

Organic Agriculture Forum

Project	Enhancing sustainable tourism, clean production and export capacity in Lao People's Democratic Republic
Commissioner	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
Activity	Lao Organic Agriculture Forum (platform public-private sector dialogue)
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To update participants on the national situation of organic agriculture development in Lao PDR 2. To facilitate a sharing among public and private sectors in Lao PDR on organic agricultural development 3. To strengthen the national organic sector and support the development of organic agriculture in Lao PDR
Target Group	30 participants from private and public sectors
Duration & Location	23 March 2012 in Mercure Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Programme

08.30 – 09.00	Registration at meeting room of Phongsaly room, Mercure Hotel,
09.00 – 10.00	Opening and Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open by acting Director General, Trade and Product Promotion Department ▪ Open by Director General, Department of Agriculture ▪ Keynote speaker: Dr. Sophia Twarog, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD ▪ Keynote speaker: Mr. Andre Leu, IFOAM President
10.00 – 10.15	Coffee break
10.15 – 12.00	Status of Lao Organic Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview presentation: Mr. Vitoon Panyakul (General Secretary, Earth Net Foundation and UNCTAD Consultant) • Participants sharing their experiences
12.00 - 13.30	Lunch break
13.30 – 14.30	Brain Storming Session (small group discussion) "Identifying Needs and Priority Lao Organic Agricultural Development"
14.30 – 15.00	Coffee break
15.00 – 16.00	Plenary Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back of the small group discussion • Discussion on the future activities
16.00 – 16.30	Closing of the workshop

Appendix 1. Lao National Organic Forum: Rationale and Vision

The formulation of a national strategy and action plans on organic agriculture is well recognized as an important instrument for facilitating national organic agriculture development. See for instance the paper “Best Practices for Organic Policy” by UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (2008).

It is also recognized that the development and implementation of such plans should be based on public-private partnership and dialogue with on-going forum of informal sharing of experiences and information. The forum should involve all relevant public agencies and range of private sector actors, from producer organizations, trader associations, environmental groups, research institutions, and consumer associations.

Lao National Organic Forum (L-NOF) is therefore being initiated by UNCTAD under the UN Inter Agency Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity project "Enhancing sustainable tourism, clean production and export capacity in Lao PDR". The first Forum meeting will be held in March 2012 in Vientiane city to discuss the challenges of Lao organic sector, prioritize them, and define the L-NOF future activities.

L-NOF is expected to function autonomously while UNCTAD would play a facilitating role during the project period (up until mid 2014).

Please note that, currently, there exists several policy papers developed mainly by consultants which provide information about the national organic agriculture development for Lao PDR. These include:

1. ITC (2005), Export Potential Assessment in Lao PDR, as part of the project Support to Trade Promotion and Export Development in the Lao PDR.
2. Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2006), Organic Product Strategy (2007-2009), Ministry of Industry and Commerce.
3. Panyakul, V. (2009), Organic Agriculture in Laos PDR: Overview and Development Options, International Trade Center’s project “Support to Trade promotion and Export Development in Lao PDR”.

UNCTAD has also commissioned a consultant to conduct a study and update information on the national situation of organic agriculture in Lao PDR. The findings of this study will be presented at the first L-NOF in late March 2012.

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