



# The Northern Uplands Development Programme selected lessons and observations



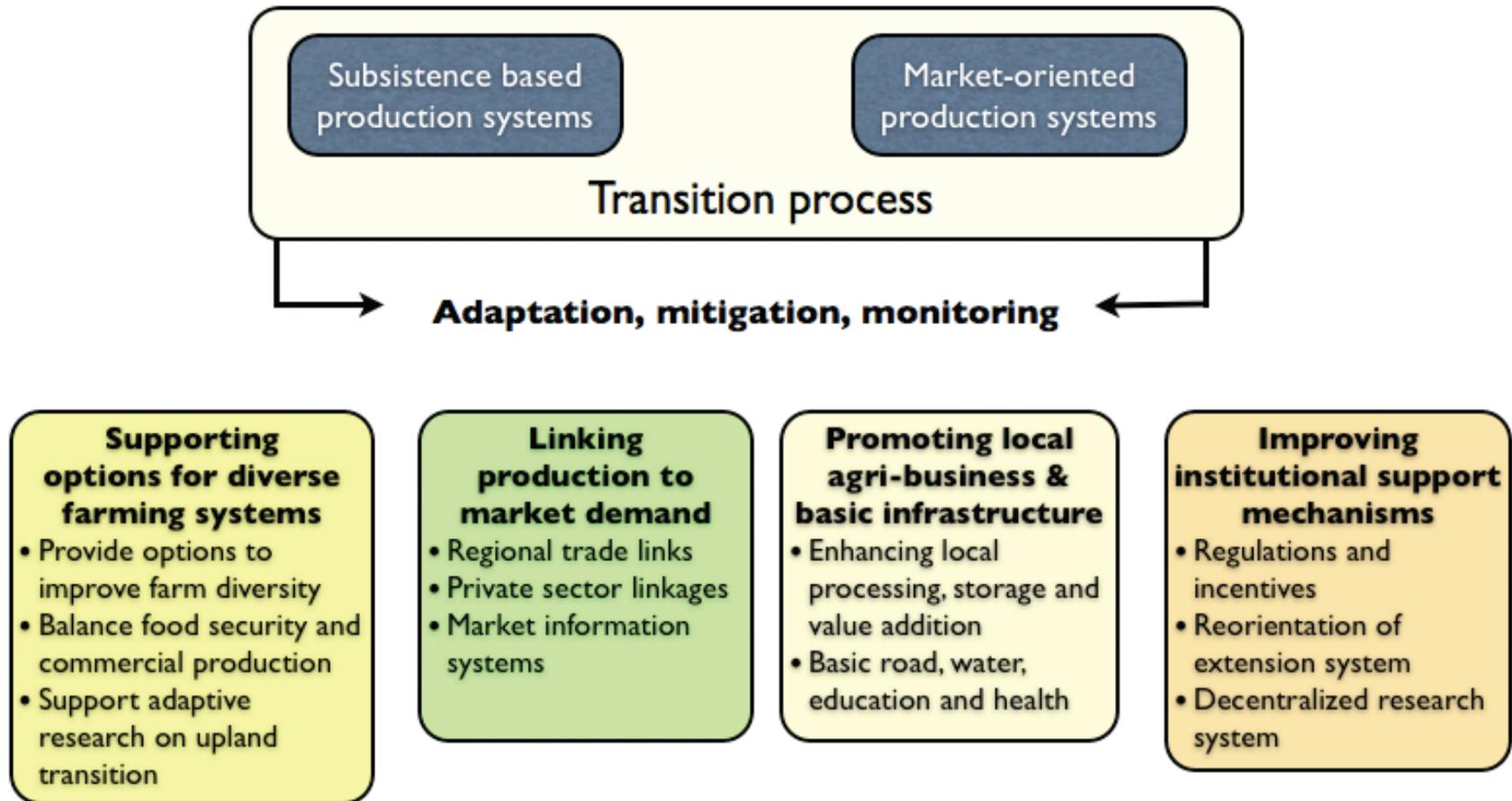
*Luang Prabang, 12-14 March 2018*





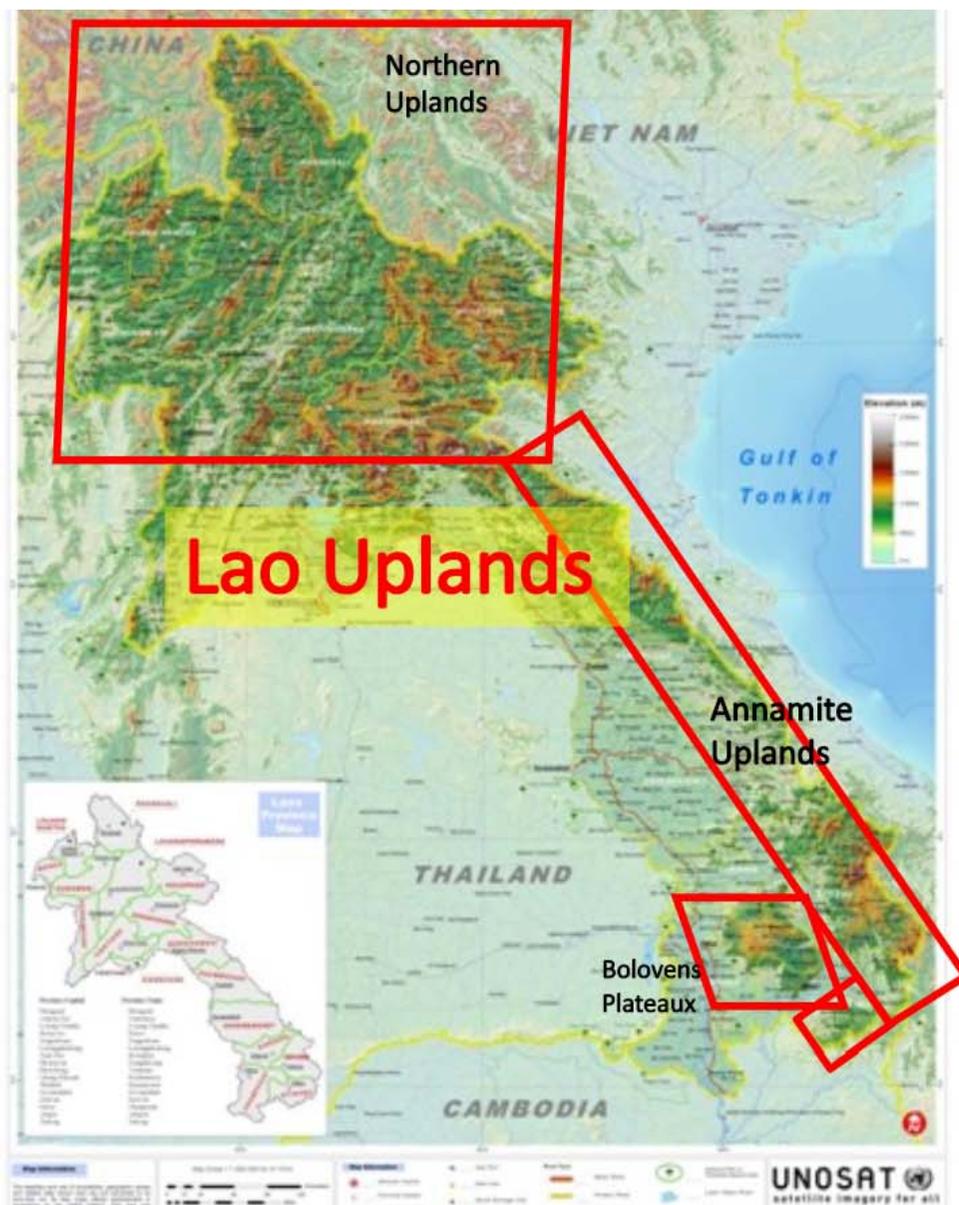
# What NUDP tried to achieve

## Policy options for improving upland farming





# The Lao Uplands Programme



## Objectives

1. Integrated rural development is established as a process for eradicating poverty in uplands
2. Upland food and nutrition security is derived from improved livelihood and income security
  - Guaranteed through increased food production and improved incomes; linked to markets
3. Strengthened capacity of local government facilitates decentralization that leads to
  - Improved efficiency and effectiveness of public services delivery; and,
  - An enabling environment for private sector and civil society in uplands;
  - To maximize development of local potential
4. Sustainable natural resources management: conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity



