



# REPORT COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AGREEMENT

Xe Bang Hieng River Basin

Implemented by:



Integrated Water Resources Management and  
Ecosystem based Adaptation in Xe BangHieng River  
basin and Luangprabang City

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Communities in the Xe Bang Hieng (XBH) River Basin depend on forests, water, and agriculture for survival. Climate variability, deforestation, and unclear land-use governance increasingly undermine these livelihoods, particularly for vulnerable households and ethnic communities living in and around protected areas. UNDP IWRM EbA project and its government partners designed and implemented the Community Conservation Agreement (CCA) process to help communities protect critical ecosystems while improving incomes and resilience.

Between October 2024 and February 2025, the UNDP Integrated Water Resources Management and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (IWRM EbA) Project successfully co-designed, validated, and implemented CCAs in five high-risk villages across Sepon, Nong, and Xonnabouly districts in Savannakhet Province. The process now benefits 638 households (3,817 people), including 208 vulnerable households, while strengthening local governance for conservation in headwater and National Protected Area (NPA) landscapes.

### **Enable Communities to Lead Conservation While Improving Livelihoods**

UNDP and district partners supported communities to shift from unsustainable resource use toward agreed conservation actions paired with viable livelihood alternatives. Through participatory consultations, over 90% of households in the five target villages actively shaped village-and household-level CCAs that clearly define:

- Conservation commitments for forests, fisheries, and headwaters;
- Livelihood alternatives that reduce pressure on natural resources; and
- Roles and responsibilities for communities, districts, and project partners.

Communities selected five priority livelihood pathways aligned with district development plans and climate resilience objectives:

- Improved livestock management;
- Cassava value-chain improvement;
- Broom grass cultivation for erosion control and income;
- Climate-resilient vegetable production; and
- Improved rice productivity.

### **Deliver Inclusive Results Through Strong Participation and Gender Engagement**

The CCA process reached scale while maintaining inclusivity:

- 576 of 638 households (90%) participated directly in consultations;
- 48% of all beneficiaries are women, with women comprising 38.5% of village-level participants; and
- 403 villagers participated in district and village dissemination and signing events.

Ethnic communities used local languages and culturally appropriate facilitation tools to ensure informed consent and ownership. This approach strengthened legitimacy and long-term compliance.

### **Align Conservation with Government Systems and District Priorities**

District governors and technical offices actively endorsed the CCAs, ensuring alignment with the District Social and Economic Development Plans (DSEDP) and sector mandates. Authorities emphasized:

- Livelihood development as the entry point for conservation;
- Water supply, sanitation, and irrigation as climate-resilience priorities; and
- Co-management of conservation areas with NPA authorities.

As a result, all five CCAs, five Community Action Plans (CAPs), and 27 Activity Proposals (APs) received district certification and governor endorsement.

### **Establish Clear Governance, Monitoring, and Accountability**

UNDP IWRM EbA project and partners embedded accountability into implementation by finalizing and approving:

- Village- and household-level CCA compliance checklists;
- AP and CAP monitoring tools; and
- A consolidated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.

These tools allow government partners and UNDP to track compliance, livelihood performance, and conservation outcomes, supporting evidence-based adaptation and scale-up.

### **Position the CCA Model for Scale and Replication**

The CCA process demonstrates that community-led agreements, when paired with technical support and district ownership, can deliver conservation and development outcomes simultaneously. Key conditions for sustained impact include:

- Completing Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) and boundary demarcation;
- Ensuring timely financing and technical follow-up for APs and CAPs;
- Strengthening co-management between NPA authorities and basin-level planning; and
- Investing in on-the-job training and farmer-to-farmer learning.

With these enablers in place, the CCA model offers a scalable mechanism for advancing climate resilience, biodiversity protection, and inclusive development across Lao PDR.

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## Abbreviation:

AP	Activity Proposal
CAP	Community Action Plan
CCA	Community Conservation Agreement
DAFO	District Office of Agriculture and Forestry
DSEDP	District Social and Economic Development Plan
DS	Dry Season
WS	Wet Season
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
FCZ	Forest Conservation Zone
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FS	Feasibility Study
<b>GRET</b>	French iNGO – consortium partner with LCG for UNDP IWRM EbA Package 4
IWRM	Integrated Water Resource Management
HH	Household(s)
LCG	Lao Consulting Group
LWU	Lao Women's Union,
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation,
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
DoNRE	District Office of Natural Resources and Environment
NPA	National Protected Area,
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Planning
PMU	Project Management Unit
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
XBH	Xe Bang Hieng

## **I. Introduction and Context**

The Xe Bang Hieng River Basin, encompassing an area of 19,801 square kilometres across the provinces of Savannakhet, Saravan, Khammouan and Sekong in Lao PDR, is a critical region for biodiversity and agriculture. Dominated by Savannakhet Province, the basin sustains the livelihoods of diverse communities heavily reliant on its natural resources. However, these communities face increasing challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change, and limited economic opportunities. One of the major causes of ecosystem degradation is deforestation caused by land clearance for commercial agriculture and infrastructure. This has a significant bearing on the socio-economic condition of the vulnerable communities who are already facing the impacts of climate change. Addressing these issues is imperative to ensure sustainable development and resilience in the region.

The Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in the Xe Bang Hieng (XBH) River Basin and Luang Prabang City Project supports Lao PDR's efforts to manage land and water resources sustainably. As part of this initiative, Task 3 focuses on designing and implementing the Community Conservation Agreement (CCA) for the 5 target CCA villages. This report outlines the approach, objectives, and outcomes of Task 3, building on findings from Task 1, several field consultations and experiences of the mobilized CCA expert.

Consequently, the results of this task inform the preparation of content and materials for subsequent training sessions on CCA activities following the CCA process approval. The integral session/task 3 was to design, elaborate and implement a CCA process in the 5 CCA villages (Task 3 of the ToR). The consultation processes that occur at the 5 target CCA villages, districts' relevant project partner and workshops are closely organized and carried out with the project staff in the district. All decisions were consulted with stakeholders and the UNDP IWRM Project team before final approval and CCA dissemination.

## **II. Objectives and Outputs**

### **2.1 Objectives**

This Task comprised of 5 target CCA villages' consultation complemented by the project's district partners consultations which feed into the three sets of workshops. Cumulatively, these designed actions seek to reach the following objectives:

- CCA templates are designed for both the village and household levels, considering the findings from Preparatory and Market Assessment task (Task 0 and 1);
- During the CCA process, identification of required means to be mobilized by the community and the interested households. This includes labour, capital or material, and land;
- Identification of support (financial, material, technical) to be provided by the project to the target CCA communities and interested households. These identified supports were then incorporated into the village and households CCA templates;
- Identification of capacity building needs and plan both at the village and household levels (technical training, demonstration plots, exchange of experiences with beneficiaries of similar initiatives in other projects). These are also incorporated into the village and households CCA templates;
- Identification of an implementation and follow-up plan of activities, including responsibilities, working calendar and budget, for the 5 target CCA communities and interested households. These are also incorporated into the village and households CCA templates;

- Developed monitoring and evaluation system for the CCAs, including the CCA parties' compliance to established terms and responsibilities, economic benefits and the financial viability of the CCA process.

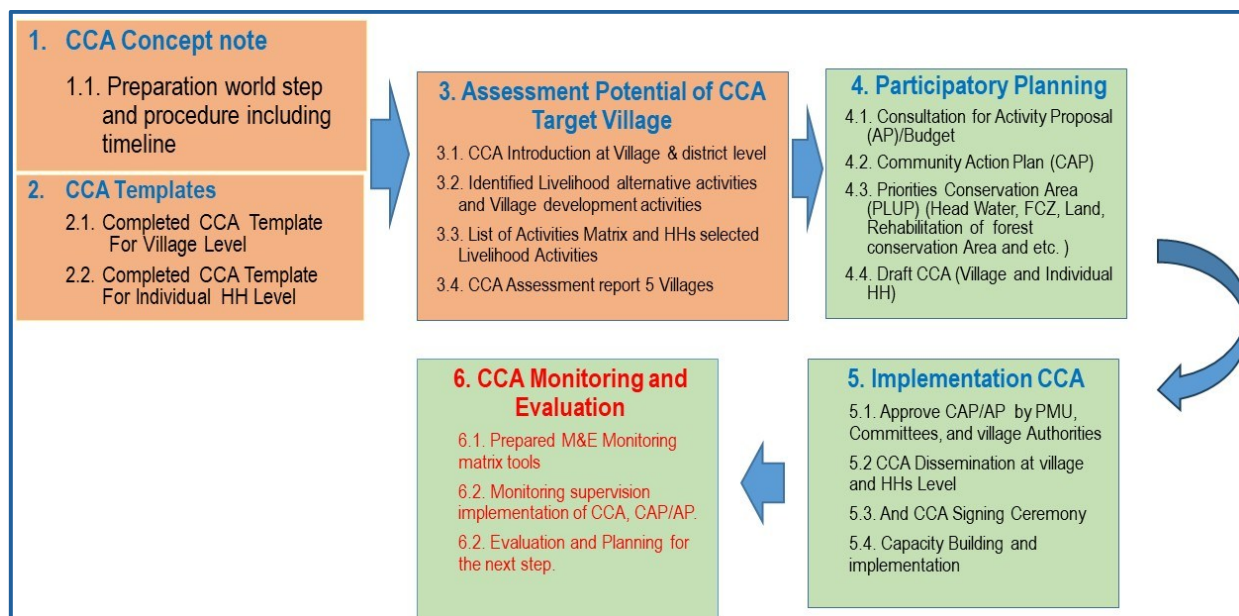
## 2.2 Outputs

Task/session 3 produced the following outcomes at both the community/village and household levels:

1. 5 CCA villages are established in five target villages (Sepon: Meuhuapa and Kaengthamae; Nong: Saveu and Tangalaineua; Xonnabouly: Meuanghong);
2. Conducted village and district level consultations using results from the previous sessions/tasks and the approved CCA templates (Village and household levels) are utilized during the three iterative community engagement workshops to co-develop and finalize CCAs for each of the 5 target CCA villages;
3. Specific benefits packages that are integrated within the validated CCAs have been properly consulted and collectively validated by the communities, reflecting the needs and circumstances of the target communities as well as priorities and capabilities of the projects and its implementing partners (i.e., alternatives to shifting cultivation and Integrated Climate-Resilient Flood Management Strategies); and
4. Five CCAs are finalized and validated for the 5 CCA villages in both English and Lao.

