

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry



POVERTY REDUCTION FUND SEMI-ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT OF PRF

(January – June 2023)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Agricultural Development Strategy
AFN	Agriculture for Nutrition
AL	Agricultural Livelihood
AWPB	Annual Work Plan and Budget
BOQ	Bill of Quantity
CCT	Community Cash Transfer
CD	Community Development
CDD	Community Driven Development
CF	Community Facilitator
CFA	Community Force Account
CLEAR	Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience Project
CQS	Consultant Qualification Selection
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
Deepen CDD	Deepen Community-Driven Development
DNO	District Nutrition Officer
DPO	District Planning Office
DRDC	Department of Rural Development and Cooperative
DRM	Disaster Risks Management
DSEDP	District Social Economic Development Plan
DTEAP	Department of Technical Extension and Agro-Processing
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EM	Energy and Mine
ESF	Environment Safeguard Framework
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguard Specialist
FB	Facebook
FEE	Final External Evaluation
FIP	Family Investment Plan
FRM	Feedback and Resolution Mechanism
FNG	Farmer Nutrition Group
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GOL	Government of Lao
GPAR	Governance Public Administration Reform
HANSA	Health and Nutrition Services Access Project
HGNDP	Health Governance and Community-Driven Development Project
HH	Household(s)
HR	Human Resource
HNG	Home Nutrition Garden
IE	Internal Evaluation
IEC	Information, Education, Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IFR	Interim Un-Audited Financial Report
KBF	Kum Ban Facilitator
KDPs	Kum Ban Development Plans

KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LAK	Lao LAK (Lao Currency)
IC	Individual Consultant
IDA	International Development Agency
ISM	Implementation Support Mission
LBD	Luangprabang Buffalo Diary
LFN	Lao Farmer Network
LN	Livelihood and Nutrition
LWU	Lao Women Union
LYG	Livelihood Young Graduate
LYU	Lao Youth Union
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MIP	Micro Investment Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MNS	Minutes
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Multimedia & Technology Solution Sole Limited
NCD	Nutrition and Community Development
NCI	Nutrition Convergence Initiative
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NCRDPE	National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPL	Non-Performance Loan
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NRDS	National Rural Development Strategy
NYG	Nutrition Young Graduate
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAFO	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office
PDO	Project Development Objective
PG	Producer Group
PGG	Producer Group Grant
PRF	Poverty Reduction Fund
PRF I	Poverty Reduction Fund Project I (2003 – 2011)
PRF II	Poverty Reduction Fund Project II (2012 – 2016)
PRF III	Poverty Reduction Fund Project III (2017 – 2019)
PRF III AF	Poverty Reduction Fund Project III Additional Financing (2020-2024)
POM	Project Operational Manual
PPSD	Project Procurement Strategy Development
PPM	Participatory Planning Manual
PM	Prime Minister
PMT	Project Management Team
QC	Quality Control

QAA	Quality Assurance Advisor
RMG	Road Maintenance Group
RRPM	Reduction Rural Poverty and Malnutrition Project
SDA	Sub-Project Damage Assessment
SBCC	Social Behavior Community Change
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SHGs	Self Help Groups
SPs	Sub-projects
#SP	Number of sub-projects
SWSSHP	Scaling-up Water-supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Project
TOT	Training of Trainers
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VDP	Village Development Plan
VFRC	Village Feedback and Resolution Committee
VO	Village Organization
VHV	Village Health Volunteer
VIT	Village Implementation Team
VMC	Village Multipurpose Center/ Village Mediation Committee
VSMC	Village SHG Management Committee
WB	World Bank
XDR	Special Drawing Rights
YG	Young Graduates

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the overall progress of works under the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) from January to June 2023, particularly the progress of work based on the agreed action of midterm review, and also the work plan in the second half of 2023. The progress of overall work in each component can be highlighted below:

Component1: Community Développement Sub-Grants: Progress of work in the 1st batch village, a total of 173 Sub-projects (SPs) had been implemented (in 173 out of 231 villages), in which 97 SPs are road access and small bridge renovation to agriculture areas, 47 SPs about basic infrastructure to support agriculture productivity, including irrigation systems, weir renovation, barbed wire fence; and lastly 29 SPs are about water supply for livelihood and nutrition activities, including gravity fed-system rehabilitation, and water tank/reservoir construction which would support the livelihood and nutrition activities. Due to the capacity of the available budget as agreed in June 2022, less than 58 villages in the 1st batch will also get at least one SP and expect to be done by the end of 2023. The CFA had been applied for non-high technical standard implementation, which has provided the optimal suit for a poor community to raise their living quality and benefit to all communities, particularly for the poor families to get the opportunity to work and earn income.

For the 2nd batch village at least 238 SPs are planned to be implemented, according to the recommendation suggested in MTR (February 2023). To ensure that the supporting sub-projects link with livelihood productivity, the World Bank requested the team to recheck the VDP of all 2nd batch village, which had been done in May 2023, following with the district meeting in June 2023, with a total of 296 SPs had selected at the district meeting. The survey design should be during July-September 2023, and then the construction work should start by the end of 2023 to March 2024, followed by operation and maintenance training before handing over.

Livelihood and Nutrition Development

By the end of June 2023, a total of 2,053 active SHGs, were 972 in the 1st batch, 1,053 SHGs in the 2nd batch, and 28 SHGs that the community set up by themselves in the 1st batch village. Total of 26,291 SHG members, 12,600 members of 1st batch, and 13,691 members (12,693 women) of 2nd batch. During this reporting period, PRF focused on the implementation of the livelihood activity, particularly, the SHG initial assessment before the seed grant would be allocated to the VSMC bank account.

At the community level, to ensure the sustainability of work after handing over to the community, up to date, a total of 2,511 VSMC members (1,352 in the 1st batch and 1,159 in the 2nd batch) in all target villages that received livelihood support by PRF (June 2023), out of which 2,011 members are women (which is 80.88% of total VSMC members (target 65%). These VSMC members are key community resource persons to handle the work after ending PRF, thus, to ensure the sustainability of work it is required to have a quality VSMC and support from the local government. The team prepared the exit strategy for the 1st batch village before handing over activities to the community and local authorities.

By June 2023, a total of 19,045 loans were taken (times) with a total budget of LAK 49,66 billion with repayment of LAK17,20 billion (34.64%). Looking at the loans taken by type, 12,241 loans for animal raising (64.3%); 3,712 loans for cropping (16.97%); 1381 loans for handicrafts (7.3%); 1,091

loans taken from saving for the emergency case of a family (5.7%), 551 for small business (2.9%); and 69 loans taken for other activities (0.4%).

To achieve increased income and employment opportunities for the poor by aggregating their quality products in a demand-driven manner, a total of 47 PGs had been formed (last report in December 2023 only 29 PGs), which includes 15 PGs in Oudomxay, 18 PGs in Xeingkuang, for Phongsaly and Huaphan provinces that just established in 2023 with a total of 14 PGs (7 PGs per each province). The project has provided training to all the PG members and committees on PG management, PG business planning and management, and technical pieces of training on PG-production activities such as weaving and handicraft, pig raising, chicken raising, and goat rearing as well as exchange visit to river weed production group.

The income generation activities promoted under the PRF III AF are pig raising, chicken raising, goat rearing, fish farming, duck raising, weaving and handicrafts, corn cultivation, vegetable production, banana farming, fruit production, ginger cultivation, and petty trading.

To present the outcomes, PRF followed up with the representative of SHG member with a good performance and can be the model family on animal raising based on 1) They got trained in animal raising, 2) can take animal vaccination, 3) can do the standard of animal cages, 4) food preparing for animal raising, 5) Bio-fertilizers; 6) stable income from animal selling, 7) increase meat productivity for household consumption and commercial propose, 8) can be a trainer on the technique of animal raising for another member in the village, etc. During this reporting period, the team also followed up on the good performance of SHG members who took loans for livelihood and income generation. 592 good-performance members can be model families in different activities of livelihood and income generation, 298 models of pig raising, 121 models of poultry raising, 88 models of goat raising, 29 models of fish raising, 26 models of weaving, and 30 models of cropping. After receiving technical training in animal raising, cropping, and others, they can bring the knowledge and skill to continue in their family's investment. They can do animal vaccination, quality standards of animal housing, animal food processing, fertilize processing, and also provide training to other members, they can sell their product and have a stable income, and repay the loan on time.

Farmer Nutrition Groups (FNGs), as of June 2023, a total of 532 FNGs had been established, where 249 FNGs in the 1st batch and 283 FNGs in the 2nd batch village. A total of 32,279 registered members 19,451 in 1st batch and 12,828 in 2nd batch (the last report was only 18,683 members at the end of December 2022), of which 19,718 are active members, of which 8,853 members compared to the report in December 2022 (10,865 active members) because of the extension to the 2nd batch village.

Home Nutrition Garden (HNG), based on the agreement with the Lao Farmer Network (LFN). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, fuel crises, and inflation, CLICK in collaboration with the PRF team was able to deliver all expected outputs including

D1: The completed set of the training curriculum.

D2: Training to model farmers in batch 2 village (3 people per target village).

D3: Training and follow-up visits at the village level.

D4: Refreshing training to selected model farmers at the district level.

D5: Lesson learns workshop at the provincial level.

By the end of June 2023, there were 4,809 active nutrition home gardens, an accumulated number of home garden visits at 5.727 times, with the model farmers trained with a good performance of 5,705 people in the reporting period.

Multi-media Peer Learning (MMPL), video creation is one of the essential supporting activities to lead to behavior change for FNG members and the community. As of June 2023, the training on video creation has completely been conducted in the 2nd batch village, a total of 870 clips have been produced by community volunteers and there are FNG members of 593,659 watched these clips around 8,778 times which will lead to behavior changes for FNG members to consume more nutrient food in the community of the second batch villages.

Goat Dairy, PRF has been partnering with Laos Buffalo Dairy (LBD) – to pilot the goat dairy activity “MILK-COOK- EAT”. During this reporting period, the target member could produce at least 32.9 liters of goat milk in Namor and Kham districts, this amount we counted that the member took during the cooking session of the nutrition activity. Based on the experience of this pilot activity, it is one of the activities of PRF that used to present during the field mission of convergence projects and others including the Government field visit.

PRF III AF is a part of the Convergence programme, during this reporting period, the representative of PRF participated in several NC meetings on the WB multi-sector nutrition convergence (MSNCA). Particularly after the MTR which was led by MPI such as the 1st Quarterly meeting, Village Nutrition Day event, Field visit in Kham district, Xiengkhouang province, technical discussion meeting, and others.

Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS): According to the recommendation in MTR, during this reporting period, the update of ESS to the environmental and social framework (ESF), the safeguard experts had updated all documents related to this task that would apply for the less of PRFIII AF and also for the CLEAR project, the training for focal staff was done in early May 2023. Then the TOT training for local staff was organized in June 2023, which would apply to 2nd batch village.

Grievance System: The system and mechanism had been developed in the PRF’s database system, where local people and YGs could provide data and information about the feedback. However, during the MTR period, the mission noticed that the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) was not well utilized since no one seemed to complain, often villagers were waiting only for the PRF staff to visit rather than using existing communication techniques. In addition, the BA evaluation in early 2023 found that the awareness of the grievance redress mechanism needs attention as the majority of the beneficiaries are not aware of the grievance mechanism (70.5%). To deal with the situation, the PRF team conducted refreshing training about this system and data flow for the staff, particularly at the district and village level, to ensure they can provide appropriate data and any complaints that occurred during the project implementation with reasonable solutions.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI): As mentioned the GESI of PRF is mainstream to all project activities, to ensure that women and ethnicity (non-Lao-Tai) have equity to participate, and benefit from project activity. Including participating in decision-making at SHG, FNG, VDP, VIT, VSMC, etc.

Training and Capacity Building: In the first half of 2023 and also the MTR’s recommendation, focused on extending the activity to 2nd batch village by providing different training to local staff and also the community. This includes the setting up of VSMC so that they can help to mobilize the work at the village

level, followed by training on the environmental and social framework for staff at each level that would also apply for CLEAR. For the construction at the 1st batch village, the team focused on the Operation and Maintenance Training for all 173 SPs and handed it over to the local authority.

Financial Status: The annual budget of US\$10,883,000 for 2023, as of June 2023, PRF has spent US\$ 3,942,972 for IDA65060 including US\$ 258,698 to support sub-projects and village planning (7%), the huge amount of budget will be spent for CFA-constructed sub-projects after getting approval and starting implementation. US\$ 332,261 was disbursed for the local capacity building (47%). US\$ 388,876 was used for project management activities (55%) and US\$ 2,963,137 supported Livelihood and Nutrition activities (52%).

Procurement: From January to June 2023, the procurement team completed some key works as agreed in MTR, including the procurement of goods, works, and non-consulting services at the Central Office; procurement of consulting services at the Central Office; and also complete all document check with Village Procurement Team about sub-projects construction in the 1st batch village, while some activities will be going on the second half of 2023.

Monitoring and Evaluation: In referring to the comment in MTR, the team provided refreshing training on MIS for the staff at different levels, the database orientation for central staff was organized in early April 2023, and participants from each division and unit participated in the session, following with the training for local staff on data checking in the database system before clicking to approve to the system. This is very important for project management to ensure that each team understands how to use the system and how to check data and follow up on the outcomes of their activities based on data that is available in the system.

During this reporting period, there are some evaluations were done, including the **Beneficiary's Satisfactory Evaluation** which confirmed that the majority of the beneficiary respondents are satisfied with the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF. 37.2% of the beneficiary respondents are highly satisfied and 55.4 % are satisfied, which results in an overall satisfaction of 92.7%, one of the constraints about VDP mentioned in the report is the difficulty for the non-Lao speaking groups, especially the women to clearly understand the messages at the meeting and thus they have lack of confidence to participate meaningfully in the meetings that they also proposed for solution.

The infrastructure technical assessment carried out by Souphanouvong University at the faculty of civil engineering to evaluate the total of 72 out of 173 SPs in April 2023, confirmed that 93% of construction met the quality standards, and those projects provided positive impacts to improve the living conditions in the poor. To guarantee the quality of construction done by the CFA approach, required close support for quality control from technical specialists and strengthening O&M after handing over activity to the community and local authorities.

Livelihood Assessment by the external consultant: This study confirmed that the implementation of SHG, which had benefited the members to access savings and loans, created additional income and food thus impacting Nutrition. However, to ensure sustainability, it suggested strengthening the capacity of VSMC on financial control and monitoring capacity, especially, when there is no project staff in the village. The same as the PG Evaluation, the consultant stated that PGs have followed a satisfactory process of formation especially since there is strong participation, well-defined governance, and the management is in place. There is a need to improve the scope of market linkage and financial control capacity, etc.

The nutrition assessment is at a satisfactory level. It can create a paradigm shift in social and behavioral change in nutritious food preparation, hygiene, and consumption through communal cooking sessions combined with nutrition information, and home visit to pregnant and lactating mothers. The PRF communal cooking combined with nutrition information sessions visibly led to actual behavior change. This was backed by the testimonies from mothers, village authorities, and family members on better food prepared for children and families. Mothers also pay more attention to child growth and health

Convergence midterm survey: found that the proportion of children consumed 4 or more food groups decreased from 37.5% to 34% due to the impacts of COVID-19, and also the impacts of disasters in different parts of Laos during 2021-2022, which caused to reduce the proportion of productivity income earning of the villager, not only PRF and also other projects under convergence agreed to extend one more year.

Work plan July-December 2023

- Revising the Project Operation Manual (POM) of PRF III AF with one more year extension and budget re-allocation until June 2025.
- Working in the 2nd Batch, including village planning, survey design, social and environmental safeguards, disaster risk management, sub-project construction, and operation and maintenance. Then, we will consider the actual beneficiaries based on the number of complete constructions.
- For the Livelihood: handing over the 1st batch village to the community and local authority together with supporting activities, including VDP, infrastructure, livelihood, and nutrition activities. Then, the team will focus on the 2nd batch village including the activities of SHG, PGs, and the performance evaluation of each activity. To set up the PGs to reach the target of at least 50 PGs with performance progress evaluation.
- For the nutrition activity in the 1st village: continue following up the activities related to behavior change through cooking sessions, home garden visits, and video watching. For the 2nd batch, the village established 283 FNGs in 238 villages and will focus on the activities under FNGs based on lessons learned from the first half of the project.
- PRF continues coordinating with all convergence projects, particularly, the MIS data sharing, planning integration, SBCC, etc. through the meeting and joining working at national, provincial, and district levels.
- Continue to support the preparation of the next steps of the CLEAR and completion of all documents for project implementation.

CHAPTER I: PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 4 northern Provinces, The PRF III AF is a part of the Nutrition Convergence Programme¹, which works together with other projects in the same areas such as RRPM, WASH, and HANSA. The PRF changed from the basic infrastructure improvement oriented to the new livelihood and nutrition elements of the revised objective by i) providing capacity-building assistance to form, nurture, and strengthen Self Help Groups (SHG) and Producers' Groups (PG); and ii) forming and strengthening groups of pregnant women and mothers with children under 2 years old to grow diverse and nutritious foods in their gardens, year-round, and to process and cook food for their own and their children's consumption. That aims to reduce the stunting of children by 20% in the target areas and by 1.75% reduction in stunting nationally.

The Project's objective has been revised to, "improve access to community prioritized basic services, as well as to support the production and consumption of nutritious foods in the Project's targeted poor communities" (Page 32, PAD3134).

Fund Sources

The PRF III AF has a total envelope of US\$ 22,500,000 over a 4 year-implementation (2020-2023). While the main implementation period will be through the end of 2023, some financial work/audits will continue until mid-2024. However, due to the delay of project activity as part of convergence and impacts of COVID-19, during the MTR, to ensure the effectiveness of all convergence projects, the donor and GoL agreed to extend one more year to June 2025. The budget has been allocated in 4 key components as table below:

Table 1: Total budgets for PRF III AF (US\$)

Source of Fund	By Component
International Development Association (IDA), credit	
Component1: Community Development (28%)	6,260,000
Component2: Local and Community Development Capacity Building (5%)	1,210,000
Component3: Project Management (13%)	2,900,000
Component4: Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Development (54%)	12,130,000
Total (US\$)	22,500,000

Source: PRF Financial and Administration Division

Note: At the community level there is a community contribution cost that we counted in kind like the material and labour contribution for the CFA work and others.

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- ¹ HANSA Project and RRPM Project will cover all 878 villages.
 - PRF-III Additional Financing will cover 465 villages and AFN 400 villages with certain number of overlapping villages.
 - Scaling-Up Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (SSWASH) Project will likely to cover 450 villages, depending upon community demand.
 - Target for nutrition convergence is 528 villages which will receive all interventions at full implementation of at least 3 projects.

Adjustment of AF: During the donor supervision mission in early June 2022, the PRF team requested to revise the percentage of sup-project beneficiaries from 75% of total target villages to 100% because of the capacity of the remaining budget for this activity (Component 1). The mission agreed to consider adjusting the requirement in the Project Operation Manual based on the remaining budget and the justification from PRF. However, one criterion still exists in the selection is “No physical resettlement/consolidation of other villages to this village in the last and the next 4 years”. The adjustment will be active in 2nd batch village and 58 villages in 1st batch that did not get infrastructure support in the first half of PRF III AF (2020-2022).