# Lessons learnt

## Land and landscape management

- **Land use planning (LUP) approaches** must be simple to implement keeping in mind the limited resources of executing agencies
- LUP should be integrated with **village development plans (VDPs)** and district social and economic development plans (DSEDPs)
- **Land use planning and registration for collective lands** has the potential to strengthen tenure security by upland communities, and is expected to be supported under new land policy and legislation
- **Systematic registration of private land** in rural areas is costly and takes years to complete; however titled land provides collateral for loans and fosters increased investments on the land



# Lessons learnt

## Local governance and planning

- VDPs and **village development activities** should be incorporated into and consistent with district socio-economic development plans.
- Before VDPs are prepared, facilitators and staff of involved sector agencies should understand **sector relevant policies**, plans, and decrees, and proposed and on-going private sector plans and activities that serve as a references for planning development activities.
- Better ways to share VDPs among development actors are required to **avoid duplication** of planning efforts and confusion, and to promote implementation of priority schemes.
- VDPs should include **sustainable NRM, land rehabilitation, climate-resilient infrastructure, nutrition-sensitive agriculture**.



# Lessons learnt

## Farmer organisations

- Farmer groups (FG) in remote upland districts are generally **not advanced in organisational development**; this factor should be recognized in grant funding procedures and assessment criteria.
- **FGs need training/support** in preparing proposals, managing finances, and keeping records.
- **Small grants to FGs** and their inclusion in private sector agricultural development activities can be a catalyst and motivate improved management; grants and livelihood programs can promote behaviour change (e.g., better management of communal grazing lands, collective marketing, collective investment, asset management)



# Lessons learnt

## Pro-poor rural economy

- **Value chain (VC) studies** are important in planning effective extension programs and livelihood interventions.
- Not all VC studies have been high quality. It is still important to **promote discussion and analysis** among stakeholders and to plan market-oriented actions and learn lessons from and build on previous projects.
- VCs for many upland commodities **extend across borders** making the detailed VC studies complex/costly.
- **Impacts from value chain development and livelihood support have been evident:**
  - livelihood improvements,
  - access to food, and dietary diversity in NUDP villages.



# Lessons learnt

## Agricultural extension and services

- NUDP has built DAFO and PAFO systems for **extension planning, budgeting, management, M&E, and reporting** that could be applied in other districts and provinces (supporting *sam sang*)
- NUDP has worked through staff in PAFO and DAFO to **build their capacity** - not parallel services implemented by consultants or NGOs
- Given available resources, TA, and targeted training, **DAFOs can be empowered** and become effective in delivering extension services to farmers
- DAFO can collaborate with private sector agribusiness investors and companies with funds to develop farmers' livelihoods in the targeted districts



# Lessons learnt

## Agricultural extension and services

- The time and resources to **develop local capacities** should not be underestimated.
- Many **TSCs have shown limited capacity** to implement activities: few permanent staff and high turnover, little or no regular budget.
- NUDP TSC development process supports capacity development and identifies **services that meet farmer demand** and can be sustained.



# Lessons learnt

## Programme Based Approach

- NUDP has shown that DPs can use **government run systems** and implement effectively with government staff
  - GoL financial management works – independent audits demonstrate transparency/accountability
  - M&E systems were operated by staff trained down to district level
- Implementing projects through **district administrations** is cost-effective and administratively efficient; it allows cross-sector **coordination that results in convergence**
- NUDP faced **complexities of different DP financial management** requirements.
- DPs appear to have **lost interest in supporting a PBA** for the uplands



# Looking ahead

## Implementing the Uplands Development Strategy and Program towards SDGs

- Need to develop coordination **beyond agriculture** - includes village planning, infrastructure development, nutrition, etc.
- The UDP/UDS was prepared in a **highly participatory and consultative** manner and approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry.
- **Government and DPs have an on-going dialogue** on poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and socio-economic development in the uplands through the SWG-ARD





# Looking ahead

## Implementing the Uplands Development Strategy and Program towards SDGs

- Requires **strong leadership**, clear guidance, and frequent consultations with senior leadership.
- Upland development activities need to be **coordinated by GoL** to ensure consistency with relevant policies.
- Uplands **inter-sectoral coordination** office is needed within MAF as focal point for upland development activities
- Implementation of the UDP requires mechanisms for **coordination at provincial and district levels**





# Thank you for your attention

