

# **Business & Biodiversity Strategy for IUCN Lao PDR**



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## Business & Biodiversity Strategy for IUCN Lao PDR

The Business & Biodiversity Programme (BBP) seeks to enhance IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature's collaboration with the private sector, by engaging the corporate world in biodiversity conservation and by helping businesses to reduce their environmental footprint.

Globally, as well as in Lao PDR, the private sector is growing in size and influence. This is paralleled by calls from across society for business to contain its effects on the environment and to mainstream sustainability principles. The conservation community is increasingly engaging business and IUCN is a leading organization in this effort.

This document sets out a strategy for engagement of the private sector and the development of an effective BBP in Lao PDR.

### 1. Background

#### **IUCN Lao Strategic Framework**

The IUCN Lao PDR country programme is guided by its *Strategic Framework 2007-2011*, which confirms its commitment to the overarching Lao programme goal: "To ensure that the ecosystems and natural resources of Lao PDR are effectively conserved and sustainably utilised in an equitable manner that contributes to the socio-economic development of the country".

In 2006, IUCN Lao PDR undertook a comprehensive strategic planning exercise, including extensive external consultation with partners and stakeholders. Through this process, IUCN Lao PDR has developed a set of clear directions to address key challenges and provide necessary support to its Lao PDR partners. Guided by a livelihoods approach to conservation, a commitment to the poorest groups in society and the ecosystems upon which they depend, the 2007 – 2011 strategy consists of four core programme themes: Protected Areas; Governance; Agrobiodiversity; and Nam: water, wetlands & watersheds.

Lying at the centre of the programme, *Governance* represents IUCN Lao's continuing efforts to strengthen institutions and enhance the processes of decision-making – across a broad range of stakeholders – to achieve national conservation and development goals. The active engagement and participation of the private sector will play a key role in improving decision-making and planning in Lao PDR, as well as offering opportunities to mainstream environmental protection in the country's growing industries.

The BBP is an emerging programme for IUCN in Lao PDR. Improved engagement and partnerships with the private sector will be a crucial factor in ensuring equitable and sustainable development in Lao PDR. In addition, IUCN Lao has a clear mandate to improve interactions with the private sector in order to achieve its goals and country strategy.

## **A Global Strategy**

In 2004, IUCN's Council endorsed a *Strategy for Enhancing IUCN Interaction with the Private Sector*. The strategy envisions a sustainable global economy in which businesses are committed and effective partners in achieving IUCN's mission: a just world that values and conserves nature.

The goals of the strategy are:

- A conservation community that is well informed about market mechanisms and understands their potential and limitations to achieve biodiversity conservation;
- A more accountable private sector which contributes to sustainable development including conservation and social equity;
- Effective dialogue and collaboration between IUCN and the private sector which helps to achieve conservation through and alongside sustainable development.

The role of IUCN – in line with its general mandate – is to *influence, encourage* and *assist* businesses to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable, efficient and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN, as a priority, engages business where change is most important and urgent due to the scale of their impact on the environment and social equity, or where change is most likely based on commitment of the company and its leadership, or where greatest potential exists for a company to positively contribute to environment. Four key business categories have been identified:

- Biodiversity dependent industries (such as fishing, agriculture and forestry);
- Large "footprint" industries (such as mining, oil & gas, hydropower and construction);
- Financial services (such as banking, insurance and other financial intermediaries);
- "Green" enterprises (including organic farming and nature-based tourism).

At the global level, IUCN has already forged a number of partnerships and undertaken activities to take forward this strategy. These include working with international cement company Holcim to develop and implement ecosystem conservation standards, contributing to sector-wide improvements in the cement and related industries. IUCN and the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) have also been engaged in an ongoing "Dialogue on Mining and Biodiversity" since 2002. This Dialogue aims to improve the performance of mining industries in the area of biodiversity conservation and to enhance understanding between mining industries and the conservation community.

## **BBP in Asia**

IUCN Asia's Regional Business and Biodiversity Programme seeks to mobilize the private sector and the environmental community to work together in mainstreaming conservation in business. The combination of sustaining high economic growth rates whilst not compromising on environmental conservation and restoration is one of the biggest challenges facing the Asia region. Responding to this challenge and guided by a clear set of principles that respect mutual roles, the Programme works with more and more Asian businesses and business apex bodies on conservation and sustainable development issues.

