projects reflect the UNODC and Government policies and priorities?
3	To what extent is the project objective and assistance relevant to the needs of the target villages?
4	What are the comparative advantages of UNODC in implementing community based alternative development projects?
	Efficiency
5	To what extent were activities implemented on schedule and within the budget?
6	To what extent were inputs (materials, budget etc) available on time and in the right quantity?
7	What measures have been taken during project planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
	Effectiveness
8	To what extent has the project achieved its foreseen objective and results?
9	What are the difficulties/problems which affected the effectiveness of the project?

10	What lessons can be drawn regarding project effectiveness?
	Impact
11	What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative, long term effects of the project?
12	What is the farmers' livelihood improvement after the assistance?
13	To what extent can any identified changes in the drug situation (drug use and production) be attributed to the project?
	Sustainability
15	What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be sustained after the end of the project?
16	To what extent were services developed under the project likely to continue, be scaled up or replicated after the project funding ceases?
17	To what extent were the beneficiaries committed to continue working towards project objectives after it ends?

1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation should include but not necessarily be limited to the following methods:

Desk review of relevant documents (project document, quarterly reports, semi-annual and annual project reports, minutes of technical meetings, reports on project activities, relevant national policy documents etc.); inception report - The submission of an evaluation methodology and work plan (in the form of an inception report). The final draft needs to be submitted to IEU for review and approval in the application in ProFi before beginning the field research.

Field visits including interviews (using a pre-designed questionnaire) with: (i) key informants such as former opium farmers in project target villages, project officers (at the UNODC field office in Vientiane capital as well as in the K46 project office Phongsaly); (ii) as well as district and provincial authorities and (iii) representatives of project donors. Approximately 6 villages will be selected for this field work and the choice of selection will be made by the Consultants.

The evaluator will use both primary and secondary data. The project logical framework matrix which identified the outcomes, outputs and activities of the project in their respective indicators will be used as the basis of gathering data. The evaluation criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impacts and Sustainability will be used as parameters

After the field trip, data will be compiled and analyzed using an appropriate research methodology. The report will then be drafted using the UNODC format and based on the information and data gained from the field survey. The evaluation report is to be prepared in line with the IEU evaluation norms, tools, guidelines and templates (to be found on the IEU-Website: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/independent-project-evaluations-step-bystep.html>))Compilation of comments received on draft evaluation report.

Final evaluation report to the project coordinator for review for factual errors or omissions and quality assessment of the final draft. IEU will assess and clear the Project Coordinator's assessment of the final report.

The Evaluators will present the findings and recommendations of the evaluation to relevant stakeholders at Vientiane on 20 February 2014.

2. TIME FRAME AND DELIVERABLES

Table 4. Time frame and deliverables

When? (Tentative dates)	Tentative Deadlines	What tasks?	Results	Where?
05 March 2014	07 March 2014	Desk review	Meeting plan with stakeholders Draft inception report	Vientiane Lao PDR
08 March 2014	09 March 2014	Review of the inception report		
10 March 2014	10 March 2014	Briefings and interviews with UNODC COLAO management and CLP	<input type="checkbox"/> Inception report and meeting plan with stakeholders (incorporated relevant comments provided by COLAO and IEU)	Vientiane
11 March 2014	18 March 2014	Site inspection and meeting with local stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Brief interview and site visit reports	Phongsaly province
19 March 2014	19 March 2014	Debriefing with COLAO	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments and clarifications of any misunderstandings or misconceptions are provided	Vientiane
20 March 2014	24 March 2014	Preparation of a draft report	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft report shall be submitted to COLAO and IEU for review and comments	Vientiane
25 March 2014	31 March 2014	Review of the draft report by selected stakeholders and IEU	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments are provided by CLPs, COLAO and IEU	Vientiane
01 April 2014	03 April 2014	Finalization of the report and preparation of a final powerpoint presentation to key stakeholders	Power point presentation shall be made available for UNODC COLAO and CLPs. The final report shall be submitted to COLAO and IEU for approval	Home based
Total Tentative Date	05 March – 03 April 2014			

3. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

One international consultant and one national consultant, who are in no way connected to the projects nor to UNODC, will be recruited.