## III. Methodology

Critical to initiate the CCA process for 5 target CCA villages (Session/Task 3) is raising awareness about the impacts of climate change in the targeted areas and the need for adapting to the impacts of climate change in building community resilience through approved activities for them to make informed decisions during the CCA process (Session/Task 3). The entire CCA process has been designed through a six-step planning process, see Figure 1, which incorporates information and results from previous sessions/tasks (Task 0: Economic Context Study-Assessment of the socio-economic and livelihood condition of the 15 target villages; Task 1: Market Chain Analysis-Analysis of selected value chains to identify market opportunities, constraints, and potential entry points for climate-resilient livelihood improvement in the XBH river basin; And Task 2: Community-based community implementation-design and implementation of community-based climate change adaptation activities in the selected five CCA villages, including awareness campaign, training, demonstration, and extension support for prioritized livelihood options, which goes hand in hand with Task 3).



**Figure 1.** Steps proposed for CCA process

For Task 3, **Figure 1.** presents the six-step approach for CCA process to be undertaken and led by Mr. Yhoksamay LATHSAVONG (CCA facilitation expert) with support as needed by Dr. Bounthanh KEOBOUALAPHA (Deputy Team Leader for review and coordination), Mr. Mr. Lamphong KHANTHALIVANH (Community engagement and gender for field work), and Mr. Phong Huynh (Team leader for inputs, review and overall coordination support).

The process also involved special extension service experts, specifically:

- Mr. Sangvane Phouthabangkham (Cropping systems);
- Mr. Som Pathammavong (Livestock and fisheries); and
- Mr. Khampeu Phaphoungneun (Agriculture extension).

### **Methodology applied for each step of the CCA Process**

#### **Step 1: CCA concept note**

The CCA concept note represented the preliminary preparation work and established the detailed procedure, including the timeline for the CCA process. This step outlined the integral design and elaboration process for the Community Conservation Agreement, building upon the essential data gathered during the preparatory work (Task 0) and market study (Task 1). The successful execution of these steps was crucial as it set the foundation for the entire subsequent CCA framework.

#### **Step 2: CCA templates**

This step focused on developing comprehensive CCA document templates designed for use at both the Village Level and the Individual Household (HH) Level. These templates served as the primary instruments for capturing the agreements, integrating key information from previous assessments (Task 0, 1, and 2). The templates were structured to facilitate the identification and incorporation of the required means to be mobilized by the community (such as labour, capital, or land), the nature of the financial and technical support to be provided by the project, the necessary

capacity building plans, and the implementation/follow-up plans, including responsibilities and budget.

### **Step 3: Assessment of potential of CCA for each target village**

Following the Step 1 and 2 wherein the methodology and CCA templates have been approved by the UNDP IWRM project, Step 3 involving assessing the potential of CCA for each of the target villages. The overall objective of the field visit for this step is to assess target Village of Community Conservation Agreement (CCA), review the CCA process with target villages and related offices from the related districts, and consult with these stakeholders on their inputs toward the CCA to be developed. The outcome of this assessment is to provide information support preparation of the Community Conservation Agreement and in line with agreed actions mentioned in the project concept note.

The assessment of CCA villages conducted under participatory approaches (consultation meeting, FGD, observation, flip charts and visualization tools, drawing technique, application of local language for non-Lao Tai linguistic groups, and discussion with ethnic leader) with the following sub-step below:

#### **Sub-step 1: Desk review**

- ✓ Reviewed project document, session/task 0 report study and analysis of the economic and ecological contexts of the 5 target villages and session/task 1 value chains and opportunities for target CCA villages.

#### **Sub-step 2: Village consultation meeting (men/women)/village observation**

- ✓ Introduced CCA concept (livelihood alternative, conservation agreement).
  - ✓ Confirmed livelihood alternative with 5 CCA villages by individual household, village development activity and conservation activities after completing session 2.

#### **Sub-step 3: Priorities, confirmation of activities**

- ✓ Individual household selected livelihood activities and registered listed of activity group.
- ✓ Village authorities presented village problem and proposed village development activities & priorities.

#### **Sub-step 4: Meeting with village authorities**

- ✓ Conducted meeting with Village Authorities to provided information on CCA concept (commitment, and benefit from CCA between institutional responsibilities and communities) and informed communities of further steps for CCA implementation.

### **Step 4: Participatory Planning**

This step is designed to ensure findings are shared with target villages to inform and support the decisions of the 5 target CCA villages during the analysis and commitment phase. This is critical for their active contribution and ownership during the design of the draft Activity Proposal (AP) and Community Action Plan (CAP). At the same time, inputs from the project's District Governor and partners and with guidance from the Project Management Unit (PMU) at National Level.