CHAPTER II: ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST RESULTS FRAMEWORK

2.1 Overall Progress of Work of Component 1

By the end of June 2023, all 173 SPs had been implemented and the PRF provided the O&M training to the village O&M committee before handing over those SPs to the community and local authority. All the construction that are not high technical standards would apply the CFA approach such as the renovation of irrigation, wier, channels, small bridges, etc. This provided the optimal suit for a poor community to raise their living quality and benefit all communities, particularly for the poor families to get the opportunity to work and earn income. For the 1st village, only 162 skilled labourers got training and worked in construction, thus, during the MTR was suggested to increase the scale of the skilled worker scheme in the 2nd batch village, where at least 2 laborers per village. These labour would be the community resource person for construction work in their villages.

Based on the experience of the implementation in the 1st batch village, and the implementation of the 2nd batch to ensure that all supporting SPs link to livelihood and nutrition activities, the MTR also suggested confirming the VDP which had been done in May 2023 and the District Coordination and Planning Meeting organized in June 2023, which a total 296 SPs in the list for survey and design, which will start in second half of 2023 for the construction work is expected to start by the end of 2023 and first half of 2024.

2.2. Achievement Against Results Framework

During the MTR in February 2023, the team Finalized the Results Framework restructuring in collaboration with the World Bank team. This aims to capture the reality of the project activity (detailed in Annex 1). So, far, during this reporting period, some indicators have been updated by using the update activities in 2023, which can be highlighted below:

A. Project Development Objectives (PDO)

2.2.1 Direct project beneficiaries

The revised PDO indicator of the target beneficiary of infrastructure improvement is 950,000 people In June 2023, there was no new infrastructure construction 2023, we checked the list of only the new villages with all complete sub-projects in the 1st batch (173 villages), and there are 72 new villages with a total of 34114 people (last report 2022, we counted only 33 villages that complete construction with 17,501 people). So, the updated result for this reporting period is 923,416 beneficiaries (889,302+34,114):

Table 2: Total Beneficiaries including females and ethnicity of PRF III and PRF III AF

Indicator	Baseline (End target PRF III)	Achievement June 2023	Yearly Target	End Target PRF III AF	% Achieved
1) Direct project beneficiaries	690,000 ²	923,416	-	950,000	97.20%
2) Female beneficiaries (%)	50%	49.10%	50%	50%	98.20%
3) Ethnic beneficiaries (%)	70%	83.7% ³	70%	70%	119.57%

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division 2022

Remark: To ensure the unduplicated counting, PRF used the village ID code to check, from 2012-2019 (Period of PRF II and PRF III), and 2020-2022 (Period of PRF III AF).

For the annual basic beneficiaries of PRF III AF, for the infrastructure improvement, we still based on data from 1st batch, because no new construction in 2nd batch (This reporting period). There are updated data on livelihood and nutrition. For livelihood, a total of 26,291 SHG members (the last report was only 19,108 members), 12,600 in 1st batch, and 13,691 in the 2nd batch), and a total of 32,279 FNG members who registered in 1st village (19,451 members) and 2nd batch villages (12,828 members). For the producer group, there are 393 PG members from 33 PGs (This counted only PGs that received the budget and started operating in 1st batch village). The beneficiaries of the mentioned activities can be detailed below:

Table 3: Number of beneficiaries in PRF III AF in 2022

Beneficiaries	Total	Phongsaly	Oudomxay	Huaphanh	Xiengkhuang
Infrastructure	76,343	22,065	8,969	21,570	23,739
PG	393	0	142	0	251
SHG	26,291	9,500	2296	7,261	7,234
Nutrition	32,279	9,153	3,654	10,263	9,209
Total 2023	135,306	40,718	15,061	39,094	40,433
Total 2022	122,671	36,846	13,642	35,937	36,246
% increased compared to 2022	10.30%	10.51%	10.40%	8.78%	11.55%

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division, June 2023

In addition, accumulated beneficiaries of PRF, particularly from the PRF III, we can check only new villages that have never received any support from previous PRF (2012-2021). For other beneficiaries from other activities: livelihood, PG, and FNG can be based on the registered member and participation in the project activities in each period. Overall, over 10% increase in beneficiaries compared with the last report.

2.2.2 Female Beneficiaries (Percentage)

For this PDO indicator, we used the cumulative number of female beneficiaries which included 173 SPs at PRF III AF, which is 49.10 % (table2), a bit lower than the target of 50%, it depends on the proportion of the population in those target villages.

² The endline target of PRF III's beneficiaries is 690,000 (achievement 889,302 which include 2 years extension data) while the end target of the PRF III AF (until June 2024) is 876,700, due to many new villages in this period, so, this indicator proposed at least 950,000 beneficiaries (with one year extension to June 2025).

³ We used accumulative data from 2017-2022 for all SPs, for 2022 under AF, we used the estimated number based on actual complete sub-project, last mission we used the estimate number (84.5% replaced by 84.9%).

Under PRF III AF, the percentage of change of beneficiary of women in those 4 provinces, while presented at 13.71%, increased by comparing to 2022, we can justify by project activities in the table below:

Table 4: Female beneficiaries of PRF III AF

Beneficiaries	Total	Phongsaly	Oudomxay	Huaphanh	Xiengkhuang
Infrastructure	37,339	10,916	4,416	10,535	11,472
PG	334	-	92	-	242
SHG Female	24,159	8,452	2225	6,892	6,590
Nutrition	25,130	7,094	2,943	7,951	7,142
Total 2023	86,962	26,462	9,676	25,378	25,446
Total 2022	76,476	23,187	8,349	22,692	22,248
% increased compared to 2023	13.71%	14.12%	15.89%	11.84%	14.37%

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division, June 2023

2.2.3 Ethnic Beneficiaries (Percentage)

As above this PDO indicator, we also used the cumulative number of ethnic beneficiaries (2017-2023). Table 2 above, which is 83.7% which is 19.57% higher than the target (70%). During this reporting period, we rechecked all data in 1st batch village received 173 SPs located in 173 villages, the total number of ethnic beneficiaries is 53,310 out of 76,343 beneficiaries equivalent to only 70 % for only infrastructure, while the percentage of ethnic beneficiaries on other activities component (PGs, SHGs, & FNGs) can justify by project activities as the table below:

Beneficiaries	Total	Phongsaly	Oudomxay	Huaphanh	Xiengkhuang
Infrastructure	53,310	17,166	6,659	12,369	17,116
PG	95	0	27	0	68
SHG	16,380	7,326	1631	3,423	4,000
Nutrition	22,787	7,335	2,500	6,460	6,492
Total 2023	92,572	31,827	10,817	22,252	27,676
Total 2022	83,670	27,941	9,535	20,522	24,067
% increased compared to 2023	10.64%	13.91%	13.45%	8.43%	15.00%

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division, June 2023

Notice: In the last report 2020-2022, we reported 63,048 ethnic beneficiaries (Non-Lao-Tai), we rechecked in each village based on 4 ethnic-linguistic groups, while some of the numbers are in the Lao-Tai group (Lao, Tai, Phuthai, Lue, Nyuan, Yang, Sek, and Tai Nuea), so, we got the updated data on 53,310 ethnic beneficiaries, which is the final number for semi-annual report 2023.

2.2.4: % reduction in travel time from agricultural production areas to villages' centers due to road improvements (Percentage).

During this reporting period, there is no new road construction, So, this indicator would be based on the same data as the last report in December 2022. A total of 54 rural road upgrades under PRFIIAF had been completed, and PRF measured the travel time by using the motorcycle as the average of 51.9% of the time reduced compared with before this road project was operated, which is 11.9% exceeded the target.

Outcomes of rural road improvement to access to production areas: The rural road supported not only reduction of the time traveling to production areas, but it is linked between village and market, somehow, the trader got access to production areas and increased income for villagers (Internal assessment 2023). In addition, it is linked with food security, in the past without road access, villager left their product in the production areas because they could not carry out all of their production, and they might get lost or fired that used to occur, after road access, they could bring their product to the village at put the safe place.

2.2.5 % increase in children aged 6–23 months from Farmer Nutrition Group (FNG) households consuming foods from four or more recommended food groups.

This is one indicator that we would get from the Convergence Impact Evaluation (Baseline, Mid-term, and final evaluation). As the results of the Mid-term evaluation done by MPI as the focal for Convergence, found that the proportion of children who consumed 4 or more food groups decreased from 37.5% to 34% due to the impacts of COVID-19 that impact on income earning of the community, which is a reason to extend one more year for some projects under nutrition convergence programme.

2.2.6 Kilograms of animal meat produced (number)

The final year of this indicator that the meat produced should be 5,454,540 kg, As discussed during the MTR, the target was overly ambitious and is being reduced. It is difficult to set a target as it is not known in advance if PGs will be undertaking a livestock activity (instead of the crop). In the first half of 2023, there are 4,524 members took loans for animal raising, with an accumulated number of 12,241 loan takers for this activity, the last report of 7,617 members (December 2022). The major income-generation activities that contribute to meat production, with following activities: 1) pig raising (59.47%), chicken raising (22..25%), goat rearing (9.39%), duck raising (6.03%), fish farming (2.85%), and frog (0.01%). The meat production details are presented below:

Table 5: Kilogram of meats produced 2020- June 2023

Animal Raising	Members	Loan Amount	#Animal	Average Kgs/animal*	Total Kg
Pig raising	7280	20,724,214,000	41,448	40	1,326,350
Chicken raising	2724	5,272,519,000	351,501	1.2	295,261
Goat raising	1149	3,274,823,000	5,458	25	122,806
Duck raising	738	1,306,860,000	87,124	2	121,974
Fish raising	349	1,123,600,000	1,404,500	0.34	382,024
Flog raising	1	1,000,000	1,000	0.25	200
Total	12,241	31,703,016,000			2,248,614

Source: PRF MIS Database, June 2023

The achievement against the target can be seen in the table below, which is 41.22 % in June 2023, the total number of meats produced in June 2023 increased by 25 by comparing the achieved total of Kgs of meat produced in December 2022 (1,800,840Kg).

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target 2022	End Target	% Achieved
# Kgs of animal meat produced	527,219	2,248,614	5,454,540	5,454,540	41.22%

The adaption of this indicator was discussed during the MTR to set the possible target that can be achieved during the project period, based on the trends, which proposed 3,000,000 kg instead of 5,454,540 kg. However, since the project got the one-year extension and we increased the volume of seedgrant from US\$120 to US\$ 200, the amount of meat produced might be higher than proposed in MTR.

Remark: For the animal raising activity, the SHG member would receive training on vaccine taking, The following up of activities in the 1st batch, confirmed that at least 3347 villagers can do animal vaccinations to prevent their animals from disease that increase productivity. Those people also can be facilitators to support and provide training for their communities (Deatiled in Component 4 Section).

B. Intermediate Results Indicators (IRIs)

Component 1: Community Development Sub-grants

2.2.7. % sub-project activities of high technical quality (Percentage)

During March-April 2023, a technical standard assessment was conducted by the Civil Engineering Student from Souphanouvong University. The objective of this assessment is to assess the quality of construction based on the BOQ (Bill Of Quantity) and the material used for construction. A total of 72 out of 173 SPs (under PFF III AF) were selected for this assessment, which included: road access to agricultural areas (40 SPs), irrigation/weir (9 SPs), water for farming (11SPs), and small bridges (2 SPs), it confirmed that 93% of construction met the quality standards, and those projects provided positive impacts to improve the living conditions in the poor. In addition, the quality of construction done by the CFA approach, it was required close support for quality control from technical specialists, and strengthening O&M after handing over activity to the community and local authorities

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
% sub-project activities of high technical quality	85%	93.38%	-	85%	110%

Remark: For the assessment of road access to production areas the team used 43 checklists, water supply for agriculture with 41 checklists, irrigation with 28 checklists, and bridge with 33 checklists. Then they used the average of all sub-projects to measure the quality standard of construction under PRFIIAF at 93.38% against the project target of 85%.

2.2.8 PRF-built infrastructure of a functioning quality (Percentage).

The Technical Standard Assessment was done by Engineer University Student (mentioned in 2.2.7), the team also assessed the functioning quality of each type of sub-project activities, particularly the functioning of road access to production areas, whether those constructions could be used and utilized positive impacts to the beneficiary, for irrigation (weir, canal, irrigation renovation) if those constructions have been operated with sufficient water for productivities, etc. This study confirmed that at least 93.82% of those constructions are functioning.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
The PRF-built infrastructure of a functioning quality	80%	93.82%	80%	80%	117.2%

Remark To ensure the sustainability of construction/renovation work, it suggests having a strong O&M team at the village level, based on the experience of 1st batch village, the O&M team should include the households that got direct beneficiaries from road, irrigation, and also other types of activities. Because those activities support them with increased productivity and family income.

2.2.9 Sub-Project activities implemented by type (number).

There is no new construction activity in the first half of 2023, the team focuses on the preparation for VDP re-confirmed at village level, and completed district planning and coordination meeting, for the second half of 2023, the team will focus on survey design and construction. Therefore, this indicator remains the same number as in 2022 as mentioned in the last report, as detailed below:

Table 6: Number of Sub-projects by sectors 2012-2022

Sectors	Number of Sub-projects				Total	% Sectors
	PRF II (2012-2016)	PRF III (2017-2021)	2012-2021	PRF III AF		
Agriculture	137	132	269	48	317	8.9%
Public Works and Transportation	355	377	732	96	828	23.3%
Water & Sanitation	588	386	974	29	1,003	28.2%
Education	715	512	1,227		1,227	34.5%
Energy and Mining	19	16	35		35	1.0%
Health	116	35	151		151	4.2%
Total	1,930	1,458	3,388	173	3,561	100.0%
Target (After MTR)					3,790	

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division, December 2022

Remark: To measure this indicator, we can base it on the total number from 2012 up to 2022 which is 3,561 SPs which reached 103.5% against a target in 2024 (3,440 SPs). However, during the

MTR period that agreed that all villages of PRF III AF period would receive at least one sub-project, together with the extension period of one more year to June 2025, it was agreed to propose the target at 3,790 SPs. So, can calculate based on the new set target.

Indicator	Baseline 2019	Achievement 2022	Yearly Target	End of Project Target 2024	% Achieved
Sub-Project activities implemented	2,800	3,561	-	3,790	93.95%

Notice: During the period of PRF III AF, PRF only supported the basic infrastructure that was linked to agricultural production such as rural road improvement to access production areas, and water for agriculture (irrigation channels, weir, etc.). Solar water pump for agricultural productivity is a new pilot sub-project that also brings positive impacts on cropping (rice and other) of beneficiaries in target villages.

For public work and transportation: The AF period supported road access to agricultural areas and also the construction of the small bridge can link the village with the productivity side and the local market.

For the Water & Sanitation: The AF supports water for livelihood activity and also for nutrition purposes.

Additionally, according to the field observation of some villages in Samphan district, Phongsaly province, instead of shifting cultivation, we proposed to do a pilot on the “rice terrace”, which is suitable for the areas situated in a valley that offers extraordinarily scenic lookouts over the terraces and surrounding green landscape. This would generate the income, tourist promotion, and green sustainable development of this district.

2.2.10 VIT members that are female (Percentage).

PRF III AF supports Gender Equality in the PRF’s sub-project activities; As mentioned above, there is no new construction during this reporting period, thus, this indicator remains the same result as the last report (December 2022), in the first batch, the implementation of the 173 sub-projects under the PRF III AF, 1,038 VIT members are appointed, out of which 528 are females (50.9%).

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2022	Yearly Target	End of Project Target 2024	% Achieved 2024
% VIT members that are female	31%	50.9%	-	40%	127.25%

Notice: During the period of PRF III AF, the members of VSMCs, who will also work for VIT are women. So, the proportion of women in VIT is higher in comparison with the set target during the project design. The updated result can be added after completing the survey design with the setting up of VIT and also CFA labour.

2.2.11 Number of women selected for RMGs who earn an income, as % of the number of poor households in the village (Percentage).

Percentage of women selected for Road Maintenance Groups earning an income out of the number of poor households in targeted villages. The project's additional financing is not financing any Road Maintenance Group (communities are just trained on O&M). So, this indicator has not appeared in PRF III AF.

2.2.12 Percentage increase in irrigated areas (Hectares).

As mentioned in the last report, we calculated a total of 79 irrigation systems (irrigation construction or renovation, irrigation channel, weir renovation or construction, etc.) for this report where the total irrigated area before is 841.32 Ha, while the areas after is 1256.3 Ha, the hectares irrigated were increased by 49.32% compared between before.

This indicator would be able to update when the new construction in the 2nd batch or the remaining 58 villages in the 1st batch would complete the construction after one year, then the team can evaluate the impact of those infrastructures (6 months or one year later after handing over to community). So, we remain the same result as mentioned in the last report.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2022	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
Percentage increase in irrigated areas	-	49.32%	50%	50%	89.64%

Additionally, the impacts of irrigation or weir renovation/new construction provided positive impacts not only on water for the farm areas but also water for animal raising, adaption for seasoning farming, and multi-cropping in the dry season. That increased community productivity and also income earning.

Component 2: Local and Community Development Capacity Building (6 indicators)

2.2.13 Households in PRF beneficiary villages voting for village priorities (Percentage).

To ensure that all villagers have the right to present their opinion on the village planning and prioritize the right village priority that benefits to their community. So, this indicator, we based on the number of representative(s) from households (HHs) who participated in VDP (at least 75% of representative households in VDP meetings).

In the 1st batch village, as reported in last year's report, a total of 12,248 (86.20%) out of 14,209 HHs participated in voting for the village priorities. Up to June 2023, PRF has completed the VDP in the 2nd batch village, with a total of 22,089 HHs and 18,612 HHs that participated in VDP to vote for their priority. Together (1st and 2nd batches), a total of 30,860 HHs out of 36,824 HHs attended village priority voting under PRF III AF, presented at 85.1% of total HHs participated in voting for village priorities (against target 76%), as a breakdown by province below:

Table 7: HHs participated in village priorities PRF III AF

Province	1st Batch Village			2nd Batch village			PRFIIIAF		
	HH Parti.	Total HHs	% Percent	HH Parti.	Total HHs	% Percent	HH Parti.	Total HHs	%Percent
Huaphanh	3,238	4,159	77.9%	5290	6199	85.3%	8,528	10,358	82.3%
Oudomxay	1,536	1,927	79.7%	2861	3304	86.6%	4,397	5,231	84.1%
Phongsaly	3,412	3,849	88.6%	5325	5909	90.1%	8,737	9,725	89.8%
Xiengkhuang	4,062	4,274	95.0%	5136	6677	76.9%	9,198	10,970	83.8%
Grand Total	12,248	14,209		18,612	22,089		30,860	36,284	
Achievement		86.2%		84.3%			85.1%		
Target		75.0%		75.0%			75.0%		
Exceed		11.2%		9.3%			10.1%		

Source: PRF Database, June 2023, at: www.admin.prfmis.org

To measure the achievement against the target, we used the accumulated number of HHs involved in VDP from 2017 to 2023 in comparison with the total HHs in the target villages that received at least one sub-project. In PRF III and AF (2017-2023), there were 131,484 (87.9%) out of 149,652 households participated in voting for the village priorities, which is 12.9 % higher than the target, as detailed in the table below:

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement	End of Project Target	% Achieved
% PRF beneficiary villages voting for village priorities	75%	87.9 %	75%	117.14%

Remark: This indicator indicates that the AF could encourage a high number of village participation, that the decision-making is from the community and they benefit from the project activity.