(a). Required qualifications:

Education:

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in research, development studies, social sciences or related technical fields (i.e., agricultural science, rural development etc).

Experience:

Extensive experiences in monitoring and evaluation, survey and statistical analysis with technical understanding and knowledge of alternative and rural development issues particularly in Northern provinces of Laos.

Language:

Fluency and proficiency in English. Knowledge of Lao language is an advantage

(b). Duties of the International Evaluation Consultant:

The International Evaluation Consultant will collaborate with the National Evaluation Consultant on the Independent Project Evaluation of the UNODC project – LAO K46. On the basis of the Terms of References, s/he will carry out the following duties to:

- Review relevant project documentation
- Draft methodology and tools and refine evaluation questions (in the form of an inception report).
- Develop and pilot a field survey
- Recommend changes to the tools as well as sampling technique and ensure full understanding of the application of the tools and the local context, including interviewing techniques and analyses of information retrieved
- Apply tools in the field and carry out interviews/questionnaires
- Conduct a first analysis of the field survey: draft an evaluation report in line with UNODC evaluation policy; finalize the evaluation report on the basis of comments received; present the findings and recommendations of the evaluation to relevant stakeholders; Include a management response in the final report, if needed;
- Perform other duties as requested by the UNODC representative.

It should be kept in mind that:

(i). the evaluation team should be gender balanced and take into consideration local customs and religious beliefs; Preference should be given to evaluation teams that are gender balanced.

(ii). Large evaluation teams should be multicultural with appropriate gender balance and geographical representation.

(iii). The evaluators will not act as representatives of any party and must remain independent and impartial.

4. MANAGEMENT OF EVALUATION PROCESS

Role of UNODC/Project Manager:

- Draft TOR, shares them with IEU. Timing of the evaluation ought to be in line with the evaluation plan. Selects Core Learning Partners (CLP) and informs them about their role.
- Shares the draft TOR with CLP.
- Integrates comments from IEU and CLP and finalizes TOR.
- Interviews Evaluators according to the UNODC/IEU Evaluation Handbook and evaluation guidelines. ² Provides relevant information and desk review materials to Evaluators.
- Comments on the inception report.
- Send the final report to IEU for clearance.
- Gives logistical support to consultants.
- Arranges meetings with key informants, etc for consultants.
- Liaises with CLP, ensuring ownership.
- Checks the draft report for factual errors.
- Assesses the quality of the final evaluation report.
- Develops an Evaluation Follow-up Plan (EFP)-shares it to IEU.
- Organizes a presentation of evaluation results in the field office.

Role of IEU:

The Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) provides norms, tools and templates for the different stages of the evaluation process. IEU also advises on evaluation matters and is involved in the process described in the Roles and Responsibilities table for Independent Project Evaluations (to find on the IEU website, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/index.html>) and as described in the workflow of the Independent Project Evaluation Application in ProFi.

Role of CLP:

- Comment on ToR, refine evaluation questions, if needed.
- Take note of Evaluators proposed.
- Provide support and insights throughout the evaluation process, as applicable.
- Comment on the draft report.
- Take note of the final report.
- Attend presentation of results (if possible).
- Agree on implementation of recommendations.
- Logistical support responsibilities, such as arrangements for transportation, translation, office space

The logistics will be arranged by COLAO during the field visits in villages, districts of Phongsaly province. The project cars will be available and serve the evaluation teams consistently. Office space will be arranged both in the provinces as well as in Vientiane office. During the mission, a translator as facilitator (not connected to project management) will be provided.

5. PAYMENT MODALITIES

Consultants will be issued consultancy contracts and paid in accordance with UNODC rules and regulations. Payment needs to be correlated to deliverables – three instalments are typically planned for: upon delivery of the Inception Report, of the Draft Evaluation Report and of the Final Evaluation Report and/or the final presentation.

The first payment will be made upon signature of the contract and submission of proposed methodology of the evaluation (in form of the inception report (25 per cent of the consultancy fee) The second payment (25 per cent of the consultancy fee) will be made upon receipt of the draft report; the third and final payment (50 per cent of the consultancy fee, i.e. the remainder of the fee) will be made only after completion of the respective tasks and receipt of the final report as assessed by the project coordinator and clearance of the assessment provided by the UNODC Independent Evaluation Unit.