CCA, AP/CAP templates are then included by CCA Expert and finalized with all stakeholders through iterative multi-stakeholder workshops. This multi-stakeholder process ensures that all parties to the CCAs can practically assess their capacities, realistically co-design CCA commitments that are implementable, and develop final CCAs that are beneficial to all parties. Finally, through the finalized and validated CCAs, to support the identified activities and technical needs, the results of this step support the designed set of technical packages (training, demonstration plots, study tours, etc.) with required budget, human resources and a capacity building plan with its objectives.

This step encompassed 5 CCA Target villages' consultation complemented by the project's district partners comprised, DoNRE, LWU, DAFO, CCA expert, Deputy team Leader, and the Community Development and Gender Specialist. Cumulatively, these designed actions seek to reach the following objectives:

- AP/CAP templates are designed for village level considering, the findings from Session/Task 0 and 1, 2;
- During the of AP/CAP process, identification of required means (labour, capital or material, land) to be mobilized by the community and the interested households;
- Identification of (financial, material, technical) support to be provided by the project to the target CCA communities and some interested households. These are to be incorporated respectively into the village and households AP/CAP templates; and
- Identification of capacity building needs and plan (technical training, demonstration plots, exchange of experiences with beneficiaries of similar initiatives in other projects) both at the village and household levels. These are to be incorporated respectively into the village and households AP/CAP templates.

Identification of an implementation and follow-up plan of activities (including responsibilities, working calendar and budget) for the AP/CAP communities and interested households. These are then incorporated respectively into the village and households AP/CAP templates.

Planning the AP/CAP Process guided by CCA Expert and the Village Development Committees, the communities will look at the way they use the natural resources, such as NTFP, fish, and wildlife, and create a plan to improve their community livelihoods action plan while also protecting the natural resources being used.

This planning includes the best way to develop the AP/CAP as well as multi-stakeholder consultation, dialogue and discussions to achieve the best collective way forward. Therefore, it was imperative that conditions are set in place to ensure community members felt at ease to speak about their needs, concerns, and agreement. Concretely, this involved:

- Prepare documents (Template of AP/CAP);
- The CCA Village Assessment found that community willingness following the PLUP and before beginning the steps for creating the AP/CAP; and
- The CCA Expert, supported by consultants if available, will ensure that at most of the community members have expressed willingness to proceed with the AP/CAP process.

### **Step 5: Implementation of CCA in 5 target villages**

The Community Conservation Agreement Implementation (Stage 5) of 5 targets Community Conservation Agreement (CCA) villages namely; Ban Meuanghong Xonnabouly district, Ban

Meuhuapa, Ban Kengthamea Sepon district, and Ban Tangalaineua, Saveu Nong district, Savannakhet province.

To finalize the CCA Package, preparation and capacity strengthening of 3 districts implementation team to implement CCA in 5 villages. Therefore, the consultation meeting was organized on February 5, 2025, at the meeting room of the Xonnabouly District Administration Office, Savannakhet province.

The Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, together with CCA Expert/LCG and GRET organized a consultation meeting on the establishment of a Community Ecosystem Conservation Agreements with the Integrated Water Resource Management and Ecosystem based Adaptation in Xe Bang Hieng River Basin and Luang Prabang City. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Kingkham Manivong, Deputy Head of the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, co-chaired by Mr. Boulika Inthirath, Deputy Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment of Savannakhet Province, and co-chaired by Mr. Khamsai Bouphaphan, Deputy of the District Governor of Xonnabouly. The participants included central-level stakeholders including the Department of Water Resources team, the Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Provincial of Agriculture and Forestry, and district-level stakeholders including the Deputy of Sepon and Nong districts, the Office of Natural Resources and Environment, the Office of Agriculture and Forestry, the Lao Women's Union, and representatives of the project target village, gender experts and staff from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lao PDR. In total, district extension participants totalled were 36 participants, 33% (12 out of 36) of whom were women (details of participants are attached). In terms of participants from the CCA target villages, there were a total of 403 participants of which were 155 women (38.5%). Details of participation by districts is shown below (list of participants is attached with this report):

- Xonnabouly district: Meuanghong village with 73 participants, 54 women;
- Nong district: Saveu village with 109 participants, 17 women; Tangalaineua village with 75 participants, 7 women; and
- Sepon district: Meuhuapa village with 81 participants, 54 women; Kaengthamae village with 65 participants, 23 women.

From 6-14 Feb 2025, the CCA consultant implemented Stage 5 of CCA workplan of 5 CCA villages (Meuanghong, Kaengthamea, Meuhuapa, Saveu and Tangalaineua) in 3 districts. This included:

- Step 5: CCA Implementation;
- Step 5.1: Approve CAP/AP, committees, and village authorities;
- Step 5.2: CCA dissemination at village and HHs level;
- Step 5.3: CCA signing ceremony and planning for; and
- Step 5.4: Capacity building and implementation.