2.2.14 Households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF III (Percentage).

In the period of PRFIIIAF, an assessment of the beneficiary village satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF states that the majority of the beneficiary respondents are satisfied with the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF. 37.2% of the beneficiary respondents are highly satisfied and 55.4 % are satisfied, which results in the overall satisfaction of 92.7%. The reason behind this high satisfaction is that their voices and their rights had been acknowledged and responded to by local authorities with a satisfactory solution.

2.2.15 PRF III sub-project prioritized by women (Percentage).

To avoid the powerlessness of women in decision-making at the community level, the separated groups of men and women during VDP, where 3 out of 5 priorities should come from the women group. This will enable vulnerable people's voices to be heard in terms of proposing, prioritizing, and implementing selected infrastructure sub-projects and livelihood and nutrition activities. For this reporting period, we still use the same number for 2022, and the new update will be made when the SPs project in 2nd batch gets approved by the end of 2023. Therefore, the achievement against the target indicator, we can use the accumulated data from 2017 to 2022, in which women were involved in the selection of all SPs that PRF had supported during this period, which is 1,528

out of 1,631 SPs, which is 93.7%., which 3.7% exceed the target. The last update for this indicator will be counted by the end of 2023.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2022	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
Sub-project prioritized by women	90%	93.7%	90%	90%	104.1%

2.2.16 PRF III sub-projects prioritized by ethnic group (Percentage)

By June 2023, PRF had completed the VDP of all target villages in the 2nd batch village, this indicator is used to measure that ethnic groups are adequately consulted with and participate in sub-project planning and implementation and that any negative impacts were avoided, minimized, or mitigated, thus, the project has provided an opportunity for all ethnic groups in the target villages to raise their voices in planning. This indicator is based on the number of ethnic groups that participated in the VDP in each target village that received at least a sub-project from PRF. The table below shows the proportion of ethnic people (Non-Lao-Tai) who participated in the VDP meeting, it seems that the proportion of PRF III AF is lower if compared with PRFIII. The PRF III targeted only the poor and poorest villages with high ethnic people, while in PRF III AF targets all the target villages without the AFN project, thus, there are many non-poor villages targeted, and many villages are only Lao-Tai people. On average 68% of ethnic people participated in voting for their SPs' priorities against the target of 70% (reaching 97.14 % of the final target for AF), as detailed in the table below:

Table 8: Participation of ethnic groups in planning village priorities 2017-2023

Province	PRFIII 2017-2019		PRFIII Extension 2020-2021		PRFIIIAF Participation		2017-2023	
	Total Parti.	Ethnic parti.	Total Parti.	Ethnic parti.	Total Parti.	Ethnic parti.	Total Parti.	Ethnic parti.
Attapeu	4,575	4,326	2,165	2,009			6740	6335
Huaphanh	15,515	8,200			12052	6127	31,431	16,182
Luangnamtha	3,803	3,769	2,368	2,368			6171	6137
Luangprabang	13,258	11,506	6,118	5,339			19376	16845
Oudomxay	15,274	14,538			5536	3683	22,510	19,805
Phongsaly	4,793	4,676			15031	13386	25,286	22,906
Saravane	11,259	9,538	4150	3950			15409	13488
Savannakhet	18,870	16,677	9457	7059			28327	23736
Sekong	3,987	3,847	1219	1156			5206	5003
Xiengkhuang	4,625	3,943			9041	5192	17,466	11,789
Grand Total	95,959	81,020	25,477	21,881	41660	28388	177,922	142,226
Achievement		84.0%		85.9%		68%		80%
Target		70.0%		70%		70%		70%

Source: PRF Monitoring and Evaluation Division, June 2023

To measure this indicator against the final target, we can use the accumulated number of participants from 2017-2023, in which 177,922 out of 142,226 participants from the ethnic group, which is 80% where 10% exceed the target (70%), this is the final number of PRF's period both PRFIII and it AF.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
% SPs prioritized by ethnic group	70%	80%	70%	70%	114.28%

Remark: All villages under PRF III AF would receive at least one sub-project, thus, this is the final data of village planning that we counted the proportion of ethnic people who participated in VDP of PRF III and its AF.

2.2.17 Communities able to plan, implement, and monitor their activities (Number).

During the MRT (February 2023), this indicator will focus on the number of villages that received at least one sub-project, then, they would receive training to prepare Village Development Plans, thus, a community should be accounted for as able to plan, implement and monitor their activities when it has fully completed a planned project with the support of a functional Village Implementation Team (fully functional to monitor activities). Since many new villages would get at least one sub-project, the new target for the final year is 1860 villages (the old one was 1736).

During this reporting period, even, though there was no new construction, the PRF team rechecked all villages in the 1st batch (173 villages that received a sub-project) with completed the construction, and we found that there are 72 new villages out of 173 villages (last report we used 33 villages only the villages that completed the construction). So far, we also used the accumulated number of villages that received at least one sub-project with a total of 1,732 villages (PRFII and PRFIII from 2012-2021). In the period of PRF III AF, we found that 72 out of 173 villages were new villages that received support during this period. Thus, this indicator can count as 1,804 villages (1,732+72), which is 101.67% against the final target of AF.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
Communities able to plan, implement, and monitor their activities	1,450	1,804	-	1,860	96.98%

Component 3: Project Management

2.2.18 Registered grievances that are addressed according to agreed procedures (Percentage)

According to the feedback from MTR, which stated that the GRM is not well utilized since there is no one seems to complain, Often villagers are waiting for PRF staff to visit rather than using different communication techniques. There is a need for more and quicker responses to information needs. To address this issue, the PRF team conducted refresher training on feedback mechanisms to all at different levels, especially local staff and community, about data collection and entering into the system with clear information about all complaints or issues about different activities, including environmental and social impacts caused by the construction of sub-projects activities but almost are small impacts and solved by the community themselves, some of the impacts by the activity of livelihood, nutrition, etc. In the first six months of 2023, the number of

feedbacks increased by 304 cases, while the number of complaints with appropriate solutions with 51 cases higher than in the previous years (only 28 cases).

Table 9: Number of the feedback by year under PRF III AF 2020-2023

	Type of Feedbacks					
YEAR	Propose	Request for fund	Need more information	Compliment	Complaints	Total
2020	5	93	26	7		131
2021	224	64	33	153	13	487
2022	248	70	12	118	15	463
2023	148	28	10	67	51	304
Grand Total	625	255	81	345	79	1,385

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation Division PRF, June 2023

The updated indicator, as the data of June 2023, we counted the number of registered complaints with total responses with a satisfactory agreed process. There are 79 small complaints (just 51 complaints found in 2023 and 28 complaints in 2021 and 2022) that happened in the community that local people and local staff could manage and solve by themselves 100% against 90% of the project target. To get more feedback about project implementation we also requested to have at least two times of village accountability meetings during the sub-project implementation, before the progress of 50% and nearly completion period.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
Registered grievances that are addressed according to agreed procedures	90%	100%	90%	90%	111%

Notice: Even, we found small feedback about complaints because our project supported small activities for the community. The community requested and proposed something else to improve their living condition, instead of complaining about the project activity.

This is an important indicator; it should also capture the accountability and transparency of the project. So, the villagers can report and provide feedback that is useful for their community development. It would request to have a key staff member who works for the safeguard and also works for GRM for data validation and report preparation.

Component 4: Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Development

2.2.19. Individuals using loans from SHGs (Number)

This indicator shows the number of SHG members who took at least one loan upon approval of the PRF III AF Project. Up to June 2023, there are a total of 19,045 loans taken from SHG (The last report was only 10,334), loans from the PRF seedgrant 16,352 members, and member savings (2,693 members). For this indicator, we used the accumulated number of loans taken in PRF III

(at 9,962) and of AF (June 2023), with a total of 29,007 times of loan takers (9,962+19,045) which is 85% against the final target in 2024(For 24,000 members).

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved Yearly target
Individuals using loans from SHGs	9,962	29,007	-	34,000	85 %
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Overall Achievement</i>	<i>Phongsaly</i>	<i>Oudomxay</i>	<i>Huaphanh</i>	<i>Xiengkhuang</i>
2023	19,045	5,032	2,926	6,223	4,864
2022	10,334	3,273	518	4,128	2,415

Notice: As reported in MTR, the total of the individual loan taken increased by 64% due to the increase of seed grants from US\$ 120 to US\$ 200 creating an opportunity for SHG members to get the loan for their livelihood activities, particularly in 2023 (Detail in Component4).

2.2.20. % VSMC members that are female (Percentage).

VSMC plays an important role in supporting and supervising the SHG's activities including financial management, livelihood, and follow-up activities with members, and they would be the village community that can continue the work after ending support from the project staff. During the project period, they received different pieces of training provided to project staff and concerned sectors of the local government. One village should have at least one VSMC, and each VSMC's structure includes 5 leadership positions appointed such as a chairperson and four vice-chairs. The project encourages a high number of women to participate in VSMC. As of June 2023, the proportion of women at 81.2% against the target of 65%, as the breakdown by the province in the table below:

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
%	-	81.2%	-	65%	124.9%
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Overall Achievement</i>	<i>Phongsaly</i>	<i>Oudomxay</i>	<i>Huaphanh</i>	<i>Xiengkhuang</i>
Total	2538	900	229	771	638
Women VSMC	2061	689	221	635	516
%	81.2%	76.6%	96.5%	82.4%	80.9%

Notice: As of June 2023, the above table presents the number of active VSMC in the 1st batch (1,313 members) and the 2nd batch village (1,225 members). Over 62% of VSMC are non-Lao Tai group. Looking at the education level of VSMC, at the primary school level with a total of 1,017 members (40%), a lower secondary school with 882 members (35%), the upper secondary school with 378 members (15%), higher education with 87 members (3%), and non-educated with 174 members (7%). To ensure that the community can manage the financial document about SHGs

in each village, it is necessary to have a person who can read and write, particularly, to record the saving monitoring, loan and repayment monitoring, cash book, bank account monitoring book, VSMC minute book, etc. Somehow, it is challenging for PRF to find the right person in some villages in remote areas, where few literate people, with low compensation if they wait only for the dividend from the interest rate of SHG activities.

2.2.21. The number of Farmer Nutrition Group member households (Number).

As a part of the Nutrition Convergence Programme, PRFIIAF aims to make a behavior change for the target groups on food consumption. Particularly, to increase dietary diversity and the quality of maternal diets, and the diets of children 6-23 months old, and to save time for women that could be used for household production, income generation, and/or child care, innovative technologies will be introduced. This indicator counted the number of households in the target village who are members of FNG and participate in key activities of nutrition, including cooking sessions, home gardening, and multi-media peer learning. By June 2023, a total of 17,309 HHs registered as FNG members against the final target of 14,300 HHs.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved Project target
Number of FNG member households	-	17,309	-	14,300	-
<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Achievement</i>	<i>Phongsaly</i>	<i>Oudomxay</i>	<i>Huaphanh</i>	<i>Xiengkhuang</i>
	17,309	4,940	2,010	5,393	4,966

Remark: The MIS system counted the number of HHs based on the registered mother to FNG member (mother of a Child 6–23-month, pregnant, lactating mother) or head of HHs who are the representative of each HH in the target village. A total of 17,309 HHs (accumulated number) were 10,286 HHs in the 1st batch village, and 7,023 HHs in the 2nd batch village (the number will be updated in the next mission).

2.2.22. SHG members who take at least two loans (Percentage)

This indicator is counted as the percentage of SHG members who have borrowed at least twice from the SHG. This measurement does not require full repayment of the second loan, only the taking of the loan. During the MRT (February 2023), this indicator was proposed to reduce the target that would be based on the trend of individual loans taken (New Target 30%). Up to June 2023, there were 19,045 times of loans taken by 11,071 members (out of a total of 26,291 members), thus, 7,616 members took at least twice loans, which is only 28.85% compared with a total of SHG members.

Indicator	Baseline	Achievement June 2023	Yearly Target	End of Project Target	% Achieved
SHG members who take at least two loans	-	28.96%	-	30%	96.5%

Remarks: The last report was at 24.62% (December 2022), we reported only the loan taken from 1st batch villages. This report uses the data of individual loans taken in 1st and 2nd batch villages, the number 29.85%. The number should be updated before the next mission. If we extend one more year period, the final target should be also updated.

CHAPTER III: PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS BY COMPONENT

COMPONENT 1: SUB-GRANTS AND PLANNING

3.1.1 Community Development and Planning

During January-June 2023, PRF focused on the implementation of the key activities in the 2nd batch villages, by applying the experiences gained from the 1st batch. In this component, PRF had finalized the village development planning (237 VDPs) that other projects can also use, while PRF would be able to support only the sub-project activities that link with agricultural production and nutrition activities.

According to the feedback from MTR, the weakness in the VDPs is the limited scope of infrastructure types selected in 1st batch, due to insufficient information on eligible infrastructure. This explains why a large majority of villages have selected roads to production areas instead of other production facilities. In the 2nd batch village, PRF has listed the catalog of eligible infrastructure types (14 types) with clear clarification that would help the community easily select the relative advantages of small public infrastructure and infrastructure-supporting SHG activities.

3.1.2 Engineering works

Process of sub-project selection for survey design, The screening in 2nd batch was carried out during the VDP at the villages and the district coordination meeting at the district level. The total activities were prioritized at the village meeting (VDP) in 10 districts and 4 provinces.

Types of Activities	Total number
Agriculture and forestry	741
Water and Nutrition	102
Access road to agricultural areas	51
Others	152
Total	1.046

These activities were priorities at the VDP meeting based on the need of the community to reduce the poverty in their villages, The six priorities list of activities was planned at 292 villages with 1.046 activities. The 1.046 activities were taken into account for the District Coordination Planning Meeting, and only 296 sub-projects have been confirmed for survey and design before submitting for NOL. This included 242 SPs in 2nd batch villages and 54 SPs in the 1st batch that did not receive sub-projects in 2021-2022 that will get support in the second half of AF.

3.1.3. Quality Control (QC)

During this reporting period, there was no new construction in 2023, the team focused on following up on some remaining activities of the 1st batch (173 SPs), particularly, the quality check of all

construction using the community labor through the CFA approach and also accompanied the students from faculty of civil engineering at Souphannouong university to supervise the quality of works and also quality check of construction based on technical standard and BOQ.

In addition, the experiences of the 1st batch village, the project provided the opportunity for 2 skilled labour to get training on construction at the vocational school, only for the villages that have CFA-constructed sub-projects, which was the reason only 162 persons received training. In the 2nd batch, the project will appoint at least 2 persons from all target villages to get the training, because those people would be key skilled labour that is utilized for their community development in the soon and long term.

3.1.4. Environmental and Social Safeguards Monitoring

During this reporting period, according to the agreed action of MTR, in cooperation with the Safeguard experts, the safeguard training was organized for PRF staff on the use of safeguard materials or guides based on ESMF documents and different levels of training, including the training of trainers, refresher training, and follow-up, on-the-job training. The training, also covered the topic on the Implement further modifications to the Feedback Mechanism, (Grievance Redress Mechanism - GRM) allowing for better tracking of follow-up actions. The feedback might be from different activities in each component AF that is registered in the system with the progress of the solution.

The training on Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) was organized (by ESF experts) for the key staff at the national and local level, which would apply to 2nd batch village and also for the CLEAR project. Then, the TOR training for local staff was also organized in June 2023, which captured the Safeguard Checklist, DRM, and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Clearance Certificates for all SPs, identifying potential issues and seeking further details as required.

By applying the experiences of 1st batch village, the implementation of the PRF III AF will be completed in a cycle with the following meetings: 1) District Orientation Meeting, 2) The Village Development Planning, 3) The Survey and Design of the Sub-projects, 4) Sub-project's design confirmation meeting, 5) Sub-project Implementation/monitoring, 6) Accountability meeting and 7) Operation and Maintenance training. Each step introduced the ESF and did the screening at the same time. If there is an issue on the subproject implementation, the meeting will screen the second priority. The information and data collection will be based on the sub-project proposal form, before and after the construction of each sub-project. Then, the local staff can do data entry to the database at the FRM section, instead of leaving information in the paper as before, and a full document of each sub-project will be uploaded to the admin of the AF database around the national team can access and monitor.

Therefore, in the 2nd batch village, the screening process was referred to the native and positive list and other ESS tools. The 296 activities list will carry on for survey and design. The survey and design will apply the ESS tools and all data of ESS and technical data, DRM data, and other data will be collected and screened in the design step. The survey and design will start in July and will be at the end of September 2023. The details of the activities screening process in the 2nd village will follow the safeguard report structure as suggested in MTR.

- a) Overview of the infrastructure subprojects that have been identified and in eligible and non-eligible subprojects (a total of 296 sub-projects after survey design).
- b) The number of subprojects were screened and the type of issue faced with the solution (will be entered into the Database system that the team can monitor).
- c) The mitigation measures applied to the subprojects (Environmental and Social Management Plan) (ESMP), Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP), and Pest Management Plan or PMP, etc.),
- d) The Environmental Management Plan developed and implemented for the proposed subprojects,
- e) The number of the subproject required an Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) for implementation, and
- f) Include in the reports an incident and accidental case of staff and community (if any); and

To make sure that we get full information as mentioned above, the PRF team updated the E&S screening and provided the refresher training to local staff so that they will be able to collect information that can be added to progress reports, together with adding key information on issued with the solution to FRM's database for data monitoring and reporting at the national level.

For the 2nd batch village, the activities planned for survey and design consist of the following activities:

- Access road to agriculture area;
- Irrigation;
- Animal fencing;
- Nutrient house;
- Animal food processing house;
- Agriculture market;
- Waving house; and
- River weed processing house.

3.1.5. Social Safeguards Monitoring

During this reporting period, according to the agreed action of MTR, in cooperation with the Safeguard experts, the safeguard training was organized for PRF staff on the use of safeguard materials or guides based on ESMF documents and different levels of training, including the training of trainers, refresher training, and follow-up, on-the-job training. The training also covered the topic on the Implement further modifications to the Feedback Mechanism, (Grievance Redress Mechanism - GRM) allowing for better tracking of follow-up actions. The feedback might be from different activities in each component AF that is registered in the system with the progress of the solution.