III. OTHER ANNEXES

Annex 1. Job descriptions of evaluators

Independent Project Evaluation of the UNODC project:

LaoK46 Project

Job description for the International Evaluation Consultant

Post title	International Evaluation Consultant and Team Leader
Estimated duration	5 March. – 3April 2014
Starting date required	5 March. 2014
Duty station	Phongsaly province and Vientiane capital, Lao PDR

Duties of the International Evaluation Consultant

On the basis of the Terms of Reference, the International Evaluation Consultant will carry out the following duties and responsibilities for the independent project evaluation of the UNODC projects-LAO K46:

1. Review relevant project documentation.
2. Draft methodology and tools
3. Develop and pilot a field survey
4. Recommend changes to the tools as well as sampling technique and ensure full understanding of the application of the tools and the local context, including interviewing techniques and analyses of information retrieved
5. Apply tools in the field and carry out interviews/questionnaires
6. Conduct a first analysis of the field survey
7. Prepare the draft and the final evaluation report
8. Perform other duties as requested by the UNODC representative.

Table 1. Duties of the International Evaluation Consultant

When? (Tentative dates)	Tentative Deadlines	What tasks?	Results	Where?
05 March 2014	07 March 2014	Desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting plan with stakeholders Draft inception report 	Vientiane Lao PDR
08 March 2014	09 March 2014	Review of the inception report		
10 March 2014	10 March 2014	Briefings and interviews with UNODC COLAO management and	Inception report and meeting plan with stakeholders (incorporated relevant comments provided by COLAO and IEU)	Vientiane
11 March 2014	18 March 2014	CLP Site inspection and meeting with local stakeholders	Brief interview and site visit reports	Phongsaly province
19 March 2014	19 March 2014	Debriefing with COLAO	Comments and clarifications of any misunderstandings or misconceptions are provided	Vientiane
20 March 2014	24 March 2014	Preparation of a draft report	Draft report shall be submitted to COLAO and IEU for review and comments	Vientiane
25 March 2014	31 March 2014	Review of the draft report by selected stakeholders and	Comments are provided by CLPs, COLAO and IEU	Vientiane
01 April 2014	03 April 2014	IEU Finalization of the report and preparation of a final powerpoint presentation to key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerpoint presentation shall be made available for UNODC COLAO and CLPs. The final report shall be submitted to COLAO and IEU for approval 	Home based
Total Tentative Date	05 March – 03 April 2014			

Required qualifications:**Education:**

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in monitoring and evaluation, research, development studies, social sciences or related technical fields (i.e., agricultural science, rural development etc).

Experience:

Extensive experiences in monitoring and evaluation, survey and statistical analysis with technical understanding and knowledge of alternative and rural development issues particularly in Northern provinces.

Language:

Fluency and proficiency in English. Knowledge of Lao language is an advantage.

Absence of Conflict of Interest:

According to UNODC rules, the consultant must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of and/or have benefited from the programme/project or theme under evaluation.

Ethics

The evaluators shall respect the UNEG Ethical Guidelines.

Annex 2. List of background documents for the desk review

- Project document including Logical Framework
- Semi Annual and Annual Project Progress Report
- Tripartite Review meeting reports
- Regional Programme for East Asia and the Pacific
- Country Programme for Lao PDR
- National Drug Control Master Plan (2009-2013)
- Seventh National Socio-economic Development Plan (2011-2015)

ANNEX II. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

- UNODC Country Office Lao P.D.R. (4)
- National Committee for Drug Control and Supervision (3)
- District Counterparts Khoua District: National Project Director (1) and K46 coordinators (5)
- District Counterparts Samphan District: K46 coordinators (4)
- District Counterparts Mai District: K46 coordinators (3)
- CARE Laos, Khoua Field Office (2)
- NUDDP, Khoua Field Office (3)
- B. Phonethong, Khoua District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (18)
- B. Omtara, Khoua District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (12)
- B. Kongvat, Khoua District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (3)
- B. Phouvieng, Khoua District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (9)
- B. Langchak, Khoua District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (3)
- B. Phouyang, Mai District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (14)
- B. Houayoun, Mai District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (6)
- B. Kachi , Mai District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (12)
- B. Houaymeun/Boumngao, Mai District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (2)
- B. Taenglouang, Mai District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (2)
- B. Chapiulouang, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (9)
- B. Chapiunoy, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (5)
- B. Yangpa, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (5)
- B. Sanam Orna, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (3)
- B. Lixiso, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities (4)
- B. Nonghoum, Samphan District, Village administration, group leaders of K46 activities, villagers (8)