The field mission was in collaboration with the representative from national level Department of Water Resources (DWR), UNDP, Provincial office of Natural Resources and Environment (PoNRE), Provincial office of Agriculture and Forestry (PAFO), District Office of Natural Resources and Environment (DoNRE), District Office of Agriculture and Forestry (DAFO), District Office of Lao Women's Union (LWU) of each of the 3 districts Xonnabouly, Sepon and

Nong , along with village authorities and people in the 5 target villages of CCA in Nong, Sepon and Xonnabouly districts of Savannakhet province, along with experts in the development of Community Conservation Agreements (CCA).

The CCA implementation of 5 CCA villages has been completed through village meetings, consultations and dissemination, individual consultation at the household and village levels with the specific objectives of:

- Finalizing CCA package CAP/AP by PMU, district partners, district governors and village authorities;
- Disseminating Community Conservation Agreements (CCAs) at the village and HH levels;
- Signing of the Community Conservation Agreements; and
- Building CCA, AP/CAP implementation capacity.

Finalization and validation (by villages and relevant stakeholders) of the documents to ensure alignment between project indicators and the communities' needs through conservation activities that are directly linked to forest, natural resources and biodiversity conservation. The Activity Proposal AP/CAP under the CCA package has been prepared for each of the 5 villages. The CCA documents were completed by the CCA Expert in consultation with the UNDP IWRM EbA Project Management Unit (PMU) and inputs from specialized extension experts and community and gender specialists.

The finalized CCA of each village is designed to be consistent with the village, district regulation, decree, laws of government of Lao PDR as well as with the needs of the village and household level.

The entire process in this step involved around 630 HHs of 5 CCA target villages' consultation complemented by the project's district partners, District Governor/ District Steering Committee, DoNRE, LWU, DAFO, CCA consultant, Deputy team Leader, Community Development and Gender specialist (GRET).

#### **Step 6: CCA Monitoring and Evaluation**

Following the finalization of the AP, CAP and CCA of each village, the consultant worked with the specialized extension experts to design trainings best fitting for the villages. These trainings were vetted by the UNDP IWRM project team before their implementation. Concurrently, the consultant through consultation with the UNDP IWRM project team while integrating feedback from the villages, designed and finalized the following:

- AP and CAP monitoring tools to be applied for each of the 5 target CCA villages;
- CCA compliance check list to be applied at both village and household level for each of the 5 target CCA villages; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools to be used during internal review before final review of the CCA process or the final review of the project.

These documents were submitted to the UNDP IWRM Project team and were approved.

### **IV. Results from each Step of the CCA Process**

#### **Step 1: CCA concept note**

The CCA Concept Note was successfully developed and approved by UNDP IWRM Project, providing the foundational methodology for the CCA process to ensure the approach was participatory and integrated inputs from relevant institutional and community levels. The concept note established the six-step planning process utilized to structure the entire CCA implementation.

### **Step 2: CCA templates**

CCA templates for both village and individual household levels were completed, guiding the CCA process. These templates became the functional documents used during the subsequent iterative community engagement workshops to co-develop and finalize the CCAs for each of the five target CCA villages. The finalized CCA documents encapsulated village-specific commitments, including the identification of capacity building needs, technical assistance, implementation plans, and budgeting necessary for enhancing climate resilience.

### **Step 3: Assessment of potential of CCA for each target village**

From 13-30 Oct 2024 the Community Conservation Agreement Expert together with LCG consultant team comprising specialized extension services (livestock & fisheries) - Som Pathammavong, (agricultural extension) - Khampeu Phaphoungneun, (Cropping systems) - Sangvane Phouthabangkham, and Community engagement and gender specialist - Lamphong Khanthavanh with LCG Representative Mr. Bounsou, Department of Water Resources (DWR/MoNRE), PoNRE, DONRE, DAFO, LWU and village authorities as well as communities of the 5 target villages implemented consultation meeting with following result below:

#### 4.1 Village consultation meetings in 5 CCA villages

**Table 1.** Summary of participants in CCA consultation 5 target villages

No.	Village	District	No HHs	No of HHs Participants CCA Consultation 5 villages					Remarks
				Total	Men	Women	% of Women participant CCA	% of HHs participant CCA	
1	Meuhuapa	Sepon	130	99	41	58	59	76	
2	Kaengthamae	Sepon	116	110	60	50	45	95	
3	Tangalaineua	Nong	73	73	41	32	44	100	
4	Saveu	Nong	114	114	82	32	28	100	
5	Meuanghong	Xonnabouly	205	180	131	49	27	88	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>638</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>90</b>	

The total of households from 5 target CCA villages participants in CCA consultation was 638 HHs with 38.4% of women for a total of 576 participants. For 10% who did not participate in the meetings, the village authorities informed the day after and selected HHs activities, and they were added to the matrix list.

#### 4.2 Characterization of beneficiaries in 5 target CCA villages

In total, the 5 target CCA villages are comprised of 638 households, of which 208 households are identified as vulnerable (poor, those with people with disability, widows, and destitute households). Below the details of these beneficiaries for each specific target CCA village is provided.