During this reporting period, there is no new construction, only the screening process for the sub-project selection. The information on the social safeguard impact can be summarized below:

Table 10: Compensation and Resettlement, Social Safeguard under PRF III AF

No	Descriptions	1 st batch village	2 nd batch village
1	Total target Province	4	4

No	Descriptions	1 st batch village	2 nd batch village
2	Total target District	12	12
3	# Target Village in	231	237
4	# Village Resettlement	3 Villages in the Bountai district 2019 planned to move in because of HPC, in 2023 the GoL did not allow for construction	To be confirmed
5	# Sub-Projects	173	> 285
6	# Village beneficiaries	173	>285
7	# Household beneficiaries	14,310	
8	# Population beneficiaries	76,343	
9	# Female beneficiaries	37,339	
10	# Sub-project effected to Personal Property or Land	0	
11	# HHs were affected	0	
12	# Personal land was affected (m2)	0	
13	# Personal property were affected (#tree)	0	
14	# HHs affected < 5% compared to their holding land	0	
15	# HHs were affected <5% is voluntarily contributed	0	
16	# HHs were affected <5% that they got compensated	0	
17	# HH affected > 5% compared to their land and have compensated	0	
18	# HH affected > 5% and got compensated	0	

Sources: Nutrition and Community Development, June 2023

Remark: Based on the experience of 1st batch village, for social safeguards, it seemed that the issues that occurred during the screening process or survey design were discussed and solved among villagers themselves, particularly, the land contribution and others with small amounts of property impact that were not recorded in the report of district or village level. For 2nd batch village, we requested the team at the village and district level to record all information with a solution that would be useful for project records.

Additionally, the information on the safeguards should be gathered from each step of project activities, including screening, survey design, implementation, and after construction. This is recommended team during safeguards training in each target district. The Sample of Safeguard in the Annex document.

3.1.6 Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

GESI is one of the key project principles of PRF, gender and social inclusion have been mainstreamed in all PRF's activities, with the project targeting that mentioned in the project manual and PAD. For example, the village priorities that should be 3 out of 5 priorities should come from the women group, at least 90% of selected sub-projects should involve women, at least

40% of VIT members should women, 65% of VSMC members should be women, at least 50% of VDP meeting should be women. Social inclusion, is about the involvement of ethnic people (Non-Lao-tai), for The sub-project construction should benefit the ethnic population of at least 70%, and at least 75% of representative households should get for the VDP session to share ideas and vote for priority that would benefit to all community, and at least 70% of sub-projects should be prioritized by ethnic people.

By the end of June 2023, we found the proportion of women in VSMC at 81.2 % (target 65%), 50.09 % of women are involved in VIT 9 (target 40%), at 93.7 % of women are involved in decision-making of sub-project selection (target 90%). The ethnic beneficiaries at 83.7% from infrastructure improvement of PRF from 2017-2023 (target 70%), HHs participated in the voting of VDP at 87.9% (target 75%), etc.

In terms of the project staffing, the project also encouraged women and ethnic staff to work, particularly at the local level. As of June 2023, a total of 199 positions of PRF staff (25 national staff, 4 provincial staff, 40 district staff, and 130 YGs), the number of 82 female staff reached 41.21 % against the overall target of 30%, while 72 ethnic group staffs show 36.18 % of the total staff, the high proportion of female staff from YGs.

On the other hand, encouraging a high number of women to work in rural areas is good, however, the rural road in mountainous areas seems to be difficult to travel for working with a high risk of traveling, thus, we can reconsider the appropriate solution and ensure the safeness of working, particularly, for the YG female.

COMPONENT 2: LOCAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

In the first half of 2023, by using the experience of 1st batch village, PRF completed several pieces of training for the project staff, local government, and target community. The training and meeting activities that link with project capacity building can be summarized below:

3.2.1. PRF staff capacity building

During January-June 2023, according to the feedback from the MTR, some training had been provided to project staff. Aiming to strengthen the capacity of PRF staff at all levels so that they can continue to utilize their skills and knowledge village level.

Environmental and Social Frameworks (ESF) Instruments consultation meeting was organized by ESF experts (March 2023), the participant from different sectors including the key staff from PRF at the national level, representatives from key departments of MAF, MPI, and Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resource, who participated in the meeting and online for local staff.

In May 2023, PRF organized safeguard training for PRF staff at different levels to include training of trainers (trained by the ESF Experts), a total of 55 staff (16 women) from national, provincial, and district levels participated in this important training. By applying new lessons learned from ESF, PRF adapted for existing safeguard document and organized refresher training for local staff as to make sure that all project activities benefited people in all target villages of PRF III AF and also for the CLEAR project.

For the project-specific activities: For the engineering work also provided training for the engineering team on survey design, quality control based on the experience of the 1st batch and feedback from MTR, and refreshing training for finance and procurement work in the 2nd batch of the project. Together with refresher training on livelihood works (SHG and PG), and nutrition activities by using the experience of the 1st batch and feedback of MTR.

For the monitoring and evaluation work, the team provided refreshing training on MIS/database for the staff at different levels (national, provincial, district, and village levels), by focusing on the use of the database with data checking entered before approving the system and also downloading for their report.

3.2.2. Local authorities and community's capacity building

To ensure the sustainability of all construction in 1st batch village, PRF provides O&M training to all target villages that received sub-projects, The selection of the O&M member is from the direct people who benefit from the construction, for example, the O&M team for the road access to production areas, any damage on the road the team could fix and manage themselves maintenance. The training for local authorities and community will be highlighted in each key component of this report.

For the 2nd batch village, after setting up the SHGs and VSMC in each target village, different pieces of training were provided for the community in different modules, including the financial part and technical training on family investment plan. The cross-exchange meeting of VSMC in the 1st and 2nd batch village that they can share experiences that would be utilized in the 2nd half of PRFIIAF.

COMPONENT 3: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

3.3.1 Finance and Administration

3.3.1.2 Budgeting

As per the agreement, the PRF has submitted to the donors the work plan and related budget for the PRF III AF fiscal year 2023 for a total budget of US\$ 10,883,000 as follows:

Component1: Community Development Grants

Component2: Local & Community Development Capacity building

Component3: Project Management

Component4: Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Developments

CLEAR Project: PPA

3.3.1.3 External Audits

The PRF Financial Audit of PRF III and PRF III AF for the fiscal year 2022 (January - December 2022) was conducted in March 2023 which the auditors did not raise any internal control on accountability issues, the financial audit report for FY 2022 has been submitted to the donors on time at the ended of June 2023.

The Final PRF Financial Audit of PRF III of SDC funding from the period January - June 2022 was conducted in September 2022 and the Financial Audit Report was already submitted to the donor at the end of December 2022.

3.3.1.4 Disbursement

As the end of June 2023, the disbursement ratio reached 99% for the IDA credit 5827-LA equivalent 100% due to the conversion exchange rate from XDR to US\$. For IDA credit 65060, the disbursement ratio reached 62% of the total budget PRF III AF. For the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) disbursement rate reached 100% and the SDC disbursement rate reached 100%. For SDC COVID-19 disbursement rate reached 100% and the Government co-financing contribution reached 84% equivalent to 100% since FY2021.

Table 11: PRF III Disbursement (as of June 30, 2023)

Fund Source	Total Budget Allocated (US\$ million)	Disbursement as of June 30th, 2023	Disbursement (Percentage)
WB (IDA credit 5827)	30,000,000	29,712,975	99%
WB (IDA credit 65060)	22,500,000	13,860,137	62%
SDC	18,395,200	18,395,200	100%
SDC COVID19	500,000	500,000	100%
GOL	6,000,000	5,023,050	84%
TOTAL:	<u>77,395,200</u>	<u>67,491,362</u>	<u>87%</u>

Source: PRF FA Division, June 2023

During the reporting period, the PRF project has proceeded withdrawal application (SOE “statement of expenditure) from the donors for a “ total amount of US\$ 29,712,975 from IDA credit 5827; US\$ 13,860,137 from IDA credit 65060; US\$ 18,395,200 from SDC & US\$ 500,000 from SDC COVID19 and US\$ 5,023,050 from Government contribution).

Table 12: Summary of funding received and disbursed as of June 30th, 2023 (US\$)

Fund Source	Fund Received FY 2017-2023	Expenditure FY 2017-2023	Percentage of expenditures
WB (IDA credit 5827)	29,712,975	29,712,975	100%
WB (IDA credit 65060)	15,041,406	13,860,137	92%
SDC	18,395,200	18,395,200	100%
SDC COVID19	500,000	500,000	100%
GOL	5,023,050	5,023,050	100%
TOTAL:	<u>68,672,631</u>	<u>67,491,362</u>	<u>98%</u>

Source: PRF FA Division, June 2023

During the reporting period (January-June 2023), PRF has spent US\$ 3,942,972 for IDA65060 including US\$ 258,698 to support sub-projects and village planning (7%). US\$ 332,261 was disbursed for the local capacity building (47%). US\$ 388,876 was used for project management activities (55%) and US\$ 2,963,137 supported Livelihood and Nutrition activities (52%).

Table 13: Expenditures by component (January- June 2023) in US\$

Description of Component	Budget for 2023	Expenditures to June 30 th , 2023	Percent expended (%)
Community Development Grants	3,798,400	258,698	7%
- Local & Community Development Capacity building - CLEAR Project	708,900	332,261	47%
Project Management	708,800	388,876	55%
Nutrition Enhancing Livelihood Development	5,666,900	2,963,137	52%
TOTAL	<u>10,883,000</u>	<u>3,942,972</u>	<u>36%</u>

Source: PRF FA Division, June 2023

3.3.2 Procurement work

During this period, the Procurement Unit had accomplished the following activities:

A. Procurement of goods works, and non-consulting services at the Central Office.

1. Completed the procurement process of mobile phones, small projectors, small microphones, and small speakers for the community under the Nutrition Community Development division, for which the contract was signed on 16 June 2023 with M&D Resolution Individual Enterprise and the goods are expected to be received at the end of August 2023;
2. Completed the procurement process of nutrition posters printing under the Nutrition Community Development division, for which the contract was signed on 27 January 2023 with Lao Inter Media Printing, and the printing books were received on 3 March 2023.

B. Procurement of consulting services at the Central Office

3. Completed the procurement process of consulting service for conducting the assessment of the performance of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Producer Groups (PGs) under the livelihood division for PRF III AF project through direct selection procurement method and subject to post review by the World Bank for which the contract was signed on 23 January 2023 with Lao Microfinance Association;
4. Conduct the procurement process of consulting service for conducting a small-scale study for assessing the PRF III AF nutrition activities through direct selection procurement method and subject to post review by the World Bank for which the contract was signed on 18 January 2023 with The Solver Laos Sole Co. Ltd.;
5. Conduct the procurement process of consulting service for Beneficiaries' Satisfaction Evaluation through CQS procurement method and subject to post review by the World Bank for which the contract was signed on 23 January 2023 with Lao Consulting Group (LCG).

C. CLEAR Project Preparation

6. Completed prepare the Project Procurement Strategy Development (PPSD) of Community Livelihoods Enhancement and Resilience Project (CLEAR) and submit to the World Bank on 3 May 2023;

7. Completed preparing the 18-month Procurement Plan of Community Livelihoods Enhancement and Resilience Project (CLEAR) and submitted it to the World Bank on 3 May 2023.

D. Sub-projects - implemented by Village Procurement Team

8. District Procurement Assistants assist the Village Procurement Team to filing documents related to the sub-project procurement;
9. District Procurement Assistants assist the Village Procurement Team to monitor the contract management process for the sub-projects.

3.3.3 Human Resources/Staffing

In terms of social inclusion promotion, women and ethnic applicants are always encouraged to apply for all positions advertised by PRF. Particularly, in the remote areas with non-Lao-Tai speaking (ethnic people), we encouraged to recruit the ethnic staff who can communicate in ethnic minority language with villagers which will help the community to understand and fully participate in the project activities. As of June 2023, a total of 199 positions of PRF staff which remains not changed from the last report (25 national staff, 4 provincial staff, 40 district staff, and 130 YGs), several 82 female staff reached 41.21 % against the overall target of 30%, while 72 ethnic group staffs show 36.18 % of the total staff, the high proportion of female staff from YGs.

Table 14: Number of staff in all levels under the AF (June 2023)

Number of PRF III AF IDA Fund Staff				Ethnic Group		
Level	Total staff	Male	Female	Total	Female	% by level
Centre level	25	20	5	1	0	4.00
Provincial level	4	4	0	1	0	25.00
District level	40	28	12	7	1	17.00
Village level	130	65	65	63	27	48.46
Total	199	117	82	72	28	36.18
Percentage	100%	58.79	41.21	36.18	38.89	

Source: PRF Human Resource Unit, June 2023

Remark: The extension of AF to 2nd batch villages with there are some remaining activities in the 1st batch that the YGs should do, to minimize the workload of YGs and they have the full time to support the work in the 2nd batch village, it should prepare well exit/transition strategy and provide training for CRP and concerned sector of district Government that they can help to follow and support the work without YGs in the 1st batch village.

3.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation System

During this reporting period, the overall progress of M&E works was about refresher training on MIS/database systems for key staff at different levels. **For the national team**, the training provided for all technical staff from each division and unit by focusing on the data flow system of each activity that happened at the community level, at least each team would help to check and follow up on the outputs of their work by using the database system.

For local staff (district and village team), we focused on the quality check of data for each component before entering and approving it to the database server that is controlled by the national team.

In addition, there are a few indicators that have been revised and updated with clear clarification about the calculation, proposal, and data source, Please see the updated result framework in Annex 1. Together with following up the outcomes of project assessment, including the beneficiary assessment, livelihood, nutrition, and technical assessments. These assessments provided important information to do better for 2nd and also for CLEAR project.

Reporting system, the team provided training to local staff to prepare the report based on the project input, output, and outcome, which would present the overall results/outcome of the project to the Government, donors, and for publication.

3.3.4.1 Management Information System/Database

According to the feedback from MTR, there are still some constraints related to data entry at the village and district level, which have an impact on data quality, and timeliness and create additional work for the project staff at the national level. To address the issues, the team conducted refresher training for all key staff and provided an opportunity for them to provide feedback on the improvement of the system. The results of the training would confirm that people could enter data with good quality, and the district and provincial teams could do data checking that was entered by YGs before being approved to the system. The team manager of each division also helped to follow up on the data of their activities that appeared in the system.

There are some additional works that PRF also requested the firm to support, that should be easier for the local staff to use the system, and it should link between data entering into the admin system and data that appears on the dashboard. For example: The filter function which is one of the key parts for this time updating, then the staff to select needed data for use purposes, which makes it easier for the project staff to log in to the system and be able to edit data in the areas of their responsibility, and also to download for specific reporting, etc. All data of village, sub-project, Nutrition, Livelihood, Capacity building, and feedback appeared in the database system both in the dashboard and admin system. For fully updated system will be done by October 2023 and would consider this system to apply for the CLEAR project, with qualified staff for the MIS and M&E team.

3.3.4.2 Other works/evaluation

During this reporting period, PRF completed different evaluations done by external consultants, which included the SHG and PG assessment, Nutrition assessment, Beneficiary Assessment, and the infrastructure technical assessment carried out by the final year student of civil engineering. The outcomes of these evaluations would provide experience and lessons learned for the CLEAR Project, and also for the 2nd batch village's implementation.

Beneficiary's Satisfactory Evaluation: This assessment confirmed that the majority of the beneficiary respondents are satisfied with the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF.

37.2% of the beneficiary respondents are highly satisfied and 55.4 % are satisfied, which results in an overall satisfaction of 92.7%, One of the constraints about VDP mentioned in the report is the difficulty for the non-Lao speaking groups, especially the ethnic women to clearly understand the messages at the meeting and thus they have lack of confidence to participate meaningfully in the meetings that they also proposed for solution. About the Grievance mechanism, the firm found that the awareness of the grievance redress mechanism needs attention as the majority of the beneficiaries are not aware of the grievance mechanism (70.5%). Approximately, 78.6% of the female beneficiaries and 53.5% of the male beneficiaries are not aware of it.

Notice of the evaluation firm: Key findings are generated from the individual interviews and focus group discussions with men and women groups. From the interviews, most respondents provided positive feedback and opinions about their satisfaction with the project's participatory village planning process as well as the results of the project interventions. It may be because the beneficiaries were concerned about future support if they provided honest responses on their dissatisfaction with the project. Even though the beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the project, some issues raised during the interviews provided information on what improvement they want to see for the future. For instance, the women raised the issue of the improvement in the ethnic language communication during the meetings, notice of meetings, and timing for the meetings in some areas is not convenient for them (Detail in Final Report of BA).

The infrastructure technical assessment carried out by Souphanouvong University at the faculty of civil engineering to evaluate the total of 72 out of 173 SPs in April 2023, confirmed that 93% of construction met the quality standards, and those projects provided positive impacts to improve the living conditions in the poor. To ensure the quality of construction done by the CFA approach, required close support for quality control from technical specialists, and also strengthening O&M after handing over activity to the community and local authorities. For the road access to production areas 50 out of 78 selected SPs, found that 5 SPs (10%) with some issues that needed to be resolved, particularly, the drainage system and landslide during the rainy season that the constructor should pay attention during the design of this type of sub-project. In addition, the O&M team should also be training with the direct beneficiaries who will continue the maintenance in case of broken and others.

Livelihood Assessment by the external consultant: This study confirmed that the implementation of SHG, which had benefited the members to access savings and loans, created additional income and food thus impacting Nutrition. However, to ensure sustainability, it suggested strengthening the capacity of VSMC on financial control and monitoring capacity, especially, when there are no YGs in the village. The same as the PG Evaluation, the consultant stated that PGs have followed a satisfactory process of formation especially since there is strong participation, well-defined governance, and management is in place. There is a need to improve the scope of market linkage and financial control capacity, etc.

The nutrition assessment. The nutrition activity can create a paradigm shift in social and behavioral change in nutritious food preparation, hygiene, and consumption through communal cooking sessions combined with nutrition information, and home visits to pregnant and lactating mothers (some key findings mentioned in the Nutrition section). The main success factors are: (a)

the key concept of preparing instant formulas for enriched porridge, which save women's time, are easy to digest and make children grow faster, (b) PRF innovative video clubs that spur curiosity and learning through making their own videos and sharing them, (c) intensive training support provided by PRF staff and Nutrition Young Graduates (NYG). About sourcing of food, the most successful were enriching porridge with protein-rich instant fish/frog powder and adding milk to porridge. The diversification of home gardens did not work well, as the crops introduced were not easy to grow and pilot farmers dealt with water shortages. The goat pilots were very successful but their scaling-up is hampered by the low productivity of local goats. The interviews found that food purchasing increases in better-off villages using their earnings from selling maize and livestock and as for the poorer villages, food production increases pairing with NTFPs collection (Detail in Nutrition Assessment Report 2023).