ANNEX III. LIST OF REVIEWED DOCUMENTS

Author/Commissioner	Title	Time of Publication
Alternative Development Project in Houaphan Province, Lao PDR (AD/LAO/06/H98) & Phongsaly Alternative Development Project Fund (PADF) (AD/LAO/132) CARE Laos	Independent External Evaluation	December 2010
	Phongsaly Food Security and Capacity Building Project - Final Review	October 2009
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Baseline Socio Economic Survey Report	April 2012
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	LAO K 46 Final TPR (presentation)	December 2013
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Midterm Review Presentation	February 2013
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Midterm Review Report	December 2012
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Project Document	October 2011
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Project Revision	undated
LAOK46 Phongsaly Alternative Livelihood and Food Security Project (PALAFS)	Terminal Report October 2011 to December 2013	December 2013
United Nations Drug Control Programme	Guidelines on Gender Mainstreaming in Alternative Development	January 2000
UNODC Laos	Assessment of Microcredit activities in three UNODC projects in Northern Laos	October 2012

ANNEX IV. PROJECT LOG FRAME WITH INDICATORS

Level of result achievement estimated by the evaluation	very high	high	satisfactory	low	none
---	-----------	------	--------------	-----	------

	<i>Text</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Comment to the indicator</i>	<i>Assessment of result achievement</i>	<i>Assessment of result achievement (in %)</i>
<i>Project Objective</i>	To enhance/improve/support the capacities of the Government of Lao PDR and target communities in sustaining opium elimination through alternative livelihood, food security, reducing drug demand, deforestation and degradation in Khoua, Mai and Samphan..	By the end of the project, household's income in the target communities will have increased by 50% (average or each household?) OR 50% of the targeted households (50 hh) notice an income increase.	Household income is subject to strong annual fluctuations beyond the influence of a project. 50% increase in 2 years is overly optimistic. Certain activities (cardamom, fruit trees) have a delayed income effect. No end-line survey, cannot be measured.	Household cash income has increased slightly, but distinctly.	94%

		Identified best practices will contribute to poverty reduction and sustaining opium elimination in other parts of the country	Very difficult to establish evidence of such contribution.	Best practices have not been formulated or distributed. UNODC conducts countrywide drug awareness campaigns.	20%
		Opium addiction is expected to be significantly reduced/eliminated	Outcome, not impact	Opium addiction is on the brink of elimination in Khoua and Samphan target villages; in Mai, the situation is unaffected.	50%
<i>Outcome 1</i>	Stable food security situation achieved in target household through the introduction of improved agricultural development linked to markets.	Number of household facing food insecurity is reduced by 50%	The terms of rice self-sufficiency and food insecurity have been confused, and its causes have not been analysed. No end-line data available.	Only severely labour-deficient households (elderly people and widows/divorcees) with insufficient network are food insecure. Project activities had only little impact on their situation.	15%
		Period of food insecurity for the poorest and most vulnerable target villages is reduced from 6 months to 3 months	The terms of rice self-sufficiency and food insecurity have been confused. No end-line data available.	Only severely labour-deficient households (elderly people and widows/divorcees) with insufficient network are food insecure. Project activities had only little impact on their situation.	15%