The BBP Asia Programme strives to:

- Ensure that the conservation community is well informed about the functioning of business and market mechanisms and understands both the potential and the limitations;
- Ensure that the private sector is well informed about current conservation issues and the likely future consequences, and recognizes and accepts the importance of the role of business in addressing them;
- Ensure effective dialogue and collaboration;
- Increase the level of trust and engagement between the business and conservation communities and so enhance the contribution both can make;
- Continuously improve the policies and standards necessary to ensure responsible business behavior.

The Programme has already made significant achievements in Asia, focusing on the following activities:

- Forging partnerships with apex industrial bodies to assist in maximising the triple bottom line for businesses. Such partnerships have been formed with Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Vietnam, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Lao PDR and India;
- Conducting Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSER) analyses and benchmarking of companies on environmental performance;
- Showcasing best practices;
- Supporting companies in working towards achieving international and national standards and in influencing policies related to biodiversity conservation. In the Asia region IUCN works with leading companies including Holcim, Dilmah, Six Senses Resorts and Spas, and the Tata Group.

## 2. Challenges and opportunities for BBP in Lao PDR

### Challenges

An overarching challenge for furthering conservation and sustainable development in Lao PDR is the rapid expansion of development projects and commercial activities at a time when the Lao authorities still have a low capacity to plan, regulate and monitor development. This is creating a situation where, while some projects are well-planned and executed, many more are being carried out in an uncoordinated and unsustainable manner. The negative impacts on the Lao environment and on communities are likely to grow.

From the perspective of promoting environmentally and socially responsible development and encouraging dialogue between the conservation community and the private sector, key challenges include<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Annex 1 for a table of key policy and institutional challenges in Lao PDR related to private sector engagement in conservation.

- Commercial activities are expanding rapidly and with insufficient oversight from the government and communities, placing growing pressure on natural resources and acting as a driving force in biodiversity loss and environmental degradation.
- Environmental governance in Lao PDR remains weak, although the government is increasingly concerned and is taking steps to improve regulatory and monitoring processes. There is a lack of institutional capacity to plan, regulate and monitor trade and investment activities, compounded by a lack of transparency and participation in decision-making processes and issues of corruption.
- The line between private sector and public sector interests and operations is not always clear, with the Government often taking a stake in major developments, such as in the mining sector, and public-private partnerships are increasingly prevalent in large infrastructure projects, such as hydropower.
- The playing field for businesses in Lao PDR is “uneven”. The lack of standardization and the insufficient implementation of regulations, as well as a sometimes insecure investment climate, removes incentives to improve environmental and social performance.
- Although businesses can be influential in Lao PDR, this is often through unofficial channels. Like communities and civil society, the private sector is also excluded from decision-making processes.
- The value of Lao PDR’s natural resources and ecosystems (and the services they provide) has yet to be fully assessed, increasing the risk of natural resources being unsustainably utilized and “traded away”.
- Constituting a challenge and an opportunity, the Lao PDR private sector remains relatively small compared to that of its neighbours and other economies in the region, although it is growing. The small scale of the Lao private sector makes it easier to promote dialogue but limits the number of potential partners.

### **Opportunities**

There are a number of opportunities that the BBP in Lao PDR can draw upon and attempt to amplify. First, there are multiplying signs that the GoL at different levels recognizes the need to better manage the country’s natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations<sup>2</sup>. The GoL is also willing to work with international and non-governmental organizations to build capacity and to address gaps in the policy and institutional framework concerning environmental governance.

There is also increasing attention, local and international, NGO and government, on key sectors with large impacts on the environment, such as hydropower, mining, plantations and construction. Research and advocacy carried out by Lao research institutes and international and local NGOs may prompt better practices from GoL actors and companies. Similarly, there has been a recent trend

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<sup>2</sup> For example: the GoL has attempted to place a moratorium on the granting of large concessions; the MAF and Luang Namtha Provincial Government have both called for a halt to further rubber development until questions can be answered about its economic, social and environmental impacts; a Department of Forest Inspection (DoFI) under MAF has been established to monitor and control the country’s forest resources and wildlife; and a new Environmental and Social Impacts Assessment (ESIA) division has been created in WREA.



towards greater scrutiny from the media and the National People’s Assembly (NPA) on the impacts of development projects on the environment and communities.