**Table 2.** Summaries number of CCA beneficiaries in 5 target villages

No	Village	Demographic Overview 2024							% women	Linguistic (Ethnic)
		District	No HHs	Families	Poor	Total	Men	Women		
1	Meuhuapa	Sepon	130	170	43	808	389	419	52	Tri
2	Kaengthamae	Sepon	116	145	39	678	349	329	49	Makong
3	Tangalaineua	Nong	73	98	29	502	276	226	45	Taoy
4	Saveu	Nong	114	141	46	708	375	333	47	Makong
5	Meuanghong	Xonnabouly	205	378	51	1,121	579	542	48	Lao
	<b>Total</b>		<b>638</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>3,817</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>48</b>	

Estimated 638 HHs in 5 target CCA villages are expected to benefit from CCA implementation and this included 208 poor family. From vulnerable (poor) group out of the total of 3,817 peoples 1,849 are women or 48% of the total beneficiaries, and all villagers are from 4 ethnic groups of Tri, Makong, Taoy, and Lao.

#### 4.3 Identification of alternative livelihood activities

Meetings with the 5 target villages to collectively analyse their alternative livelihood development activities (individual household and village levels) that integrate conservation and village development activities was supported by the results of the previous task (please refer to those respective reports). Within this task, the team consulted with interested households and supported their decision-making in their participation and selection of activities. From this consultation, five main activities for the households were identified, specifically: improvement livestock, cassava plantation and improvement of value chain, broom grass plantation, vegetable plantation, and improved rice yield.

**Table 3.** Number of households selected to participate in livelihood development for conservation activities

No	Village	District	No. HHs	Activities proposed by Session 0 and Session 1					No. Poor HHs	% of Poor HHs
				No. HHs Cattle improving	No. HHs Cassava	No. HHs broom grass	No. HHs Vegetables	No. HHs improving rice		
1	Meuhuapa	Sepon	130	81	78	16	84	98	43	33
2	Kaengthamae	Sepon	116	85	91	28	74	73	39	34
3	Tangalaineua	Nong	73	54	73	23	56	57	29	40
4	Saveu	Nong	114	60	72	33	69	81	46	40
5	Meuanghong	Xonnabouly	205	95	151	NA	133	140	51	25
	<b>Total</b>		<b>638</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>% of HH Selected Activities</b>				<b>59</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>NA</b>

The number of households interested in each activity shown in the table served as the basis for the planning and budget allocation for the prepared activity plan and extension methodology.

**Table 4.** Community/Village development activities proposed by village authorities and villagers

CCA Target Village	No	Activities	Community Participations	Remark
Meuhuapa (Sepon district)	1	Village Meeting Hall/Village office	Community will support Local material (wood) and labour	
	2	Water supply (groundwater and Solar Pump)	Community will support local material (wood) and labour, Water User Group and maintenance fund	FS existing water supply that is supported by XBH Project and World Vision
	3	Sanitation (latrine)	HHs will make by themselves with support from district public health office	only 10 HHs have latrines
	4	Transportation to production Land (boat, small bridge crossing the Sepon River)	Community will support Local material (wood) and labour	
	5	Communication during emergency (phone, alarm system)		
	6	Support fruit tree and industry plantation		
	7	Improve road access to the village		
Kaengthamae (Sepon District)	1	Water supply (groundwater and solar pump)	Community will support local material (wood) and labour, Water User Group and maintenance fund	FS Existing water supply that is supported by XBH Project and World Vision
	2	Improving road access to the village (3Km) from Sun paper company to the Village		
	3	Emergency response (ferry or boat) and for student travel		
	4	Village loud speaker		
	5	Village Meeting Hall/Village office	Community will support local material (wood) and labour	
Tangalaineua (Nong District)	1	Water supply (groundwater and solar pump)	Community will support local material (Wood) and labour, Water User Group and Maintenance fund	FS existing water supply that is supported by XBH Project and World Vision and hamlet
	2	Communal fishpond (50m*100m) and 20m x 15m for Ala hamlet	For fishery, storage water for home garden and livestock	FS on land and potential
	3	Emergency Response alarm system (flooding)		

	4	Sanitation (latrine) including Ala hamlet	HHs will make by themselves with support from district public health office	
	5	Women income and welfare fund for women's health and children's education	Communities matching fund	
	6	Increasing rice production through paddy field extension	Potential and land for paddy extension	FS on land and potential
Saveu (Nong District)	1	Village dispensary		
	2	Village Meeting Hall/Village office	Community will support local material (wood) and labour	
	3	Water supply (groundwater and solar pump) 4 more including Ban Vong Hamlet	Community will support Local material (Wood) and labour, Water User Group and maintenance fund	FS existing water supply that is supported by XBH Project and World Vision and both hamlet
	4	Electricity (For Ban Vong hamlet)		
	5	Reservoir for livestock and agriculture		FS on land and potential
	6	Sanitation (latrine) including Ala Hamlet	HHs will make by themselves with support from the district public health office	
	7	Increasing rice production through paddy field extension	Potential and land for paddy extension	FS on land and potential
Meuanghong (Xonnabouly district)	1	Village Meeting Hall/Village office	Community will support local material (wood) and labour	
	2	Village dispensary		District Governor suggest removing it
	3	Bridge for crossing river (Huaoykhy and Lakeng stream)	Community will support local material (wood) and labour	
	4	Road maintenance from Meuanghong to Songhong village		DSEDP and tender process of the District Governor suggests removing it
	5	Irrigation for dry season rice		FS on land and potential
	6	Clear land for village resettlement during emergency flooding		

Shared priorities across several CCA villages cover large-scale infrastructure and community-based projects. These include:

- Development of water supply systems (groundwater and solar pumps) and associated infrastructure, often with community contributions in the form of labour and the establishment of maintenance funds through Water User Groups (WUG); and
- Improved road access and the construction or upgrading of community facilities such as village meeting halls or offices.