		Number of households adopting innovative food processing technologies and agricultural practices increased by 10%		A majority of households has tried and, if successful, adopted new crops (galangal, cardamom, hybrid maize, fruit trees) and techniques (greenhouses).	100%
<i>Output 1.1</i>	Innovative food production and agricultural practices e.g. cultivation techniques, fertilizing, harvesting, seeds/seedlings selection introduced and implemented in target communities	Number of Livelihood Activity Groups (LAGs) and Income Generation and Marketing Groups (IGM) groups adopting and using innovative food production and agricultural practices increased by 10%	Outcome, not output The concept of LAG and IGMG is culturally not compliant. No baseline and no end-line data.	The concept of LAG and IGMG has not been pursued. A majority of households has tried and, if successful, adopted new crops (galangal, cardamom, hybrid maize, fruit trees) and techniques (greenhouses).	50%
		Areas under cultivation using improved seeds/seedlings or stocks increase by 20%	Outcome, not output Lack of definition of 'improved seeds'. No baseline and no end-line data.	Hybrid maize has been tried successfully, but there is no market. Upland rice seed was not successful.	40%
<i>Output 1.2</i>	Livelihood Activity Groups (LAGs) and Income Generation and Marketing Groups (IGM) linked to sources of technology and market	Number of LAGs and IGM groups producing commodities for outside market	Outcome, not output The concept of LAG and IGMG is culturally not compliant. No baseline and no end-line data.	No LAGs and IGM groups producing commodities for outside market	0%
		10% increase in the volume of goods/commodities sold for outside market	Outcome, not output No baseline and no end-line data.	Reported strong increase of NTFP, rice and animals sold.	100%

		20% LAGs and IGM groups with market tie ups/contract	Outcome, not output The concept of LAG and IGMG is culturally not compliant. No baseline and no end-line data.	No LAGs and IGM groups with market tie ups/contract	0%
		20% LAGs and IGM groups producing commodities for outside market	Outcome, not output The concept of LAG and IGMG is culturally not compliant. No baseline and no end-line data.	No LAGs and IGM groups producing commodities for outside market	0%
		20% Increase in the variety and volume of trade in the surrounding communities and outside market.	Outcome, not output No baseline and no endline data.	Reported strong increase of NTFP, rice and animals sold.	100%
<i>Output 1.3</i>	Vaccination Program in 3 districts established and operational	At least 3 set of vaccination established in 3 districts	No definition of 'set of vaccination'	Vaccination program carried out completely in Khoua, but only insufficiently in Samphan and Mai.	33%
<i>Output 1.4</i>	Village Rice Bank established, managed and operated	At least 80% of the total villages without rice bank supported with rice bank scheme	Outcome, not output	All target villages provided with rice bank.	100%
<i>Outcome 2</i>	Increased productivity of former opium growing families and communities with the elimination of opium production and successful treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of opium addicts.	Opium poppy cultivation eliminated in all target villages		Opium poppy cultivation eradicated in target villages in Khoua and Samphan.	66%
		Number of addicts reduced by 90%		No. of addicts reduced from 89 to 65 (27%)	30%

		Relapse rate below 25% at the end of the project		Est. Relapse rate 73% (mainly Mai)	30%
<i>Output 2.1</i>	Drug treatment of opium drug addicts provided at BSSM Samphan, Khoua and Mai districts	100% of opium drug addicts treated, rehabilitated and reintegrated to community	Definition of 'rehabilitated and reintegrated'	All drug addicts have been treated.	100%
<i>Output 2.2</i>	Drug free villages established by District Committee on Drug Control (DCDC) in the 3 districts of Samphanh, Khoua and Mai	46 drug free villages established at the end of the project	Outcome, not output Many villages have been drug free already before the project start.	The three district report that 125 out of tot. 276 villages are drug free.	100%
		Village Drug Control Team (VDCT) established and operating in all target villages	Outcome, not output Definition of 'operating'	Although village authorities have been trained and exert some influence on drug addicts, formal VDCT have not been in place.	50%
<i>Output 2.3</i>	Long term treatment provided (on need basis) to opium drug addicts in target communities	100% of opium drug addicts avail long term treatment	Outcome, not output Definition of long term treatment	Only in Khoua addicts have been provided with post-treatment medication.	33%
		DHO regularly (once a month) supervises monitors and manage the long term treatment program at the village level.	Definition of long term treatment	No regular long term treatment program in place. DHO has not followed up.	0%
<i>Output 2.4</i>	Education and drug awareness raising campaign conducted for vulnerable groups e.g. students, out of school youth, and members of the community	At least 5,000 attendees (2,700women) in drug awareness campaigns	Difficult to count.	Estimated 5,750 persons were reached during awareness campaigns (no gender-segregated data).	100%