As mentioned above, Lao PDR’s neighbours are influential through traditional ties, shared history, economic cooperation and increasing FDI flows. There has been growing pressure on countries such as China and Thailand, internally and externally, to better govern overseas development aid and the activities of their companies overseas.

The internationalization of the Lao economy also offers opportunities to promote more “green” industries. Increasingly, access to important international markets (such as Europe and the United States) is dependent on “green” credentials, such as biodiversity conservation and carbon footprint. Tighter regulation in certain markets, as well as consumer preference, may start to trickle down the supply chain and affect the sourcing of products, such as timber, from Lao PDR. There are also a growing number of initiatives aimed at improving access for Lao products to “green” and fair-trade markets, promoting organic produce, farmers’ cooperatives and sustainable tourism.

Some other opportunities to consider include:

- A number of large multinational and foreign-based companies have a presence in Lao PDR. These companies often have established CSER policies, are familiar with working with civil society and can demonstrate a business case for sustainable practices.
- IUCN Lao has a number of experiences and existing relationships that it can build upon in the development of its BBP, including: joint activities with particular companies in the forest sector; previous collaboration with the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI); experience conducting research and analysis on trade and investments they relates to the environment and livelihoods; and experience setting up forums/networks to discuss environmental governance issues.
- In addition, private sector approaches and actors are increasingly utilized in IUCN Lao and IUCN regional projects and programmes, such as the Landscapes and Livelihoods Strategy (LLS) and the Mekong Region Water Dialogues (MRWD). These activities have already helped IUCN Lao PDR build up relationships with several companies and other relevant stakeholders.

### **3. Scope of this Strategy and Definitions**

This strategy is concerned with the development of activities under the BPP in Lao PDR, and to a smaller extent, regional or sub-regional activities that are related to Lao PDR.

For the purpose of this strategy, we utilise the definition of “Private Sector” that appears in the IUCN *Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement*, 2009:

“..the private sector is broadly defined to include commercial enterprise of any size, in any country, whether privately held, ‘publicly quoted’, or wholly or majority owned by the state or by local communities. It covers both legally registered (formal) and unregistered (informal)

enterprise, the latter including most family farms and a large proportion of small-scale trade and industry in the developing world. For the purpose of these guidelines, engagement with the private sector will also include work with related organizations such as industry associations. In these Guidelines, the terms ‘business’, ‘firm’, ‘corporate’, ‘company’, ‘industry’, and ‘industry association’ are used interchangeably with ‘private sector’.”

“Engagement” is defined as:

“Any interaction with the private sector covered by a signed contractual document which seeks to influence the behavior of business in ways that contribute to the IUCN Mission. Such interaction may take different forms, including carrying out joint projects, receiving private sector financial support, mutual capacity building, and IUCN providing advice, carrying out scientific assessments, and convening independent scientific reviews.”

#### 4. Purpose and Objectives

Based on the *Strategy for Enhancing IUCN Interaction with the Private Sector*, the purpose of this strategy is to mobilize the conservation community, private sector and government to work together to improve environmental and natural resource governance, thus improving biodiversity conservation and safeguarding livelihoods in Lao PDR.

The objectives of the strategy are:

- A conservation community that is well informed about market mechanisms and the value of partnerships with the private sector, and understands their potential and limitations to achieve biodiversity conservation.
- A more accountable and better informed private sector, which contributes to sustainable development including conservation and social equity.
- Effective dialogue and collaboration between IUCN, the private sector and policy makers, which helps to achieve conservation through, and alongside, sustainable development.

#### 5. IUCN’s role

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, is the world’s oldest and largest global environmental network. IUCN is a democratic union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and some 10,000 volunteer scientists in more than 150 countries. IUCN’s work is supported by 1,100 professional staff in 62 countries and hundreds of partners in the public, NGO and private sector around the world. IUCN helps the world find pragmatic solutions to pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN's ability to convene diverse stakeholders to work together to improve environmental governance is one of the organization's core strengths. It allows it to effectively engage with business and to act as a bridge between the private sector, governments and the conservation community.