COMPONENT 4: LIVELIHOOD AND NUTRITION

4.1. Livelihood activity

4.1.1. Status of SHGs and PGs

During this reporting period, the team focused on the following outcomes of the 1st batch village and started the activities in the 2nd batch village. A total of 2,053 active SHGs, were 972 in the 1st batch 1,053 SHGs in the 2nd batch, and 28 SHGs that the community set up by themselves in the 1st batch. Total of 26,456 SHG members, 12,617 members of 1st batch, and 13,839 members of 2nd batch. During this reporting period, PRF focused on the implementation of the livelihood activity, particularly, the SHG initial assessment before the seed grant would be allocated to the VSMC bank account. A total of 1053 SHGs had been established with a total of 13,691 members and 12,693 women.

Table 15: Number of SHG and members in 1st and 2nd batch villages

Province	Number of SHGs of 1 st & 2 nd batch			Member of SHGs		
	1st Batch	2nd batch	Total SHG	1st Batch	2nd batch	Total SHG
Huaphanh	270	309	579	3,317	4,008	7,325
Oudomxay	102	95	197	1,118	1,185	2,303
Phongsaly	344	365	709	4,560	5,004	9,564
Xiengkhuang	284	284	568	3,622	3,642	7,264
Grand Total	1,000	1,053	2,053	12,617	13,839	26,456

Source: PRFIIAF Database, June 2023

To ensure the sustainability of work, PRF set the village committee at each that received livelihood through the implementation of SHGs. As June 2023, a total of 2,511 VSMC members (1,352 in the 1st batch and 1,159 in the 2nd batch), out of which 2,011 members are women (which is 80.88% of total VSMC members (target 65%). These VSMC members are key community resource persons to handle the work after ending PRF, thus, to ensure the sustainability of work it is required to have a quality VSMC and support from the local government. The team prepared the exit strategy for the 1st batch village before handing over activities to the community and local authorities.

All 1,352 VSMC members (1st Batch) have strongly engaged in maintaining the bookkeeping and accounting system of SHG Fund and have been able to generate tremendous results of financial performance e.g. 100% repayment of loan and interest from loan-taken members and less than 70% (160 out of 229 villages of 1st batch) and brought interest money for the internal dividend to 7 shares according to by-Law of SHG Fund management. In addition, more than 20% out of 1,352 VSMC members can play the local trainers on bookkeeping and accounting to 1,159 VSMC members in 2nd batch village.

Producer Groups (PGs)

Up to June 2023, a total of 46 PGs had been formed (last report in December 2022 only 29 PGs) with a total of 710 members, which includes 15 PGs in Oudomxay, 18 PGs in Xeingkuang, 6 PGs in Phongsaly and 7 PGs in Huaphan that have just established in 2023. The project has provided training to all the PG members and committees on PG management, PG business planning and management, and technical pieces of training on PG-production activities such as weaving and handicraft, pig raising, chicken raising, and goat rearing as well as exchange visit to river weed production group.

The formation of PGs reached 92 % out of 50 PGs as a newly defined target and 29 PGs have received seed grants of Community Livelihood Investment Plan of USD 3,000 per PG, the total amount of USD 87,000 was disbursed and was used for purchasing production inputs. Since the late quarter of 2022, 14 PGs of La and Namoh received loans from Nayoby Bank (the State Bank) amounting to LAK 1.2 billion, the average size of the loan per member is LAK 15 million that bigger loan size than the size of the SHG seed grants and were invested in production and increased quantity of production. The Nayoby Bank strongly confirmed that PRF's PGs members have been excellently performing the repayment of the interest and principal loan regularly referring to loan contracts and wish to replicate the same collaboration with PRF on the establishment of Producer Groups the PRF districts wherein Nayobay Bank's Branches are operating. The remaining 2 districts will be establishing 2 PGs for each district by August 2023.

Table 16: Number of Producer Groups by Type as of June 2023

No.	PGs Types by District	Total PGs and members			
		# PGs	%	Members	%
1	Native Chicken Production	5	10.86	78	10.98
2	Meat Duck Production	2	4.34	41	57.74
3	Native Pig Production	23	50.00	325	45.77
4	Native Goat Production	3	6.52	25	3.52
5	Fish pond raising	1	2.17	8	1.12
6	Vegetable Production	1	2.17	12	1.69
7	Cattle Production	1	2.17	9	1.26
8	River weed processing	1	2.17	90	12.67

9	Weaving	9	19.56	112	15.77
	Total	46	100	710	100

Source: PRF Livelihood Division June 2023

4.1.2 Loan Taken of SHG Member

By June 2023, a total of 19,045 loans were taken (times) with a total budget of LAK 49,66 billion with repayment of LAK17,20 billion (34.64%). Looking at the loans taken by type, 12,241 loans for animal raising (64.3%); 3,712 loans for cropping (16.97%); 1381 loans for handicrafts (7.3%); 1,091 loans taken from savings for the emergency case of a family (5.7%), 551 for small business (2.9%); and 69 loans taken for other activities (0.4%), as detail in the table below:

Table 17: Loan Taken by main type 2020- June 2023 (unit: LAK)

	Main Activities	# Loans	% Activity	Loan Budget	Loan Repayment
1	Animal Raising	12,241	64.3%	31,703,016,000	13,197,889,000
2	Cropping	3,712	19.5%	11,779,050,000	1,439,160,000
3	Handicraft	1,381	7.3%	2,884,116,000	993,940,000
4	Emergency	1,091	5.7%	984,540,000	629,360,000
5	Small business	551	2.9%	2,179,780,000	812,100,000
6	Other	69	0.4%	137,300,000	133,300,000
	Grand Total	19,045	100.0%	49,667,802,000	17,205,749,000

#Breakdown by year

	Main Activity	2020	2021	2022	June 2023	Grand Total
1	Animal Raising	85	3789	4179	4188	12241
2	Cropping	8	216	629	2859	3712
3	Handicraft	9	515	407	450	1381
4	Small business	1	87	173	290	551
4	Emergency	55	469	367	200	1091
6	Other	1	59	9		69
	Total	159	5135	5764	7987	19045
	Percentage by YEAR	0.8%	27.0%	30.3%	41.9%	100.0%

Source: PRF MIS Database, June 2023

By comparing the number of loans by year, we can see that the number of loans in 2023 was higher than in previous years, due to the increase in the seed grant amount per member (US\$ 80) in the 1st batch, together with the high number of loan repayment (the end of 2022) that allowed the less member got the opportunity to take the loan. With loan allocation in the 2nd batch, the village created more opportunities for loan takers in 2023.

The updated system of MIS creates a session that the team can differentiate between the number of loans in 1st and 2nd batch villages., where 15,895 out of 19,045 loans are in the 1st batch (83.4% of total loans), and 3,150 loans are in 2nd batch villages which just released in 2023, as detail below:

Table 18. A loan is taken breakdown by 1st and 2nd batch villages

Main Activities	1 st Batch Village			2 nd Batch Village		
	# Loans	Loan Amount	Repayment	# Loans	Loan Amount	Repayment
Animal Raising	11,213	27,736,616,000	13,054,749,000	1,028	3,966,400,000	143,140,000
Cropping	1,961	5,513,850,000	1,435,160,000	1,751	6,265,200,000	4,000,000
Handicraft	1,225	2,332,616,000	993,880,000	156	551,500,000	60,000
Emergency	1,016	889,640,000	618,660,000	75	94,900,000	10,700,000
Small business	411	1,579,780,000	769,800,000	140	600,000,000	42,300,000
Other	69	137,300,000	133,300,000			
Total	15,895	38,189,802,000	17,005,549,000	3,150	11,478,000,000	200,200,000

Source: PRF MIS Database, June 2023

In the experience of 1st batch village, the period of loan taken is over 65% for a 12- month period, which seems to be longer and takes time for the less members who are in waiting list for the loan taken due to demands of loans were higher than available seed grants and production period was longer. Thus, in the 2nd batch villages and for the second round of lending, we encourage the SHG members to consider applying the declining repayment of principal loan and interest as well as the short-term period of loan repayment.

Status of loan taken from Seed grant of PRF (Unit: LAK)

	Main Activities	# Loans	% Activity	Loan Budget	Repayment
1	Animal Raising	11,384	69.6%	29,879,574,000	12,214,952,000
2	Cropping	3,370	20.6%	10,997,600,000	1,181,710,000
3	Handicraft	1,125	6.9%	2,592,336,000	825,760,000
4	Small business	453	2.8%	1,935,280,000	675,300,000
5	Other	20	0.1%	53,000,000	49,000,000
	Total	16,352	100%	45,457,790,000	14,946,722,000

Status of loan taken from SHG Saving (Unit: LAK)

	Main Activities	# Loans	% Activity	Loan Budget	Repayment
1	Emergency	1,091	40.5%	984,540,000	629,360,000
2	Animal Raising	857	31.8%	1,823,442,000	982,937,000
3	Cropping	342	12.7%	781,450,000	257,450,000
4	Handicraft	256	9.5%	291,780,000	168,180,000
5	Small business	98	3.6%	244,500,000	136,800,000
6	Other	49	1.8%	84,300,000	84,300,000
	Total	2,693	100.0%	4,210,012,000	2,259,027,000

Source: PRF III AF Database, June 2023

Table 19 Type of Activities loan taken in 2023 (January-June 2023)

	Type of Activities	# Members	Loan Total	Repayment
I	Livestock	4188	14,908,095,000	393,030,000
1	Pig raising	2833	10,585,064,000	278,680,000
2	Chicken raising	676	1,842,548,000	62,000,000

3	Goat raising	384	1,490,873,000	27,350,000
4	Fish raising	103	485,000,000	21,000,000
5	Duck raising	191	503,610,000	4,000,000
6	Flog raising	1	1,000,000	-
II	Cropping	2859	10178000000	30870000
1	Corn cropping	2620	9,188,500,000	28,870,000
2	Vegetable cropping	67	247,500,000	-
3	Rice Cropping	56	330,000,000	-
4	Adlay cropping	50	196,000,000	-
5	Animal grass	46	168,000,000	-
6	Casava cropping	10	15,000,000	2,000,000
7	Ginger cropping	3	15,000,000	-
8	Mushroom	2	7,000,000	-
9	Broom cropping	2	3,000,000	-
10	Banana cropping	1	6,000,000	-
11	Fruit tree cropping	1	1,000,000	-
12	Gallangal cropping	1	1,000,000	-
III	Small trade and Service	289	1,228,200,000	22,300,000
1	Small shop and vending	202	926,600,000	20,000,000
	Small vending	23	128,300,000	2,300,000
2	Small food commercial	62	163,300,000	-
3	Tailor shop	2	10,000,000	-
IV	Handicraft			
1	Weaving	450	1,400,636,000	60,000
V	Emergency	201	327,300,000	34,000,000
1	Sickness	154	272,600,000	31,600,000
2	Child education	25	34,700,000	1,300,000
3	Rice Buying	19	14,900,000	1,100,000
4	funeral ceremony	1	600,000	-
5	Vehicle/Motorbike fixing	2	4,500,000	-
	Total	7,987	28,042,231,000	480,260,000

Source: PRF Database June 2023

In the first half of 2023, a total of 7,987 loan takers for different activities (7,351 loans from seedgrant, and 636 loans from savings), which 7,786 loans for livelihood and income generation activities, 201 loans for family emergency cases taken from the saving budget of the member, which created the opportunity to the poor member could access to finance in the hard situation of their family.

Looking at the livestock activities with a total of 4,191 animal raising activity. Loan takers invested in activities as their potential resources and experiences, to get opportunities for loan taking, they received technical training on animal raising, including vaccination taking, animal food processing, animal house construction, etc. During this reporting period, pig raising remains the highest investment with 2,833 loans (67.6%), followed by chicken raising with 676 loans (16.1%), goat raising 384 loans (9.2%), duck and fish/flog raising with 191 (4.6%) and 104 (2.5%), respectively.

According to the BA 2023, which stated that the main reasons why pig raising and chicken raising are most liked are because they can generate good and satisfactory income, the ability to generate income, and they are familiar with these types of animal raising.

4.1.3 Village SHG Fund Dividend

During this reporting period, the team also focused on the financial performance of 1st batch villages, in terms of dividends, which had proceeded the dividend from net incomes⁴ to more than 12,500 SHG members and the rest of 6 portions. The gross income values LAK 1.36 billion and LAK 61 million is gross expenditures, thus the net income is LAK 1.266 billion from which 50% is divided among all SHG members and the rest 50% is divided into 6 portions including 15% incentive to all VSMC, 5% for the expenditure of management, 10% adding to Seed Grant, 10% reserved for NPL, 5% Social welfare/Nutrition and last 5% for village fund of DRM and development. The average investment return rate from savings with SHG Fund is 40% which is higher than saving accounts of commercial banks.

Table 20: Summary of Dividend Income from Operating SHG Village Funds, June 2023

No.	Districts	# Village SHG Funds	# Village SHG Funds by Dividend Money	Percentage	Details of Incomes LAK		
					Gross Income	Expenditures	Net income for Dividing
1	Saphane	15	14	93,33%	85.626.000	16.444.000	69.182.000
2	Bountai	15	14	93,33%	76.908.000	3.997.000	72.911.000
3	Khua	27	27	100,00%	107.323.500	9.092.000	98.231.500
4	Mai	24	24	100,00%	121.702.000	11.122.000	110.580.000
5	La	5	5	100,00%	30.077.000	930.000	29.147.000
6	Namoh	14	14	100,00%	95.505.500	3.683.500	91.822.000
7	Kham	29	29	100,00%	252.883.914	10.461.000	242.422.914
8	Nonghed	36	36	100,00%	215.649.000	3.668.000	211.981.000
9	Kuan	15	15	100,00%	49.914.500	700.000	49.214.500
10	Huameuang	22	22	100,00%	199.470.000		199.470.000
11	Sone	4	4	100,00%	54.158.000		54.158.000

⁴ The net incomes are the results of gross incomes, mainly from interest repayment, deducting gross expenditure within the 12-month period of fund performance.

12	Samtay	23	23	100,00%	71.156.500	1.723.500	69.433.000
	Total	229	227	99,13%	1.360.373.914	61.821.000	<u>1.298.552.914</u>

Source: PRF Nutrition Division, June 2023

4.1.4 Good performance of SHG members

To present the outcomes, PRF followed up with the representative of SHG member with a good performance and can be the model family on animal raising based on 1) They got trained in animal raising, 2) can take animal vaccination, 3) can do the standard of animal cages, 4) food preparing for animal raising, 5) Bio-fertilizers; 6) stable income from animal selling, 7) increase meat productivity for household consumption and commercial propose, 8) can be a trainer on the technique of animal raising for another member in the village, etc.

During this reporting period, the team also followed up on the good performance of members of SHG who took loans for livelihood and income generation. 592 good-performance members can be model families in different activities of livelihood and income generation, 298 models of pig raising, 121 models of poultry raising, 88 models of goat raising, 29 models of fish raising, 26 models of weaving, and 30 models of cropping. After receiving technical training in animal raising, cropping, and others, they can bring the knowledge and skill to continue in their family's investment. They can do animal vaccination, quality standards of animal housing, animal food processing, fertilize processing, and also provide training to other members, they can sell their product and have a stable income, and repay the loan on time.

Table 21: Good performance of SHG members

District/Activities	Village	Pig Raising	Goat raising	Poultry Raising	Fish raising	Weaving	Cropping	Total
Khua	27	24	8	26	2	1	1	62
May	24	12	10	8	1			31
Samphan	15	11	6	5	2			24
Boun-Tai	15	33	13	11	11	1		69
Pongsaly Total	81	80	37	50	16	2	1	186
Huameuang	22	33	12	5	1	1	0	52
Sone	4	1	1	4	0	1	0	7
Xamtai	23	40	4	12	2	4	3	65
Kuan	15	27	7	11		10	0	55
Huaphan Total	64	101	24	32	3	16	3	179
Namoh	14	10	5	1	7	2		25
La	5	9	3	10				22
Oudomxay Total	19	19	8	11	7	2	0	47
Nonghed	36	55	11	21	0		26	113
Kham	29	43	8	7	3	6	0	67
Xiengkhuang Total	65	98	19	28	3	6	26	180
Total Models	229	298	88	121	29	26	30	592

Source: PRF Nutrition Division, June 2023

Example of the model family: One of the 592 model members is the family of Mrs. Sengdao Daovilay at the Phearlek village, Boun-Tai district, Phongsaly province. She took 1st loan amount

of LAK 3 million, and 2nd loan of LAK 5 million from SHG for poultry raising. The team visited her family in May 2023, she expressed that “ To join a member of SHG she learned how to do animal raising, she can do animal vaccination, build a standard house for the animal, basic animal food processing, and also prepare the organic fertilizer for cropping, she knows on basic financial management about her family income, she can be the local trainer at the village even at the district that can provide basic training to other members within the village or villages nearby. There is the local market to buy or sometimes she can bring to sell in the district market. She earns not only a stable income, but she also has the available animal in her family after repayment total loan to the SHG. During our visit, we also found that she crops multiple -animal raising, for example, pig raising she uses the benefit from poultry selling and pilots other animal raising. From a total of LAK 8 million loans from SHG, she can generate over LAK 31 million with available live animals that can further sell and also family consumption”.

Regarding the technical training on animal raising techniques, one of the highlights of the animal vaccination in 1st batch village, at least 3347 villagers can do animal vaccinations to prevent their animal from disease which increase productivity. They can also provide training to other people within the village and also villages nearby.

Table 22: Number of members who can do animal vaccination in 1st batch villages.

Provinces	Vacinantion training	Actual Testing	Member cando vacine	%
Oudomxay	507	374	374	73.8%
Huaphan	2480	2480	1341	54.1%
Xiengkhuang	2382	1596	1486	62.4%
Phongsaly	230	230	146	63.5%
Total	5599	4680	3347	59.8%

Source: Monitoring and Evaluation Division, June 2023

4.2 Nutrition Work.

During this reporting period, several nutrition activities of PRF III AF had been implemented with good progress. The team focused on the 2nd batch of villages together with the following activities in the 1st batch of villages before handing them over to the community and local authority. The progress of work under this reporting period is highlighted below:

4.2.1 Farmer Nutrition Group Meeting and cooking demonstration.

As of June 2023, a total of 532 FNGs had been established, where 249 FNGs in the 1st batch and 283 FNGs in the 2nd batch village. A total of 32, 279 registered members 19,451 in 1st batch and 12,828 in 2nd batch (the last report was only 18,683 members at the end of December 2022), of which 19,718 are active members, of which 8,853 members higher compared to the report in December 2022 (10,865 active members) because of the extension to the 2nd batch village.