		At least 50% of the beneficiaries in target villages having access to publications and literature on drug abuse prevention.		All target villages have received drug awareness posters, and one set of drug-related publication.	50%
		All schools in the target villages have access to publications on drug and HIV prevention		no information	
<i>Outcome 3</i>	Reliable social and economic support services from government staff to support AD activities of target communities delivered	Government formulated support services delivery programme for AD activities in all target communities	Definition of 'formulated programme'	No formulated service delivery programme in place.	0%
		50% of households in target communities having access to social and economic support services	Output, not outcome Not clear about the meaning of 'support services'	All households in target communities have access to VSCG and basic health services	100%
		Households in target communities increased their income by 50%	Impact, not outcome Household income is subject to strong annual fluctuations beyond the influence of a project. 50% increase in 2 years is overly optimistic. Certain activities (cardamom, fruit trees) have a delayed income effect. No endline survey, cannot be measured.	Household cash income has increased slightly, but distinctly.	94%
<i>Output 3.1</i>	VSCGs, LAGs and IGM groups organized, trained and empowered to manage savings and credit funds ,revolving funds, production and processing activities, including marketing and linkages	Increased knowledge of PALAFS and district counterpart staff participating in refresher course on micro credit management.	Outcome, not output Not measured. A very slight increase would still satisfy the indicator.	no information	

		75% VSCGs generating regular savings, and managing credit/loan to members	Outcome, not output no exact data	All VSCGs have been generating regular savings, and managing credit/loan to members	100%
		75% LAGs and IGM groups availing of loans and managing revolving funds for production, processing, and marketing activities	Outcome, not output No LAG and IGMG	no LAG and IGMG	0%
		75% VSCGs being able to pay interest and principal of loans on a regular basis	Outcome, not output 75% of VSCG <i>members</i> ...? No exact data	>90% of VSCG member have paid interest and principal of loans on a regular basis	100%
		Increased knowledge of LAG and IGM groups on loan management, production and processing and linkages to market.	Outcome, not output No LAG and IGMG	No LAG and IGMG	0%
<i>Output 3.2</i>	Village infrastructures e.g water supply and latrine, access tracks, irrigation schemes, schools, market shelter constructed, operated and maintained	Number of infrastructures constructed, operated, and maintained in the old 30 target villages	No target value	no information	
		Number of infrastructures constructed, operated, and maintained in the new 16 target villages	No target value	58 km access track, 8 clean water supply systems and 41 latrines have been constructed	100%
		The volume of trade with surrounding communities increase by 10%	Outcome, not output Trade with surrounding villages is insignificant no data	no information	

		Enhanced access to health and education services increased by 50% at the end of the project	Difficult to measure. Not measured	Road access has improved access to health services; school services unaffected.	75%
		Reduction in morbidity and mortality rates by 25%	Impact, not output no data available	Villagers report reduced levels of sickness.	100%
<i>Output 3.3</i>	Revolving drug fund/medicine cabinet established and adult education classes conducted in project target villages	No. of households availing themselves of the medicine cabinet	Outcome, not output no data available	Medicine cabinets available and used in all villages.	100%
		50% of persons especially women, attending adult education classes.	Outcome, not output "persons, esp. Women' unclear	No project-funded activities	
		50% Reduction in the number of non –working days due to sickness	Impact, not output Difficult to measure no data available	Improved health has probably lead to decrease in sick days	75%
		Number of persons who can read and write increase by 50%	Impact, not output no data available	No project-funded activities	
<i>Outcome 4</i>	Enhanced Capacity of Phongsaly Alternative Livelihoods and Food Security (PALAFS) staff and provincial/district counterpart staff in support services delivery. Strengthened communities in project implementation, operation and maintenance	PALAFS staff and provincial/district staff able to deliver support services to all target communities	indicator is unclear: 'able' - what support services?	The ability to deliver services has probably increased, however, actual service delivery is depending on budget allocation as before.	25%
		All target communities are able to plan, implement, operate and maintain community projects	indicator is unclear	The communities' ability to plan and implement community projects is probably largely	20%