In 1969, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of the Government of the Lao PDR became a state member of the IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and in 1992 the IUCN Lao PDR Country Office was established. Since its beginnings, the office has been offering key technical and knowledge-based support to the GoL on conservation and livelihood issues.

Drawing on the technical and institutional resources from its global network, IUCN Lao PDR's has three main strategic roles:

#### *Convener of stakeholders*

In convening multi-sectoral dialogues, working groups and partnerships, IUCN Lao PDR works to improve cooperation and institutionalised understanding among all relevant stakeholders in specific issues. IUCN Lao PDR uses its access to a global network of scientists paired with its involvement in the promotion and monitoring of international policies, multilateral environment agreements and local legislation around the world, and convenes key stakeholders for institutional capacity building and for improved research, environmental assessments and policy development and implementation.

#### *Centre of information*

IUCN acts as an international centre of information, maintaining a library of printed and digital publications, and providing access to a range of experts, in order to:

- Host and disseminate up-to-date research on relevant environmental issues;
- Test innovative practices and approaches from across the globe, demonstrate linkages between conservation and livelihoods and promote field-based learning; and
- Disseminate amongst decision makers at various levels of the society the knowledge gathered from these experiences in order to promote policy changes.

#### *House of scientific and technical experts*

IUCN Lao PDR draws on the vast IUCN network in the region and globally to actively respond to emerging environmental issues and provide technical and scientific advice when requested. Additional support and expertise is by IUCN's global network of six specialist commissions, including the Species Survival Commission (SSC); the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA); the Commission on Environmental Law (CEL); the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC); the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) and the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM).



## 6. Principles and Processes

Engagement between IUCN Lao and the private sector will be governed by a series of principles and processes, as outlined in the 2004 *Strategy for Enhancing IUCN's Interaction with the Private Sector*, the 2005 *Strategy for Enhancing IUCN in Asia's Interaction with the Private Sector* and the 2009 *Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement*.

Any interaction with the private sector should be governed by the following principles. It must be:

1. *Relevant* to the IUCN vision and Mission.
2. *Consistent* with the general policies of IUCN.
3. *Responsive* to the aspirations of the membership.
4. *Empower* IUCN to implement its Programme and IUCN members to conserve nature.
5. *Effective* and results-based with concrete outcomes that can be measured.
6. *Efficient* in the use of IUCN resources as compared to alternative actions.
7. *Transparent* in the sense of ensuring public access to information, while respecting individual privacy and institutional confidentiality, as appropriate.
8. *Participatory* in the sense of creating opportunities for involvement by affected stakeholders, especially vulnerable groups, while respecting legitimate decision-making mechanisms.
9. *Enhancing* the credibility and autonomy of IUCN.
10. *Promoting* further development and inclusion of the principle of Free Prior and Informed Consent.
11. *Building* on commitment at the highest level within the company – including to sustainable development and social and environmental best practice.
12. *Ensuring* independence of IUCN from the company / industry group. *Relevant* to the IUCN vision and mission;

IUCN Lao will carefully assess the potential risks of engagement with private sector actors through suitable processes. The term due diligence refers to a general duty to exercise care before entering into any kind of agreement or transaction with another party. In terms of *IUCN's Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement*, due diligence involves researching and analyzing a potential business partner ahead of approaching the company and undertaking any negotiations, in order to:

- gain an understanding of the business and its operations, particularly with respect to environmental and social impact, performance, and reputation
- identify opportunities and possible areas of engagement
- identify any past, present, and predictable future sources of risk to IUCN arising from an engagement with the business

A due Diligence Report will be prepared by IUCN Lao PDR prior to any substantive engagement with a private sector entity. Similar to a 'background check', this report will commonly include:

1. Basic company description: e.g., sector; vision and mission; market position; sales and prospects; operations; customers; suppliers; competitors
2. Company impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services
3. Social and environmental policies, standards & public commitments: e.g., external policies, standards & initiatives to which the company has committed; internal policies & standards; policy implementation & compliance mechanisms
4. Environmental and social performance: e.g., reporting mechanisms; examples of environmental and social performance/improvements; stakeholder engagement
5. Company reputation: e.g., the company's presence in international sustainability indices; awards; independent rankings; any past public criticisms or campaigns against the company or sector (particularly by the IUCN membership); experiences of other groups in working with the company,
6. Assessment of the company's commitment to corporate responsibility
7. Potential risks for IUCN
8. Indication of points that could be investigated further

In addition, the research can explore opportunities for IUCN, including appropriate areas of engagement and types of engagement activities.