Table 23: Accumulated FNG members up to June 2023

Provinces		Direct Beneficiaries	Indirect Beneficiaries
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	Total Member	Pregnant	lactating mothers	Child aged 6-23 months	Mothers of Child- aged 6-23	Child-aged 0-5 months
Huaphan	10,263	891	576	4,299	3,926	571
Xiengkhuang	9,209	947	455	3,792	3,564	451
Phongsaly	9,153	864	472	3,748	3,604	465
Oudomxay	3,654	375	227	1,423	1,408	221
Grand Total	32,279	3,077	1,730	13,262	12,502	1,708

Table 24: Accumulated the active members up to June 2023

Provinces	Member	Direct Beneficiaries			Indirect Beneficiaries	
		Pregnant	lactating mothers	Child aged 6-23 months	Mothers of Child-aged 6-23	Child-aged 0-5 months
Huaphan	6,167	723	510	2,250	2,172	512
Xiengkhuang	5,651	886	424	1,997	1,921	423
Phongsaly	5,419	694	442	1,936	1,905	442
Oudomxay	2,481	347	209	858	860	207
Grand Total	19,718	2,650	1,585	7,041	6,858	1,584

Source: PRFIIAF Database, June 2023

FNG budgeting, by the end of June 2023, the accumulated budget for supporting FNG cooking activities had been completely transferred a second time for food subsidy to 231 first batch villages, 12 districts, 4 provinces with a total of LAK 342,583,493 and community contribution in terms food and vegetable that members contributed in cooking session in amount LAK 390,326,000.

From January to June 2023, PRF focused on working in 237 villages (2nd batch) and also followed up the work in the 1st batch (231 villages, particularly the cooking session with regular 1-3 times per week. PRF had allocated a total of LAK 2,629,099,400 for nutrition activities, with a community contribution of LAK 92,024,000. For the SBCC with 3,981 meetings with participants of 111,778-time person that included pregnant 15,594 times, lactating mothers 9,949 times, children 6-23 months 37,528 times, for the indirect members, including Child care persons 38,740 times; and children aged 0-5 months 9,967 times. The table below summarizes the outcomes of FNG just period of January-June 2023, and accumulated data of 2020-2022, and 2020-June 2023, respectively.

Table 25: Summary of the outcomes of Nutrition Activities from 2020 to June 2023

No.	FNG Activities	2020-2022	Jan-June 2023	2020-June 2023
1	SBCC meeting with FNG (No of time)	13,787	3,981	17,768
2	FNG member (No of People)	500,139	111,778	611,917
3	Pregnant	69,321	15,594	84,915
4	Lactating	48,690	9,949	58,639
5	Children for 0-5 Month	47,220	9,967	57,187
6	Children for 6-23 Month	187,114	37,528	224,642
7	Children Care taker	186,282	38,740	225,022

8	Total of Expensediture for Childend 0-23 Month	634,012,000	239,767,000	873,779,000
9	Total of Communities Contribution for Children	174,932,000	30,068,000	205,001,000
10	Total of PRF Support for children	459,080,000	209,698,000	668,778,000
11	Total of Expensediture for Food of mother	728,743,000	202,847,000	931,591,000
12	Total of Communities Contribution for mother	123,369,000	61,955,000	185,325,000
13	Total of PRF Support for Mother	605,373,000	140,891,000	746,265,000
14	Pre-mix in Cooking Demonstration	22,075	2,705	24,781
15	Pre-mix takes home	1,728	675	2,403
16	Telling Story	12,545	2,468	15,013
17	Watching VDO	7,226	1,860	9,086
18	New VDO making	606	316	922
19	Family visit/	3,465	2,262	5,727
20	FNG Member of implementing for Home Garden	896	4,809	5,705
21	Goat milk production	-	32,901	32,901

Source: Nutrition and Community Development Division, June 2023

From January to June 2023, a total of 2,705 kg of pre-mix was produced by FNG members, which took home 675 kg to cook for their children. From 2020-2023, the accumulated number of pre-mix 24,721 kg and 2,403 kg that take home to cook for children,

Food from the SHG: During this reporting period, PRF could see the link between the livelihood and nutrition activities, especially the purchase of food from the SHG such as chicken, duck, egg, and and fish to prepare food for mothers and children during the cooking demonstration session, that the money purchased is LAK **16,347,526**

About Food Processing as confirmed by the external assessment: PRF-promoted porridge from pre-mixed dry powder is welcomed by mothers as it saves time and children love it. There is a growing demand for these pre-mixed ingredients and village shopkeepers are becoming interested in opportunities to sell them. Group members are also interested in producing healthy snacks for young school-going children.

4.2.2 Home Nutrition Garden (HNG)

This is one key activity of nutrition under AF, during this reporting period the team supported by LFN tries to complete the following activities:

D1: A completed set of training curriculum

D2: Training to model farmers in batch 2 village (3 people per target village)

D3: Training and follow-up visit at the village level

D4: Refreshing training to selected model farmers at the district level

D5: Lesson learns workshop at the provincial level

Table 26: The outcomes of model farmers under FNG's activity

Name of province	Name district	N: Trained model farmers	N: of successful model farmers	N: of farmers trained by model farmers	N: of successful farmers trained by model farmers
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Xiengkhouang		204	168	1,497	988
	Nonghet	117	100	874	652
	Kham	87	68	623	336
Oudomxay		57	56	511	220
	Namoh	42	41	403	161
	La	15	15	108	59
Hoaphan		195	109	2,195	233
	HoaMueng	69	36	518	55
	Xone	12	8	120	13
	XamTai	69	36	1,020	91
	Kouan	45	29	537	74
Phonsaly		197	162	1,050	691
	Mai	53	47	345	231
	Khoa	71	56	405	303
	Samphan	40	34	150	82
	Boun Tai	33	25	150	75
Total	12 districts	653	495	5,253	2,132

Source: Nutrition and Community Development Division, June 2023

Some Remarks:

- 76% of trained model farmers successfully established the home garden while 41% of farmers trained by the model farmers applied the lessons.
- Successful farmers mean that they plant seeds and seedlings that are provided by the project as suggested by the trainers and result from good yields such as dry season crops, rainy season crops, living fences, and pot gardening.

By the end of June 2023, there were 4,809 active nutrition home gardens, an accumulated number of home garden visits at 5,727 times, with the model farmers trained with a good performance of 5,705 people in the reporting period.

About sourcing of food: The external consultant in early 2023 concluded that “ Among the interventions of the PRF III nutrition program, the most successful were enriching porridge with protein-rich instant fish/frog powder and adding milk to porridge. The diversification of home gardens did not work well, as the crops introduced were not easy to grow and pilot farmers dealt with water shortages. The interviews found that food purchasing increases in better-off villages using their earnings from selling maize and livestock and as for the poorer villages, food production increases pairing with NTFPs collection”.

4.2.2 Multi-media Peer Learning (MMPL).

Video creation is one of the essential supporting activities to lead to behavior change for FNG members and the community. During this reporting period, we encouraged and followed up the MMPL activities with 2460 telling stories; 1,860 video watching; and 316 new videos produced by members who received the training.

A total accumulated number of 922 clips have been produced by community volunteers and there are FNG members of more than 593,659 times of watching which lead to behavior changes for

FNG members to consume more nutrient food in the community of the second batch villages. To ensure that people can access to watch, thus, all clips were posted on Facebook and the homepage of FNGs, and nutritional information to exchange experiences and lessons learned from each other. In addition, WhatsApp groups of FNGs were created and used among themselves to exchange clips and information. Thus, some FNG members had changed their behavior of living factors for instance food consumption and plenty of nutrition which covered 6 main food groups. In addition, the 10 training videos had been completely created for supporting activities to lead to behavior change for FNG members and the community in target villages.

The findings of the external assessment on -Social and Behavior Change Communication, explained that the PRF communal cooking combined with nutrition information sessions visibly led to actual behavior change. This was backed by testimonies from mothers, village authorities, and family members on better food prepared for children and families. Mothers also pay more attention to child growth and health. The main success factors are: (a) the key concept of preparing instant formulas for enriched porridge, which save women's time, are easy to digest, and make children grow faster, (b) PRF innovative video clubs that spur curiosity and learning through making their videos and sharing them, (c) intensive training support provided by PRF staff and Nutrition Young Graduates (NYG).

4.2.3 Goat Dairy Pilot.

This is a pilot activity under PRF III AF, which aims to invest in goat dairy to support the nutrition target of the project which is to increase dietary diversity in child feeds for children 6-23 months of age. The Goat milk activity was implemented in Oudomxay (Namoh and La districts) and Xiengkhuang (Kham district). A total of 106.7 liters of goat milk that produced by selected model farmers, of which 76.8 liters were from the Namoh and La districts and 29.9 liters from the Kham district.

Just the period of January – June 2023, the target member could produce 32.9 liters of goat milk in the Namoh and Kham districts, This amount we counted that the member took during the cooking session of nutrition activity. Based on the experience of this pilot activity, PRF might extend to other districts in AF targeting.

According to the feedback from the nutrition assessment in early 2023, the firm stated that Goat dairy pilots created a new way of consuming milk through pancakes (Oudomxay) and omelets (Xieng Khouang). It confirmed that the goat pilots were very successful but their scaling-up is hampered by the low productivity of local goats.

4.3 Information Education and Communication (IEC)

During the year 2023, PRF has focused on producing various tools and information for disseminating news to the masses as follows:

- ✓ Wrote 65 news stories related to the PRF's activity implementation and disseminated on Facebook, and the PRF website, with 3,300 Like clicks, and 485 shares.
- ✓ Video clips about Ms. Mariam SHERMAN, the World Bank Director for Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR visit and observe the implementations of the activities under the Nutrition Convergence Program supported by World Bank 5 May 2022, Huayla Village, La District, Oudomxay Province

- ✓ Developed community video clips from 12 districts of 4 targeted provinces related to nutrition promotion for children aged 6-23 months and then published them onto PRF YouTube and shared them on PRF Facebook.

CHAPTER IV: SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

4.1. PRF Administrative Board and Government Sector

After the MTR, the 26th PRF Board Meeting was held on February 28, 2023, at Mittaphab Hotel, Xay District, Oudomxay Province, which was chaired by H.E Ph.D. Phet Phomphiphak, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as the chairman of the PRF's administrative board, together with the members of the PRF's board directors committee from the ministries, the deputy provincial governors in the target provinces of PRF, representatives from mass organizations, the responsible committee of the PRF at the central level participated together, the Heads of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry and the PRF at the provincial level in the four target provinces and a representative from the World Bank with a total of 64 participants, 10 women. The objectives are to update the progress of work since the last board meeting, and also the progress of preparation of the CLEAR project which would request agreement during the meeting. Throughout the discussion and exchanges of comments, the meeting has agreed following points:

- 1) Agreed to approve the summary of the evaluation result of the PRF's implementation in 2022 and the work plan in 2023 of the PRF III, with few adaptations based on feedback from the participant.
- 2) Agreed to approve the extension of the PRF III AF's implementation period to one more year, which means that the project will end in June 2025.
- 3) Agreed to approve the components, activities, and criteria to select the target areas (provinces and districts) of the new project named: "Community Livelihood Enhancement and Resilience (CLEAR)".

By the end of the meeting, the chairman had provided some comments as follows:

1. Let the local authorities, especially the PRF's board committee in each province, consider, define plans and allocate projects according to the new priority focal points by the solution of poverty and new rural development according to Decree 348/GoL.
2. Focus on empowering the local people as well as the people who are self-builders to get out of poverty on their own under the encouragement of the local authority and technical support from the PRF and other development partners.
3. Let the PRF continue to improve itself to be stronger, increase the level of coordination with the local authority better, and ensure transparency to guarantee maximum benefit to the people in the target villages.
4. Propose the PRF to bring the main content of this meeting to develop it into a concrete form and cooperate with the team of donors and local levels in planning for the design of the new project according to the direction of the government's policy.
5. Request donors continue to provide financial support in solving poverty in Lao PDR by focusing on the government's set focal points.
6. The next meeting of the PRF Board Meeting may be held at the end of 2023, the exact location and date will be discussed in more detail.

4.2. Donor mission

The mid-term review (MTR) of AF took place from February 13-24, 2023 with field visits organized in Xiengkhouang and Huaphanh provinces. The objectives of the mission are to: i) assess the overall performance of the project against the results framework; ii) monitor the implementation of project activities and the adaptive arrangements made to improve results; iii) identify existing or potential risks that affect the performance and sustainability of the project; iv) assess performance in mainstreaming gender and addressing risks of social exclusion; and iv) define realistic and results-oriented recommendations to support the performance of the project, which could include a project restructuring.

Overall, the project remains on track to achieve its Project Development Objective (PDO) by the current closing date of June 30, 2024, and the progress toward the PDO was rated satisfactory. However, due to the implementation delay during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project requires restructuring and a no-cost extension of 12 months and this was also reported to the Government and agreed upon in the 26th PRF Administrative Board Meeting. There are 46 agreed actions from the MTR have been implemented, with more than 14 actions marked as complete by June 2013.

A virtual mission to follow up on the progress of work (June 21-22, 2023) between the World Bank and PRF, to discuss the following key points:

- ✓ PRF and WB task teams will initiate the project restructuring process and ensure that all necessary steps are taken to obtain approval by August 2023.
- ✓ All assessments must be thoroughly verified to enhance credibility, and the final version should be submitted to the team along with an exclusive summary of the findings and recommendations (The final version was shared by the firm on July 5, 2023).
- ✓ To demonstrate the effectiveness of the project, the exclusive summary of the assessment must be shared with the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). This will serve as evidence of the positive impact the project has had on its intended beneficiaries.
- ✓ The PIM/POM update should be initiated in the coming weeks, with a special focus on the exit strategy, YG selection, loan repayment, CRP, etc. Please refer to the Aide Memoire.
- ✓ In September, the first Knowledge Exchange series of training/workshops for all World Bank-financed projects in MAF will be organized, and PRF will be invited to participate. Further details regarding the event will be discussed soon.
- ✓ It is important to discuss the workload and work conditions of YGs and find the right balance. This will help to ensure that YGs can work efficiently and effectively.
- ✓ The next mission can be in September or October (with a field visit to Phongsaly).

4.3. Cooperation and Partnerships

Partnership and Cooperation with Convergence Program, which was financed by the World Bank, PRF attended different meetings (quarterly and semi-meetings) under the Nutrition Convergence, where all convergence project task teams (RRPM, HGNDP/HANSA, SWSSHP, and PRF), PMUs, and MPI Coordinators to update the implementation status of each project. During January-June 2023, PRF joined the 1st and 2nd Quarter meetings organized by MPI that allowed all convergence projects to present the progress of work, with achievements, challenges, and lessons learned that can provide more benefit for all beneficiaries in target villages. In the 2nd Quarter Meeting, the

recommendation of the representative from MOF to request each project under convergence to support each other, enhance good coordination, and minimize the time of villagers to participate in the activities of many projects in the same village, suggested to list of activities that each project can work together, it would be able to save the time and budget that would be allocated for other activities.

CHAPTER V: PLANNED ACTIVITIES FROM JULY- DECEMBER 2023

PRF will focus on implementing the work in 2nd Batch village, by utilizing lessons learned from the 1st batch, and ensure high benefit to the community, as detailed in the work plan for each division and unit:

- ✓ PRF continues coordinating with all convergence projects, particularly, planning integration that can be used by other, village score card, MIS exchange, SBCC, etc. through the meeting and joining working at national, provincial, and district levels.
- ✓ Highlight the project outcomes evaluation (internal and external evaluation) that would be evident to show with Government about the project achievement, challenges, and lessons learned that would be also useful for the CLEAR project.
- ✓ Perform the tasks as the recommendation of the PRF Board mentioned in the 26th Board Meeting, and perform the tasks in the agreed action of MTR.

Different tasks that project management team from different division and unit has to do, as highlighted below:

5.1. Finance and Administration Plan

- ✓ VIT training on Finance and Procurement to communities and district staff for 2nd batch villages.
- ✓ PRF staff refresher training Provincial and District FA & Microfinance.
- ✓ Supporting Services (Staff performance review and renewal contract).
- ✓ Equipment (procurement process).
- ✓ Works (office maintenance).
- ✓ Preparation report of the Annual budget and expenditure progress and variance of 2022.
- ✓ Submission of Interim unaudited financial report (IFR) for the period (Jan – Mar 2023) to the donors (WB) by May 15, 2023, period (April – June 2023) to the donors (WB) by Jul 15, 2023; period (Jul – Sept 2023) to the donors (WB) by Nov 15, 2023; and period (October – December 2023) to the donors (WB) by Feb 15, 2024;
- ✓ PRF FA at the central level plans to complete transfer 1st and 2nd installment of CFA sub-projects of Batch I during June-July 2023 and Plans to complete transfer 1st installment of 2nd Batch during November-December 2023.
- ✓ Preparation of Annual budget and work plan of FY2023-2024.
- Preparation the PRFIII AF replenishment document for IDA 6506
- Preparation Financial statement and supporting documents for External audit and FY2022 and FY2023 for PRFIII AF.
- PRF FA/FM central office supervision to the target area twice a year.
- Preparation of PRF Board meeting.
- Preparation of CLEAR Project.

5.2. Procurement and Human Resource

- ✓ Continue to revise the Project Procurement Strategy Development (PPSD) under the CLEAR project.
- ✓ Conduct the procurement process for goods and consultant services as mentioned in the PRF III AF Procurement Plan.
- ✓ Continue following up on the works of the agreed action of the PRF III AF and CLEAR project.

5.3. Human Resource

- ✓ Following the performance of staff working in 4 AF provinces.
- ✓ Staff performance evaluation and capacity building support.

5.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- ✓ Following up the functioning of the Database System, to ensure that all key data of AF's activities are entered into the system can report on time with a good quality of data.
- ✓ Continue monitoring the MIS system with PRF staff at provincial, district, and village levels to ensure all data entry is properly correct and informative in the system and other people can access it easily.
- ✓ Continue to work closely with the M&E focal point persons for M&E issues coordination in the PRF at different levels.
- ✓ Follow up the implementation and the status of the sub-project at the district with their outcomes with concerned sectors in the 4 provinces to update some indicators for the year 2023.
- ✓ Continue to provide training on the FRM, especially the data of grievances that should be entered into the system, and report writing on the feedback.
- ✓ Following up the outcomes of project activities in each component at the community level
- ✓ **For CLEAR:**
 - Support key data for the preparation of CLEAR and other tasks, Results frameworks,
 - Propose for the dataset/form that would use for the MIS development for CLEAR.

5.5. Agriculture and Livelihood work

- ✓ For the Livelihood: Continue following the progress of work in the 1st batch village until Dec 2023.
- ✓ Provide intensive technical support on livelihood activities of SHG members in 236 villages of 2nd batch village.
- ✓ Following up on technical support and management established 50 PGs as the amended final target of the project, with a performance progress evaluation.
- ✓ Provision bookkeeping and accounting skills to 234 villages with mobilization of VSMC
- ✓ Continuing the Capacity Building on 4 modules to SHG and VSMC
- ✓ Follow up the Seed Grants Provision to remaining 130 Villages.
- ✓ Training to CRP on Technical Production and starting performance in Batch one villages

5.6. Nutrition and Community Development Work

- ✓ Continue conducting the SBCC meetings and cooking demonstrations 2 times per month for the 1st batch villages and 4 times per month for the 2nd batch village
- ✓ Handing over activities of 1st batch village to community and local authority as base to exit

strategy of the project.