The strong emphasis on water-related interventions underscores persistent challenges in water access and management, directly reflecting the villages' climate-related vulnerabilities.

#### 4.4 Meetings with Target Districts' Governors on CCA Concept, findings from village assessments and recommendations from District Governors for further implementation.

**Table 5.** Meetings with district authorities: Suggestions and recommendations for further CCA implementation

<b>District</b>	<b>Discussion topic/ Activities</b>	<b>Recommendation From district Governor</b>
Sepon	Team introduces and wrap-up progress of awareness raising and CCA concept	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project should focus on the livelihood activities and village development activities that are consistency with District Social and Economic Development Plan (DSEDP)</li> <li>2. Fully agreed on the activities that have been identified such as vegetable cultivation, improving livestock, improving rice yield, broom grass plantation in the fallow land and along XBH river to protect erosion, and generate income.</li> <li>3. Support water supply and sanitation that are the priorities of the district and district planned to award model villages on model health and clean villages (Ban Sam-sa-ad)</li> <li>4. 2 CCA villages using land and natural resources inside DPV NPA. Suggested that the project should work co-management on the conservation with NPA management unit.</li> <li>5. For the access to Meuhuapa village. District has already planned for maintenance suggested cut out from project activities priority</li> <li>6. Supporting alternative livelihood development for conservation should be a winning model of extension and scaling outcomes.</li> <li>7. Project should focus on building ownership and capacity strengthening at village level through support training on the job, and farmer to farmer cross visit.</li> </ol>
Nong	Team introduces wrap-up progress of awareness raising and CCA concept	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend establishment of project committee district and village level</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Project should support capacity building to the district as well as village level</li> <li>3. Water supply and sanitation is priority of the target village and district fully agree with project</li> <li>4. Project should focus on building ownership and capacity building of village authority</li> <li>5. Establish village development committee</li> <li>6. Recommend implementing village regulations related to part of CCA condition</li> </ol>
Xonnabouly	Meeting before field work and Wrap-up progress of Awareness raising and CCA concept	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are six activities proposed by village mentioned above and suggested to cut out 2 activities (village dispensary and road maintenance from Meuanghong to Sonhong village) cause overlapping with district plan for road maintenance construction contract has been signed.</li> <li>2. Irrigation activities are very importance for this village and recommend the project should conduct feasibility study (FS)</li> </ol>

The meetings with target district governors highlighted authorities' emphasis that all project activities should align with the District Social and Economic Development Plan (DSEDP). District Governors supported livelihood interventions including vegetable production, improved livestock management, enhanced rice yields, and water supply and sanitation measures. An important institutional recommendation highlighted the need for co-management of conservation activities with the NPA management unit, as several CCA villages are located within or near the Dongphouvieng National Protected Area. Authorities also underscored the importance of fostering local ownership and strengthening village-level capacity.

### Key findings:

1. The main livelihood of 4 CCA villages (2 villages in Sepon district – Meuhuapa and Kaengthamae and 2 village in Nong district Tangalaineua and Saveu) rely mainly on agriculture subsistence (shifting cultivation/ upland rice with a 4-5 years' rotation) and only 20-30% of HHs have paddy rice, livestock raising mainly large animal (cattle and buffalo), NTFP collecting (broom grass, mushroom, honey, orchids), fishing along the tributaries of the XBH river (Xelanong, and Sepon rivers)
2. 3 CCA target villages (2 villages Sepon district – Meuhuapa and Kaengthamae) and 1 village in Nong district (Tangalaineua) touch and/or are within the Dongphouvieng NPA (Category II: Straddle Village) while 1 village namely Ban Saveu is entirely within Dong Phouvieng NPA (Village Category I: Enclave Village). Thus, Saveu is the most important village in the headwaters.
3. Field observations discovered that encroachment to the forest area for cassava plantation is the main issue with the trend that this could increase in the coming seasons.
4. Village land had been allocated a long time ago in some villages conducted in 2003 and therefore, the borders between the village land, the NPA and the conservation zone are not

clear. Village authorities report that customary land/forest use is being applied for most villages lacking PLUP.

5. The 5 target CCA villages were willing to participate to CCA and implement livelihood alternative, village development, natural resources conservation (e.g., fish conservation zone, forest and forest land conservation area) if there is appropriate support (technical, and financial).
6. The 5 target CCA villages have customary conservation forest experience (Spiritual forest) while some have established Fish Conservation Zone (FCZ) which can be supported under CCA.
7. UXO and mine contamination are high risk particularly for activities involving land clearance. To mitigate this risk, the NRA office can provide maps of aerial bombardment, maps of UXO effects, maps of exploration, recovery and destruction of unexploded ordnance, and reports of various tasks related to UXO work.