These questions are intended to provide an indication of the types of risks associated with a particular engagement, and are not meant as a means of screening out specific types of engagement. The next steps are to assess the risks of an engagement, identify means of managing those risks, and then finally take an informed decision about whether or not to pursue the engagement.

Further information about IUCN's due diligence and other processes related to private sector engagement can be found in the IUCN *Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement* (2009), available at [http://liveassets.iucn.getunik.net/downloads/ps\\_20guidelines.pdf](http://liveassets.iucn.getunik.net/downloads/ps_20guidelines.pdf).

## 7. Implementation

As stated above, the purpose of this strategy is to mobilize the conservation community, private sector and government to work together to improve environmental and natural resource governance, thus improving biodiversity conservation and protection of Lao livelihoods. The BBP will be implemented by IUCN Lao staff and partners in the private sector, civil society and government.

In the implementation of the BBP, IUCN Lao PDR can:

- Provide guidance on environmental issues to the private sector and the government;
- Facilitate partnerships and establish networks;

- Help businesses to develop a holistic Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility (CSER) strategy, with a monitoring framework;
- Monitor the progress and evaluate the impacts of CSER work on a regular basis;
- Provide technical assistance for specific projects.

### **Target sectors and entities**

The BBP in Lao PDR will be focused on working with private sector entities and on commercial operations. The programme will work with businesses at a number of levels, from large multinational companies with a presence in Lao PDR to smaller locally and regionally based companies, and state-owned enterprises.

Similar to BBP at the global level, over the long term BBP in Lao PDR will aim to engage with partners in:

- Biodiversity dependent industries (such as fishing, agriculture and forestry);
- Large "footprint" industries (such as mining, oil & gas, hydropower and construction);
- Financial services (such as banking, insurance and other financial intermediaries);
- "Green" enterprises (including organic farming and nature-based tourism).

### **Linkages to the IUCN Lao PDR Programme**

As mentioned above, promoting a positive contribution by the private sector to sustainable development in Lao PDR faces a number of challenges related to both private sector operations and environmental governance. Both the private sector and the government play a role in determining the sustainability of trade, investment and commercial activities in the country. While BBP Lao PDR will be focused on working with private sector entities, IUCN Lao PDR also works closely with government and civil society through its Environmental Governance Unit. This strategy envisages that BBP and the Environmental Governance unit will work in tandem on these interrelated issues.

In addition, efforts will be made to link the work of BBP with other programmatic priorities for IUCN Lao PDR. In particular, this strategy will aim to build on existing activities in the areas of water, watersheds and wetlands, forestry, and protected areas.

### **Key activities**

To launch the BBP in Lao PDR, IUCN proposes to focus on several key activities related to the target sectors listed above and building on focus areas of the IUCN programme in Lao PDR. These are discussed in more detail below.

Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility: As identified above, an overarching challenge for sustainable development in Lao PDR is the rapid expansion of development projects and commercial activities at a time when the Lao authorities still have a low capacity to plan, regulate and monitor development. IUCN Lao PDR sees the promotion of CSER as an important tool in improving the environmental and social impacts of commercial activities, complementing the efforts of governments and NGOs. However, awareness of CSER among businesses in Lao PDR is low, as is the capacity of companies and industry associations to promote and implement it. Under this component, IUCN Lao proposes to undertake a series of activities with business, financial institution, association and civil

society partners to raise awareness and build capacity, with the aim of establishing the IUCN initiative “Leaders for Nature”<sup>3</sup> in Lao PDR.

Water: Water resources are very important to rural livelihoods, industrial development and the ecosystems of Lao PDR. Water, watersheds and wetlands is thus a core area of work for IUCN in Lao PDR. The BBP will continue to provide support as required to the Mekong Region Water Dialogues (MRWD) Programme, and will seek to promote improved environmental and social practices among companies whose activities have impacts on the country’s watersheds and wetlands, such as hydropower developers.