				unaffected.	
<i>Output 4.1</i>	Workshops/trainings including study visits on social, technical and management related issues organized and conducted for PALAFS and target communities	PALAFS and District counterpart staff trained on rapid rural appraisal, baseline survey and data analysis.		No training on rapid rural appraisal, baseline survey and data analysis.	0%
		VSCG management committees in 16 target villages trained on micro credit management, bookkeeping and accounting.		4 training events	100%
		District counterpart staff of DAFO (Agriculture and forestry) trained on land use formulation including identification of various zones.	Activity not covered by K46, but by NUDP		
		DAFO counterpart staff and village agriculture committees in 16 villages trained on various production technologies on crops, livestock and NTFPs		8 Training events on greenhouse, rice and fruit production	100%
		Livelihood and Entrepreneur groups of 60 villages trained on entrepreneurship and small business management	There are no livelihood and entrepreneur groups	No trainings conducted	0%
		PALAFS staff and provincial and district members of project management trained on project management, planning, reporting, assessment and evaluation, coordination and linkages.		No trainings conducted	0%

		Members of BSSM, VDCT and DHO staff trained on DDR which include community preparation and mobilization, use of TO capsules, counselling, life skills, etc.		Addict treatment training and BI trainings	100%
		Livelihood and entrepreneur groups in target villages trained on loan management, food production, processing and marketing.	There are no livelihood and entrepreneur groups	No such trainings	0%
		Increased knowledge of livelihoods and entrepreneur groups in target villages through cross visits to other villages and neighbouring communities.	Outcome, not output There are no livelihood and entrepreneur groups	No crossvisits	100%
<i>Outcome 5</i>	Project management, provincial/district/community mobilization and coordination developed and improved to empower local participation	At the start of the project, Project management structures, system and procedures established	Output, not outcome All the remaining indicators concern the project itself and should not be taken to measure the outcome of the project!	Done, with the exception of a monitoring system	75%
		At the start of the project Coordination and communication mechanisms set up	Output, not outcome	In place in Khoua, not in Mai and Samphan	33%
		At the start of the project Mechanisms for the participation of all stake holders set up	Output, not outcome	Stakeholder meetings	80%
<i>Output 5.1</i>	Project management set up in Khoua district including sub offices in Samphan and Mai districts	The office premises are properly equipped and operational		The office premises are properly equipped and operational	100%

<i>Output 5.2</i>	PALAFS staff recruited, provincial and district counterpart staff nominated and designated in the 3 districts of Khoua, Samphan and Mai	At the start of the project All PALAFS staff recruited	Input, not output	At the start of the project PALAFS staff recruited	100%
		At the start of the project NPD nominated and designated by PCDC	Input, not output	At the start of the project NPD nominated and designated by PCDC	100%
		At the start of the project all district counterpart staff nominated by DCDC and designated by PCDC	Input, not output	At the start of the project all district counterpart staff nominated by DCDC and designated by PCDC	100%
		At the start of the project all staff given orientation about the project		no information	
<i>Output 5.3</i>	Planning, implementing, monitoring and assessment/evaluation mechanisms and procedures established at the project, district and community level	Baseline survey and RRA reports prepared and validated by target communities and distributed to PCDC, DCDC and other development organization on the target areas.		Baseline survey prepared and validated	100%
		Weekly and monthly progress of implementation discussed during weekly and monthly meetings of PALAFS and counterparts staff.		Regular progress meetings	80%
		Assess field operation through field visits and monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports		Regular field visits by NPD, regularity of reporting unknown	80%

<i>Output 5.4</i>	Supplies and materials, equipment, facilities and services procured in the most effective and efficient manner	Regular procurement plan		Regular procurement plan	100%
		Regularly prepared detailed schedule for biddings and awards (monthly)		Regularly acc. To UNODC SOP	100%
		Regular monitoring /follow up procurement, delivery and utilization (monthly)		Regularly acc. To UNODC SOP	100%
<i>Output 5.5</i>	Coordination supervision and monitoring of all project activities	Regular procurement plan		Regularly acc. To UNODC SOP	100%
		Regularly prepared detailed schedule for biddings and awards (monthly)		Regularly acc. To UNODC SOP	100%
		Regular monitoring /follow up procurement, delivery and utilization (monthly)		Regularly acc. To UNODC SOP	100%