#### **Step 4: Participatory Planning**

From 16-26 December 2024, a participatory planning exercise was conducted for all 5 target villages. The results of these village-based planning sessions were:

- Completed participatory planning for five CA target villages (Sepon: Meuhuapa and Kaengthamae; Nong: Saveu and Tanglalaineua; Xonnabouly: Meuanghong);
- Completed implementation consultation for Activity Proposal (AP)/budget for each of the 5 CCA Villages
- Completed community consultations on Community Action Plan (CAP) for each of the 5 CCA villages;
- Completed Priorities Conservation Area (PLUP) (head water, FCZ, land, rehabilitation of forest conservation area etc. Draft report or final report form PoNRE, DoNRE) for each of the 5 CCA villages; and
- Completed Draft CCA (village and individual HH) for each of the 5 CCA villages

These documents were subsequently used to finalize the CCA documents/process for these villages. It served to launch Step 5 of the process whose results are delved into in more detail below as it encapsulated better the technical and operational results derived from the CCA process at the village and district level.

#### **Step 5: Implementation of CCA in 5 target villages**

The overall results of this step included:

- Completed district consultation meetings with 3 district and 5 CCA target villages as stated in the section 1. Overview.
- Finalized the contents of CCA at village and individual HH Level for 5 CCA Villages including 5 Community Action Plan (CAP) and 27 Activity Proposals including budget estimations. All CCA packages were certified by district partners and endorsed by each district governor of the three districts;
- Completed CCA signing ceremony in 5 CCA villages and 630 individual households (Sepon: Meuhuapa and Kaengthamae; Nong: Saveu and Tanglalaineua; Xonnabouly: Meuanghong)

- Disseminated CCAs in 5 CCA Villages with attendance of 98% from each village during the CCA dissemination.
- CCA packages for each of the 5 CCA target villages were submitted to the UNDP IWRM EbA project.

### **Step 6: CCA Monitoring and Evaluation**

The following documents were finalized, submitted to and approved by the UNDP IWRM project:

- Action Plan (AP) and Community Action Plan (CAP) monitoring tools to be applied for each of the 5 target CCA villages;
- CCA Compliance check list to be applied at both village and household level for each of the 5 target CCA villages;
- Monitoring and Evaluation Tools (M&E) to be used during internal review before final review of the CCA process or the final review of the project; and
- The AP and CAP monitoring tools, CCA Compliance check list and M&E tools were submitted to the UNDP IWRM EbA Project.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

The Community Conservation Agreement is a community empowerment strategy in managing village land areas that seek to improve these areas' functionalities and the local community's economy. The CCA process which was engaged in at the 5 target CCA villages sought to enhance the area's functionality was conducted successfully, satisfying all steps proposed. The CCA and supportive documents which were developed through iterative consultations with different stakeholders, particularly the UNDP IWRM EbA project and district partners identified for each village, all CAPs and APs along with proposed M&E system. However, this CCA process needs to be effectively implemented by the villages with strong support of the project and its governmental partners. Even though proposed action plans, procurement materials etc, have been submitted for the target CCA villages to acquire production facilities, infrastructure, and training to increase their business development capacity, the success of each CCA's implementation relies on project/partners' support, follow up and monitoring. The process of community empowerment within the CCA process needs to be implemented to optimally convert the potential capacity of each village to maximize each village's performance in implementing the CCA. The empowerment process must begin with strengthening commitment, coordination, effective communication, and capacity building on the individual, institutional, and organizational levels.

The assessment has made the following recommendations in effectively implementing Community Conservation Agreements (CCAs):

1. PLUP with Land Use Zoning, and boundary demarcation for all target villages should be completed and regularly updated to ensure identified specific areas for headwater conservation, forest conservation, biodiversity conservation and rehabilitation of conservation areas remain relevant to the target communities in building resilience from the impacts of floods and droughts;
2. Livelihood alternatives that have been designed and incorporated within the APs and CAPs should be annually reviewed to ensure their implementation remains relevant to the target communities and contributed to the effective implementation of the District Social and Economic Development Plan (DSEDP);
3. Adequate and timely allocation of budget and technical support for APs and CAPs of 5 target CCA villages; and

4. Co-management in informational exchanges between NPA management plan and XBH River Basin management plan should be developed to ensure coherency and complementarity.

**List of Annexes:**

1. CCA template at household and village level (English and Lao)
2. CCA Process Stage 3 documents: Workshops, summary report, and CCA village Activities Matrix
3. CCA Process Stage 4 documents: Agenda and CN for Activity Planning
4. CCA Process Stage 5 documents: agenda, report, participants and CCA related documents for each village (CCA, Activity Planning, Community Activity Planning, CCA Implementation and Signing)
5. CCA CAP monitoring tools, M&E tools and Compliance checklists
6. Photos of villages
7. CCA Villages Procurement Plan

**IWRM-EbA Project**  
**Project Management Unit**  
**Department of Water and Resources (DWR)**  
**Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE)**



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