- ✓ For the 2nd batch, village will focus on the activities under FNGs based on lessons learned from the first half of the project.
- ✓ Continue the home visit activity in the 1st and 2nd batch village
- ✓ Coordinate with LFN to conduct the training of trainer on HNG, and piloting 2 shade house per district for planting wet season crops.
- ✓ Provide training of Trainer (ToT) on MMPL by CLICK for district nutrition officers , NYGs and district LYU, then trainers will train to village VDO team of the 2nd batch villages
- ✓ PRF will translate the audio clips of PRF's supported crops into local languages using the NYGs and their linguistic talents
- ✓ Roll-out goat dairy activity to Huaphanh & Phongsaly province
- ✓ Launch incentive-based payments for HNG and goat dairy model farmers
- ✓ Conduct the community nutrition meetings in all targeted villages.
- ✓ Perform social impact screening related to infrastructure activities to be implemented in the 2nd batch villages

5.7. Community Engineering and community development

- ✓ Conduct survey and design in 2nd batch village for all villages of AF, at least 296 SPs.
- ✓ Submit the list of SPs for NOL before starting the construction.
- ✓ VIT training on SP implementation in the 2nd batch village.
- ✓ Provide training on DRM and EMS, including the FRM system.
- ✓ Organize the technical training for CAF labours (at occupation school), who will do construction work at the CFA-constructed sub-projects.
- ✓ Follow up and support the construction work in all target villages.
- ✓ Operation and maintenance training.

Annexes 1-5

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Annex 1: Accumulated data of Result frameworks

		Cumulative Targets Values					End Target YR9 (June 2024)
Indicator Name Project Development Objectives (PDO)	Baseline (2019)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
<i>Direct project beneficiaries (Number)-(Core)</i> <i>Comment: The mission discussed and emphasized the need to account for beneficiaries only when they are receiving the benefits of the project. For example, beneficiaries of sub-projects can only be accounted for when the infrastructure is completed and functional (beneficiaries cannot be accounted for at design stage). It was discussed earlier and need to be implemented consistently. It is essential to reflect the reality in the field.</i>	567,762	690,000					876,700 This proposed at 950,000 as the final year of AF
Actual		866,771	887,138 ^[1]	889,302 ^[2]	906,803	923,416	
<i>Female beneficiaries (Percentage)</i> <i>Same comment as above.</i>	53	50	50	50	50		50
Actual		49.46	49.00	49.00	49.10	49.1	
<i>Ethnic Beneficiaries (Percentage)</i> <i>Same comment as above.</i>	70	70	70	70	70		70
Actual		82.91	85.00	85.10	84.90	83.7	
<i>% reduction in travel time from village center to kumban center due to road improvements</i> <i>Comment: This indicator won't be tracked anymore as the additional financing will focus on roads linking agricultural production areas to villages. In the restructured results framework, it will be replaced by the indicator: % reduction in travel time from agricultural production areas to villages' centers due to road improvements (Percentage). No roads linking agricultural production areas to villages' centers so far has been completed under the additional financing. The mission also discussed and emphasized the need to only report on this indicator when the road is completed and functional.</i>	-		40				40
Actual		46.38	51.70	52.30	51.9	-	
<i>Percentage increase in children 6-23 months old from Farmer Nutrition Group households consuming foods from four or more recommended food groups</i> <i>Comment: This indicator will be captured by nutrition convergence survey, which is under preparation.</i>	37.5%			-	34%		40

Actual				-	-		
Kilograms of animal meat produced (Number)	-		527,219	2,108,877	5,454,540		5,454,540
Actual		312,360 ^[3]		779,020	1,800,840	2,248,614	

Indicator Name	Baseline	Intermediate Targets					End Target
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
% of total project value contributed by the community (Percentage)	11	10					Not reported during the PRF extension and AF period
Actual		7.52	7.37	7.34	7.59	-	
% of sub-project activities of high technical quality (Percentage) <i>Assessment 2022 by External consultant: Overall, 50% of the sub-projects were assessed as Good with 43% assessed as Fair and only a small 7% were Poor.</i> <i>2023 assessment by engineering students of AF SPs, 93.38% of overall SPs met standard quality.</i>	85	85					85
Actual		92			93	93.38	
% of PRF built infrastructure in a functioning quality (Percentage) <i>Comments: Technical Assessment and Outcomes Survey in 2022 (funded by World Bank) found that of the 84 sub-projects, only 7 (8%) were not in operable condition.</i> <i>In 2023, the Civil Engineering Assessment of 72 SPs, found that 93.82 are functioning quality.</i>	80		80				80
Actual		94.98	94.68 ^[4]	94.68	92.00	93.82	
# of sub-projects implemented (Number)	1,426	2,800					3,440 The updated target is 3790

Indicator Name	Baseline	Intermediate Targets					End Target
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Actual		3,099	3,334	3,335	3, 561	No SPs yet	
% of Village Implementation Team (VIT) members that are female (Percentage)			31	-		No SPs yet	40
Actual			33.85	33.80	50.9 ¹	-	
Number of women selected for Road Maintenance Groups who earn an income, as a % of the number of poor households in the village (Percentage) <i>Comments: The methodology to collect the indicator has been updated in 2021 and is now measured regularly by the PMU. Previously it was supposed to be measured only once by an impact evaluation with the Gender Lab, which ended up not measuring exactly this indicator in 2020. The indicator and the methodology of collection will be updated with the restructuring of the RF and the target will also be increased significantly. The indicator will be updated to the Percentage of women selected for Road Maintenance Groups earning an income out of the number of poor households in targeted villages.</i>		8	16	-			<i>There is no financial support in AF, thus, this indicator might not appear. This proposed to drop out in AF.</i>
Actual			15.96	20.40	--		
Increase in hectares of irrigated area (Percentage)		0					50
Actual			49.70	48.40	49.32	-	
% HHs in PRF beneficiary villages voting for village priorities (Percentage)	60	75	75	75	75	75	75
Actual		87.81	91.90	92.7	88.50	87.9	
% of PRF KBs participating in DSEDP process promoting PRF KBPs and/or VDPs (Percentage)	75	75	75	-	-	-	75

¹ This is new indicator of AF, so we will base only under the PRF III AF's coverage, the implementation of the 173 sub-projects under the PRF III AF, 1,038 VIT members are appointed, out of which 528 are females (50.9%).

Indicator Name	Baseline	Intermediate Targets					End Target
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Actual		80.60	80.60	80.60	-		Only PRFIII indicator
% of households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRF III (Percentage) <i>Comments The Donor Super Mission in 2021, recommended that the result achieved and measured in 2018- should not be reported across other years as it was not measured again and would not reflect the current reality, thus, it was advised to conduct an independent satisfaction survey of beneficiaries. This will be able to estimate this indicator, and also to identify ways to improve PRF additional financing by looking at satisfaction beyond planning and future implementation of the CLEAR Project. The first draft outcomes of this evaluation should be able to present the draft report during MTR (By the end of February 2023).</i>	75						80
Actual		95.00			--	92.6	
% of PRF III sub-project prioritized by women (Percentage)	91.00		90.00			-	90.00
Actual		93.00	94.90	93.80	93.70	SPs not yet	
% of PRF III sub-projects prioritized by ethnic group (Percentage)	70.00		70.00		70.00	70.00	70.00
Actual		84.91	88.00	84.70	83.50	80%	
# of communities able to plan, implement, and monitor their activities (Number)	1,124	1,450					1,736
Actual		1,695	1,727 ^[6]	1,732 ^[7]	1,765	No new SPs	
% of registered grievances that are addressed according to agreed procedures (Percentage)	90		90	90	90	90	90
Actual		98.97	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	

Indicator Name	Baseline	Intermediate Targets					End Target
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
# of individuals using loans from SHGs (Number)	4,054				22,000		34,000
Actual		9,962		12,782 ^[8]	20,296	29,007	
% of Village Self-Help Group Management Committee (VSMC) members that are female (Percentage)	0.00						65
Actual		63	90.50 ^[9]	80.81	80.00	81.2	
Number of Farmer Nutrition Group member households (Number)	0.00		7,200	-	-	-	14,300
Actual			5,313 ^[10]	7,223	9,578	17,309	
Percentage of SHG members who take at least two loans (Percentage) <i>Comments: It was also agreed that for the restructuring the target will be lowered as it will be quite difficult to achieve as the number of SHGs who took a first loan has not reached 80%. This indicator was proposed to adjust the final target. Since, the target is too ambitious and was reduced to 30% as discussed and agreed in October 2022</i>	0.00		35.00	35.00	50.00	80.00	80.00
Actual		56.68 ^[11]		--	24.62	28.96	

^[1] We use the number 866,771 people in 2019 and we then added the number of 20,367 beneficiaries in 32 new villages that just received sub-projects in 2020

^[2] In 2021 we based on a number of sub-projects funded by GoL 13 billion LAK to implement 53 sub-projects in 53 villages, 21 districts, 6 provinces. There are only 5 new villages that just received support with 2,164 people. For beneficiaries in 2021=887,138 +2164 = 889,302

^[3] We use the number of kilograms of animal meat produced in 2019. The number of Kilograms of animal meat produced in 2022 (1,201,494 kgs). We used the numbers of livestock from each type times by average kgs cost.

^[4] We follow up on the total number of sub-projects from 2012-2019 with 3,099 sub-projects and there were 165 sub-projects not fully functioning which is 5.3%

[5] Overall, the program works as intended, increasing household welfare during the program. It increases women's earnings and improves household welfare. 18 Another perhaps more important indicator of the impact that was captured by the impact evaluation was the percentage of household regular earners of income. This indicator increased from 2.16% at baseline to 14.4% at the end line.

[6] We use the number of 32 new villages that just received sub-projects in 2020.

[7] Only 5 new villages received sub-project in 2021 in those 6 provinces uncovered by PRFIII AF.

[8] As of November 2021, there are 2,820 new members who took the loan from the Seed grant during the period of PRFIII AF, and the number will be increased when the first loan is allocated to SHG members who requested the first loan (will be updated in the annual report 2021).

[9] This is the data of 3 pilot villages in 2020

[10] In the semi-report 2020, there were 113 FNG members HH in the 3 pilot villages. After the baseline survey was done, 249 FNGs have been set up in 231 villages, 12 districts which included 5,313 FNG member HHs.

[11] We use the number of people taking loans at least two times from SHG in 2019 which is 5,716 members compared to the total of 10,085 members

[12] This data can be updated after first seed grant loan replay and start with new loan.

Annex 2: Sample the Environmental and Social Management Framework Report

1. Overview of the infrastructure sub-projects

PRF III-AF has been implemented in 4 provinces and 12 districts, and there are 10 offices in 10 districts. The type of illegible sub-projects included: Agricultural infrastructure, such as access to production sites, small-scale irrigation, weirs, ponds, canals, gates, spillways, livestock handling facilities, grain storage facilities, fencing, nursery construction, other light structures, etc., but no funding for premises and buildings.

The key staff who is responsible for Safeguards at each target district and the young graduates were trained and worked at the village level. According to the Project Operation Manual (POM), 75% of 231 villages would receive at least one infrastructure, thus, only 173 villages received one SP per village. A total of 1,245 prioritized SPs from 231 villages and only 173 SPs were selected and agreed upon at the district meeting.

2. The number of sub-projects was screened with issues found

There were 173 sub-projects decided at the district meeting in 1st batch, there are 2 out of 173 SPs have been canceled, due to one SP construction site being inside the National Protected Areas and the other one being already funded by the GOL. The replaced sub-projects moved to the 2nd priority, with already properly evaluated on the environmental impact. The screening was carried all sub-projects supported by PRF before implementation construction. And the design step will mitigate the impact on the sub-projects and inform the community to monitor during the construction, and further consultation of the community and sectors.

3. The compliance of ESMF in the PRF III-AF

Each step of project's activity was introduced the ESMF and done the screening at the same time. If there is an issue on the subproject implementation, the meeting will screen the second priority. The full process of works would complete in a cycle with following activities: 1) District Orientation Meeting, 2) The Village Planning, 3) The Survey and Design of the Sub-projects, 4) Sub-project Implementation/monitoring, and 5) Operation and Maintenance training before handing over.

Prior to implementation of the 173 sub-projects under the PRF III AF's funding both technical engineering review and Environmental and Social Safeguards review were conducted to ensure all SPs in Compliance to Environmental and Social Safeguards including accomplishment of Safeguard Checklist, DRM, and obtaining of UXO Clearance Certificates from NRA.

Table 1: Clearance List of sub-projects under 1st batch village

Provinces	Districts	No. of SPs	Certified by Villages authority	Under clearing UXO
Phongsaly	Mai	18	18	0
	Khua	20	20	0
	Samphan	11	11	0
	Boountai	11	11	0
Oudomxay	Lar	4	4	0
	Namor	11	11	0

Huaphan	Kuan	11	12	0
	Xamtai	17	17	0
	Huamueang	17	17	0
	Xone	4	4	0
Xiengkhuang	Nonghaed	27	27	0
	kham	22	22	0
Total:	12	173	173	0

Source: PRF Engineering Division, June 2023

4. The number of sub-projects with ECOP checklist

The monitoring was taken during the construction of 173 sub-projects in 4 provinces, PRF trained the community on the monitoring of the erosion at the construction site and site management. The checklist of ECoP was applied during this monitoring and PRF staff summarized data into the form for each work progress. Some sub-projects have been completed and prepared for training on the operation and maintenance. The following table is a summary of ECoP from each sub-project of the 1st batch villages.

Table 2: Summary of Environmental impacts of construction works in 1st batch village

No.	Type of Impacts	Preliminary mitigation measures Proposed	Solutions during Practice	Sub-Project types	Districts
I. Landslides, soil erosion and excavation					
1	Soil erosion at Crossing Road Pipe Outlet	Build erosion barriers and use bio-engineering by plant erosion-resistant plants.	Plant long-rooted grasses that are easy to find locally, such as Vetiver to prevent landslides.	Spot improvement of Access Road to Productid Area, GFS rehabilitation	Nonghed
2	Soil mass from road spot improvement is dumped into rivers and villagers' production areas.	Machine owners must be careful not to dump Soil mass, Stone, and Waste into rivers and cover production areas.	In areas with high mound masses, machine owners spread the mass over areas with average to low mound masses to prevent soil from sliding into rivers and community production sites.	Spot improvement of Access Road to Productid Area	Mai, Kua, Samphan, Bountay, Namoh, Kham, Nonghed, Kuan, Xamtay, Huameuang and Sone
II. Stone blasting					
1	Blasting rock out of the road alignment	It is advisable not to put in a large number of Dinamites, explode little by little And don't push big rocks down steep banks because it can destroy trees and fill streams. This must also be announced to the community before the explosion and to temporarily close the road until the explosion is over then release the road.	Put in a small number of Dinamites, explode little by little and the community take the blasted rock to the right place laying.	Spot improvement of Access Road to Producted Area	Huameuang, Sone, Bountay and Kuan
III. Tree cutting and watershed forests Protection					
1	Cutting trees along roads, GFS pipes and fence Line	Just only small trees should be cut and necessary cases only	Cut down only small and necessary trees. Depending on the type of sub-project, for example: cutting down trees along a fence line should cut down only small trees.	Barbed Fence, GFS, Spot improvement of Access Road to	Mai, Kua, Samphan, Bountay, La, Namoh, Kham, Nonghed, Kuan,

			For the large trees with a trunk diameter of more than 10 cm should be used to make a fence post.	Producted Area and irrigation system rehabilitation	Samtay, Huameuang and Son
2	The watershed forest above GFS Intake is an agricultural area.	The watershed forest above GFS Intake must be a protected area of at least not less than 1 square kilometer	Because the watershed forest above GFS Intake of Kong Sawi Village is located in the cardamom produced area of LaoPhan Village. The land allocation committee which uthorized by District Governor coordinated with the people of LaoPhan villages by formulating rules not to encroach on watershed forests and the owner of the cardamom plantation does not use pesticides, does not cut down the trees, and does nothing dirty.	GFS	Samphan

IV. Waste water, and sewage

1	Wastewater from drainage system in the GFS Tap platform, chemicals from fabric dyes	The GFS Tap platforms should be repaired and cleaned regularly, the waste water from dyeing should be poured into a sewage pit that is safe from people and animals.	Sewage from the GFS Tap platform is drained to the appropriate and safe place and wastewater from dyeing is poured into the Household wastewater treatment pit	GFS, Weaving Activity	Kham, Namor, Mai, Khua, Nonhed, Samphan, Bountai, and Huameuang
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V. Garbage, construction site waste

1	Construction waste and waste are not removed from the construction site after sub-project completed.	Machine owners/Skill labors must remove debris from the construction site before handover.	Demolition and removal of construction waste as well as cleaning garbage and debris from the construction site before handover	Spot improvement of Access Road to Production Area, Culvert pipe and Agricultural market	Mai, Kua, Samphan, Bountay, La, Namoh, Kham, Nonghed, Kuan, Xamtay, Huameuang and Sone
---	--	--	--	--	--

Source: PRF Engineering Division, June 2023

5. Planning for Safeguard Report in 2nd batch village

In the 2nd batch village, all villages will receive at least one SP because of the capacity of the remaining budget in the first component. Therefore, a total of all sub-projects will be planned and must be assessed for environmental and social impacts according to the prescribed form in early 2023. For the first list of 296 sub-projects that will be used for survey design and then submitting for NOL before starting implementation. Based on recommendation of MTR that required infrastructures link with livelihood and nutrition activities, with 14 updated list of activities, which includes:

1. Rural Road improvement to production areas.
2. Irrigation system construction/renovation
3. Solar water pump for livelihood and nutrition
4. Water Supply for agricultural production
5. Fence Material supply for animal raising
6. Animal food processing place
7. Agricultural production processing house
8. Weaving house construction

9. River Weed Processing House
10. Drying space for agricultural products
11. Green house for vegetable cropping
12. Agriculture Market Construction
13. Storage house for agricultural products
14. Nutrition house

PRF provided training to local staff on data checking and gathering in the period of screening, survey design, implementation, and after. That would provide key information that can add in the safeguards report.

The detail of the activities screening process in the 2nd village will follow the safeguard report structure as suggested in MTR.

- a) Overview of the infrastructure subprojects that have been identified and in eligible and non-eligible subprojects (a total of 296 sub-projects after survey design). This will gather data from the screening process of 1,046 prioritized SPs that agreed to only 296 SPs at the district meeting before moving to the next steps (survey design and implementation), etc.
- b) The number of subprojects were screened and the type of issue faced with solution (will enter to the Database system that the team can monitor).
- c) The mitigation measures applied to the subprojects (Environmental and Social Management Plan) (ESMP), Environmental and Social Code of Practice (ESCOP), and Pest Management Plan (PMP), etc.),
- d) The Environmental Management Plan developed and implemented for the proposed subprojects,
- e) The number of the subproject required an Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) for implementation, and
- f) Include in the reports an incident and accidental case of staff and community (if any).