Mining: The mining and extractive industries are a key area for the BBP globally and IUCN already works with a number of actors in this sector to improve conservation performance, including the International Council on Mining and Minerals (ICMM), Rio Tinto, Shell and Holcim Cement. In Lao PDR, the BBP will aim to engage mining companies in the MRWD and will seek ways to work with the industry to further reduce impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and to promote dialogue with stakeholders, including the Government. For example, the existing IUCN dialogue with ICMM may serve as a model for Lao PDR.

Forests and plantations: Another core area of IUCN Lao’s work is the protection of forests and forest biodiversity, both in and outside of protected areas, and the promotion of sustainable forestry practices. The BBP in Lao PDR will seek to collaborate with the private sector in areas where forest protection and sustainable forestry practices can be promoted. This may include the promotion of sustainable nature-based tourism which contributes to the conservation of protected areas and boosting local livelihoods, and working with plantation companies to put in place measures to enhance biodiversity conservation and local livelihoods.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The status of the implementation of the BBP in Lao PDR will be reviewed and evaluated every 12 months after the adoption of this strategy. While utilizing funding from the IUCN Lao PDR Country Programme Agreement, BBP activities will also be regularly reported on to the donor, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

### **Resources**

Until now, BBP activities in Lao PDR have been funded through the core funds of the IUCN Lao PDR programme and through ad-hoc project funding in areas related to private sector engagement. This

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<sup>3</sup> Leaders for Nature (LFN) is a global learning and action oriented network that brings together current and future business leaders around three general themes: ecosystems and nature conservation, sustaining the business, and leadership. The goal of Leaders for Nature is to integrate 'ecosystem thinking' into the core of business. LFN was founded in 2005 by the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands. In 2007 LFN was launched in Switzerland and IUCN International adopted the programme. Several other national LFN initiatives are in start-up phase around the world. LFN in the Netherlands, for example, provides a programme of meetings and workshops, master classes, a Young LFN Forum and an online database of best practices.



strategy foresees a more integrated and focused development of activities under the BBP and a more proactive approach to seeking funding.

IUCN Lao PDR's Business and Biodiversity Officer will be the primary staff to develop and implement the BBP in Lao PDR. He/she will also provided assistance to other IUCN projects with private sector engagement components as required.

Support for BBP implementation will also be provided where required and feasible from the IUCN Lao Country Representative, Country Programme Coordinator and the Regional Coordinator for BBP in Asia.

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## Annex 1: Policy and institutional challenges and opportunities<sup>4</sup>

Challenges	Opportunities
Significant lack of capacity among government and semi-government organizations	Early stage of development in a number of sectors makes interventions worthwhile
Uneven implementation of existing legislation and regulations regarding environmental protection, impact assessment, wildlife trade, etc	GoL generally willing to work with international and non-government organizations to build capacity and address policy/legislation gaps
Gaps in key policies and laws, such as Wildlife Law, Forestry Law, etc, and lack of coordination, clear roles and responsibilities and monitoring between government agencies	Increasing NGO attention in key sectors with impacts on the environment (hydropower, mining, plantations) may prompt better practices from GoL and companies
Uneven playing field for international, regional and local business actors; minimal incentives to improve environmental and social performance. Difficult business environment and high risk for investments further encourages a “cut and run” approach.	A number of large multinational and several local companies are setting best practice examples for CSR
Lack of awareness of CSR, multi-stakeholder processes	Changing attitudes in neighbours towards CSER, commercial and foreign aid activities overseas; utilization of progressive actors in neighbouring countries,
Lack of linkages to “green” markets	Growing number of organizations working to improve access for Lao products to “green” markets
Strong influence of neighbours, particularly China, Vietnam and Thailand	Increasing media, community and National Assembly attention for environmental issues
Corruption	Growing government concern regarding the disconnects that have resulted in rapid and poorly planned expansion of concessions and projects
Poor provision information and extension for rural communities, as well as a lack of infrastructure in some areas	

<sup>4</sup> This table is taken from an IUCN Lao supporting document: *Policy and Institutional Framework – Private Sector Engagement for Conservation in Lao PDR*, 2009.