6. Sample form of safeguards screening for data collection

Poverty Reduction Fund Environmental Evaluation Control Sheet - small sub-projects

I. Initial Environmental Evaluation.

1. Project title / Activity Code: _____

 Name / Location of Village: _____
 District / province: _____
2. Names, Address and phone number of VIT: _____

3. Project description: _____

4. Expected Benefits: _____

5. Number of Beneficiaries:

6. Description of project: (Describe the main sub-Project's activities. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

7. Describe the Sub-Project's main materials and their source

8. Project expected duration (Start / completion dates):

9. Add / draw map of location including potential environmental hazards:

10. Describe the projects surroundings land-uses including potential environmental hazards:

11. Environmental factors Potentially Affected:

The environmental factors graded below would be potentially affected by this sub-project:

C – A little impact and be able to managing.

B – Mild Impacts

A – Significant Impacts

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils and Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials

<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Population / housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> UXO
<input type="checkbox"/> Waste Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Community conservation/National Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other...(Describe).....

12. For any B or A classifications, describe mitigation measures below and complete the relevant ECOP Table 4.1 – 4.5 under A3.2. Attach additional sheets if necessary:

13. Discussion with Contractors about Contraction’s contents(Circle on Yes or No)

Yes

No

Date of discussion: _____

Describe other issues on discussion: _____

II. Mid-term Evaluation

14. Mid-term evaluation (includes date / participants and details of any environmental issues and mitigation)

	Environment checklist	Yes / No	Remarks
1	Compliance with the planned mitigation measures and environmental obligations		
2	Occurrence of notable environmental pollution such as dust, water pollution, noise		
3	Encroachment to natural habitats and physical cultural properties		
4	Improper operation and maintenance of construction equipment, fuels and oils		
5	Occurrence of complaints		
6	Site cleaning while site under construction		
7	Built temporal access roads if necessary		
8	Erosion prevention measures for used borrow pits		
9	Built temporary water flows' diversions or blockages if necessary		
10	UXO clearance certification		

Signed of

For PRF

Head off village

For Contractor

III. Final evaluation

15. Final evaluation: (includes date / participants and details of any environmental issues and mitigation)

	Environment checklist	Yes / No	Remarks
1	Compliance with the planned mitigation measures and environmental obligations		
2	Occurrence of notable environmental pollution such as dust, water pollution, noise		
3	Encroachment to natural habitats and physical cultural properties		
4	Improper operation and maintenance of construction equipment, fuels and oils		
5	Occurrence of complaints		
6	Site cleaning upon completion		
7	Disposal of construction wastes		
8	Removal of temporal access roads upon completion		
9	Erosion prevention measures for used borrow pits		

10	Removal of temporary water flows' diversions or blockages upon completion		
11	Removal of construction camps upon completion		
12	UXO clearance certification		

Signed of

For PRF

Head off village

For Contractor

Annex 3: Progress of agreed action in MTR

	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Status
1	Prepare exit strategy for Batch 1 villages	PRF	May 30, 2023	Ongoing
2	Edit the PIM to incorporate the various points below	PRF	May 30, 2023	Ongoing
3	Review revised PIM including exit strategy	WB team	June 30, 2023	Ongoing
	Community Development Sub-Grants			
4	Create and disseminate a catalog of small infrastructure options	PRF	April 30, 2023	Done
5	Organize a new round of village VDP meetings	PRF	June 30, 2023	Done
6	Increase the scale of the skilled worker scheme in Batch 2 villages	PRF	April 30, 2023	Ongoing
	Capacity Building			
7	Train Young Graduates in methods for coverage of more hamlets in the large villages	PRF	December 31, 2023	Ongoing
8	Organize management of infrastructure user fee through the VSMC	PRF	December 31, 2023	Ongoing
9	Liaise with AFN on animal raising practices, with LFN and/or Helvetas on producer groups	PRF	April 30, 2023	September 2023
10	Adjust training activities for producer groups	PRF	April 30, 2023	Ongoing, pilot in 4 districts of Phongsaly Province,
	Livelihood Activities and Nutrition Activities			

	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Status
11	Rolling out of CRP activities	Livelihood Division	28 April 2023	Starting with CRP provide mentoring to SHG members in their village and VSMC-CRP help LYG in monitoring to VSMC of 2 nd Batch villages.
12	Training of Young Graduates on PG	Livelihood Division	28 April 2023	Done
13	Creation of on-time loan repayment in the dashboard of online MIS	M & E Division	15 April 2023	On going
14	Q & A note for all Nutrition Young Graduates on nutrition together with monthly nutrition pieces of training on specific topics (as part of monthly PRF meetings)	PRF	April 2023	Ongoing
15	Formalize GOL counterpart engagements with LYU, LWU and Nabong/Faculty of Agriculture NUL	PRF	April 2023	Ongoing
16	Contract signed with Click, LFN for phase 2 villages with TOR addressing lesson learned from MTR	PRF	April 2023	Done
17	Pilot communal FNG communal shade houses	PRF/LFN	June 2023	Ongoing June 30, 2023
18	Village nutrition meetings rolled out in all 12 Districts with focus on growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) data and livelihood/nutrition linkages	PRF	June 2023	Ongoing July 2023
19	Nutrition communication plan – incl. GOL advocacy	WB	May 2023	Ongoing
20	Strengthen home visits and partnership with local District Health Office	PRF	May 2023	Ongoing

	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Status
21	Innovative agenda points for quarterly nutrition convergence meeting	PRF/RRPM/WB	May 2023	Ongoing
	Monitoring and Evaluation			
22	Finalize Results Framework restructuring in collaboration with the World Bank team.	PRF	March 30, 2023	Done
23	Finalize independent qualitative evaluations (nutrition, beneficiaries' satisfaction and SHGs)	PRF	March 25, 2023	Done
24	Conduct MIS refresher training of all project staff at national level and provincial level.	PRF	April 15, 2023	Done
25	Identify remaining MIS glitches and issues by collecting user feedback from a sample of local and national users.	PRF	March 20, 2023	Done
26	Identify solutions and potential budget for improving the MIS	PRF	April 30, 2023	June 30, 2023
27	Identify actions necessary for the MIS to be used as a results-based management tool (village, district, provincial and national level).	PRF	June 10, 2023	On going July 31, 2023
28	Update the activity plan and budget to include independent qualitative evaluations (including technical audit of infrastructures) for project closure	PRF	April 25, 2023	Done, to be confirmed with FA on budget
	Financial Management			
29	Submit expenditures forecast up to project closing date using remaining available fund	PRF	By March 31, 2022	Done
30	Submit IFR covering the period from April 1 till June 30, 2022	PRF	By May 15, 2022	Done
31	Submission of the FY21 audit reports and management letter to the Bank	PRF	By June 30, 2022	On going
32	Confirm budget adjustments for the above activities	PRF and WB team	April 30, 2023	Done
	Procurement			
33	Complete the procurement of mobile phone, miniprojector, small microphone, small speakers, and Sim for community	PRF	By Apr, 2023	Signed contract
34	Complete the procurement of ACCPAC Accounting System Software	PRF	By Apr, 2023	Ongoing
34	Complete the selection of Senior Nutrition Officer (replacement)	PRF	By Mar, 2023	Done

	Action	Responsibility	Deadline	Status
35	Complete the selection of consultant to prepare the CLEAR Project Implementation Manual (PIM)	PRF	By May, 2023	Ongoing
36	Complete the selection of consultant to revise the CFA Manual	PRF	By May, 2023	Ongoing
37	Complete the selection of consultant to revise the Nutrition Manual & SBCC	PRF	By May, 2023	October 2023
38	Complete the selection of consultant to revise the Livelihood Manual	PRF	By May, 2023	Ongoing
39	Complete the selection of a consultant to revise VDP Process	PRF	By May, 2023	Ongoing
	Social and Environmental Safeguards			
40	Provide key elements on safeguards monitoring/reporting to PRF to enhance its reporting on safeguard management	World Bank	By March 2023	Ongoing
41	Submit project progress report to include more details on environmental and social (SG) safeguards-related activities.	PRF	By the next progress report	Done in Annex3
42	Document and monitor progress towards addressing barriers of inclusion for ethnic minority groups including increasing the number of LYG/NYG from EM backgrounds, language barriers and building interpersonal skills among vulnerable groups.	PRF at all levels	Routine and part of monitoring reports	Ongoing
43	Provide some samples of voluntary land donation documents to the World Bank for review	PRF social focal point	By May 2023	October 2023
44	Integrate basic information about Feedback and Resolution Mechanism (FRM) into all meetings/consultations with communities and beneficiaries as well as communication materials.	PRF	Ongoing	Done
45	With technical guidance from the Bank's specialists, enhance/update safeguard training materials for PRF staff and provide training to relevant PRF staff/YGs	PRF	Once a safeguarding consultant is mobilized.	Done
46	Organize safeguard training for PRF staff at different levels to include training of trainers, refresher training and follow-up, on-the-job training on the application of SG requirement for PRF III AF, and introduction of ESF requirement under CLEAR project.	PRF	By June 2023	Done

Annex 4: Accommodated number of loans by activity and repayment (2020-June 2023)

Type of Activities	# loans	Loan total	Repayment
Small trade			
Small shop and vending	391	1,556,680,000	508,800,000
Small vending	47	220,300,000	87,800,000

Small food commercial	108	381,800,000	208,500,000
Service			
Tailor shop	4	17,000,000	7,000,000
Vehicle fix	1	4,000,000	-
Cropping			
Animal grass	57	183,000,000	13,000,000
Rice Cropping	56	330,000,000	-
Economic crops			
Fruit tree cropping	21	23,050,000	17,050,000
Mushroom	6	16,200,000	4,200,000
Banana cropping	5	16,900,000	10,900,000
Ginger cropping	32	48,700,000	33,700,000
Corn cropping	3352	10,606,900,000	1,289,510,000
Vegetable cropping	94	298,100,000	28,600,000
Casava cropping	18	29,500,000	16,500,000
Broom cropping	6	7,500,000	3,500,000
Cabbage cropping	1	1,200,000	1,200,000
Gallangal cropping	14	22,000,000	21,000,000
Adlay cropping	50	196,000,000	-
Animal Raising			
Chicken raising	2724	5,272,519,000	2,967,999,000
Goat raising	1149	3,274,823,000	1,588,100,000
Duck raising	738	1,306,860,000	644,650,000
Flog raising	1	1,000,000	-
Fish raising	349	1,123,600,000	521,340,000
Pig raising	7280	20,724,214,000	7,475,800,000
Emmergency cases			
Child education	216	152,850,000	110,450,000
Sickness	726	724,690,000	436,160,000
funeral ceremony	7	7,300,000	7,700,000
Mill machine fixing	1	500,000	500,000
Motobike fixing	5	2,600,000	2,100,000
Rice buying	135	95,600,000	71,450,000
Zinc roof purchasing	1	1,000,000	1,000,000
Handricraft			
weaving	1381	2,884,116,000	993,940,000
Other			
Harvesting	69	137,300,000	133,300,000
	19045	49,667,802,000	17,205,749,000

Source: PRF MIS Database June 2023

Annex 5: Summarize the outcome of PRF's External Assessment in 2023

1. Beneficiaries' Satisfaction Evaluation

The overall objective of the study is to evaluate beneficiaries' satisfaction with the following areas of the project (paying particular attention to women beneficiaries):

- i. The participatory planning process in response to indicator 16 of the resulting framework: % of households in PRF beneficiary villages satisfied with the participatory planning process supported by PRFIII;
- ii. Technical assistance and capacity building provided during implementation and supervision (both for infrastructure and livelihoods);
- iii. Results of activities (infrastructure and livelihoods); and
- iv. Grievance's mechanism.

Altogether 24 villages with different ethnic groups such as Hmong, Khmu, Akha, and Lao Loum have been selected for the field survey of which 12 villages in Kham and Nonghed districts of Xiengkhouang Province and 12 villages in Lah and Namoh districts of Oudomxay Province.

Key findings are generated from the individual interviews and focus group discussions with men and women groups. From the interviews, most respondents provided positive feedback and opinions about their satisfaction with the project's participatory village planning process as well as the results of the project interventions. It may be because the beneficiaries were concerned about future support if they provided honest responses on their dissatisfaction with the project. Even though the beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the project, some issues raised during the interviews provided information on what improvement they want to see for future project phases. For instance, the women raised the issue of the improvement in the ethnic language communication during the meetings, notice of meetings, and timing for the meetings in some areas is not convenient for them.

The overall degree of satisfaction towards the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF

The overall degree of satisfaction towards the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF has been calculated for the beneficiaries as well as GoL and PRF staff by using two different methods.

The first method is to average the degree of satisfaction by each question of the questionnaire. The results of the first method show that 37.2% of the beneficiary respondents are highly satisfied and 55.4% of them are satisfied, which results in the overall satisfaction of 92.6% for the beneficiaries (93% for women and 91.2% for other linguistic groups). For the GoL and PRF respondents, 60% are highly satisfied and 35.6% are satisfied, which results in the overall satisfaction of 95.6%.

The second method is to average the degree of satisfaction by each respondent. The results of the second method show that 30.6% of the beneficiary respondents are highly satisfied and 61.0% of them are satisfied, which results in the overall satisfaction of 91.6% for the beneficiaries (92.1% for women and 90.3% for other linguistic groups). For the GoL and PRF respondents, 53.8% are highly satisfied and 41.2% are satisfied, which results in the overall satisfaction of 95%.

Therefore, the vast majority of the respondents are satisfied with the interventions introduced by PRF III and PRF III AF, with the overall satisfaction of over 91% for the beneficiaries and over 95% for GoL and PRF respondents regardless of the method used for the calculation of the overall satisfaction.

2. Nutrition Evaluation

This study was carried out in 10 villages in two provinces (Oudomxay and Xiengkhouang) interviewing 339 respondents over a wide range of stakeholders (mothers segregated in wealth categories, village leaders, shopkeepers, district officials, project staffs). A qualitative survey methodology was used including semi-structured and key informant interviews to guide the discussion with the mentioned target groups.

Key findings:

Theme 1-Social and Behavior Change Communication: The PRF communal cooking combined with nutrition information sessions visibly lead to actual behavior change. This was backed by the testimonies from mothers, village authorities, and family members on better food prepared for children and family. Mothers also pay more attention to child growth and health. The main success factors are: (a) the key concept of preparing instant formulas for enriched porridge, which save women's time, are easy to digest and make children grow faster, (b) PRF innovative video clubs that spur curiosity and learning through making their own videos and sharing them, (c) intensive training support provided by PRF staff and Nutrition Young Graduates (NYG).

Theme 2-Sourcing of Food: Among the interventions of the PRF-III nutrition program, the most successful were enriching porridge with protein-rich instant fish/frog powder and adding milk to porridge. The diversification of home gardens did not work well, as the crops introduced were not easy to grow and pilot farmers dealt with water shortages. The goat pilots were very successful but their scaling-up is hampered by the low productivity of local goats. The interviews found that food purchasing increases in better-off villages using their earnings from selling maize and livestock and as for the poorer villages, food production increases pairing with NTFPs collection.

Theme 3-Food Processing: PRF-promoted porridge from pre-mixed dry powder is welcomed by mothers as it saves time and children love it. There is a growing demand for these pre-mixed ingredients and village shopkeepers are becoming interested in opportunities to sell them. Group members are also interested in producing healthy snacks for young school-going children. Goat dairy pilots created a new way of consuming milk through pancakes (Oudomxay) and omelets (Xieng Khouang).

Theme 4-Storage of food and water: 9 out of 10 villages reported that water shortages are the main issue for better hygiene, cooking, and growing vegetables. Glass jars used for storing pre-mix and fish powders work fine but are difficult to purchase as there is no value chain for this product in the country.

Theme 5-Linkages between nutrition and other PRF activities. There are clear links between nutrition, infrastructural PRF investments and various village funds. Self Help Group (SHG) loans are almost exclusively all used for small livestock raising. The repayment rate is very high and the program is very much appreciated. However, most of these animals are sold, not consumed in the household much.

Theme 6-Vulnerability and Inclusion. Poor households strongly benefit from direct-cash transfers such as provided via Reducing Rural Poverty and Malnutrition Project (RRPMP) for infant and young child feeding coupled with PRF dietary advice. It is important to maintain the complementarity of these two programs. Involvement of village authorities and local influencers is very effective and should be kept. Prioritizing women in the Farmer Nutrition Groups (FNGs) is an excellent approach to create more agency, leadership and participation of women in villages to take charge in changing nutrition behaviors.

Key Recommendations:

- The FNG approach should be scaled up in the CLEAR program, with special attention to retaining all its key success factors: frequent group meetings, facilitation by NYG, video clubs as a cost-effective

way to support peer-to-peer learning. FNGs already have a strong impact on women empowerment. A special women leadership program could be added to the FNG approach to capitalize on this impact.

- To improve the effectiveness of Quarterly District Convergence Meetings, start each meeting with a presentation of updated data on indicators in child growth and malnutrition, segregated per village and per age category (0-6, 7-23, 24-60 months) as a shared basis for convergence planning.
- Allow more time for farmer networks to develop sustainable options for producing nutritious crops in gardens and from wild collection through continued field testing and peer-to-peer learning.
- Invest more in linkages between nutrition with water supply/storage and irrigation activities, either under PRF, or explore a separate climate-change and rural water supply program under the convergence program.
- Develop a program supporting village shop keepers to develop value chains for affordable and safe food storage solutions such as instant infant foods and healthy snack for young school children for which the project has created a demand. They can also relay messages on buying healthy foods (e.g., understanding the differences between various milk and milk replacement products). Support for quality control in cold chains for perishable products could also be explored.
- In-kind subsidies are necessary for poor households to be able to adopt the practice of providing enriched porridge to infants. The link between PRF support to FNGs and RRPMP support for mothers with young children should be maintained. Additional funding mechanisms for supporting food/nutrition security during climate-related disasters should be explored.

3. Livelihood Evaluation

This assessment report is prepared by the Lao Microfinance Association (LMFA) according to contract engagement with reference Ref. No: AF-C.042-1 (CLEAR-009) – 2023 Proposal for the Assessment of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Producers’ Groups (PG) from Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF) website dated 04 January 2023 on Procurement title “the assessment of self-help groups and producers’ groups”.

A total of 90 Self-Help Groups (SHG) were interviewed. Most of the SHGs that were interviewed were from Oudomxay(31%) followed by Xiengkhouang(29%). On the other hand, 11 PGs were interviewed. In addition, a total of 120 members with IGAs were covered in the survey. The majority of the PGs that were covered came from Xiengkhouang(73%). Of the members with IGA, 81% were from Xiengkhouang, and the rest were distributed to the 3 other provinces. Following key findings and recommendation:

A. Concerning SHG

- SHG has benefited the members in accessing savings and loan
- The IGA has provided benefits for additional income and food thus impacting the Nutrition
- The SHG must improve its savings and loan portfolio monitoring
- The financial controls are weak and need to be strengthened
- There should be a mechanism to support the VSMC and SHG to access sustainable capacity building and monitoring support
- Provide necessary equipment and stationery that are important for cash and important documents keeping
- Need training on MIS and how to use the information it provides

B. Concerning the Production Group

- PGs have followed a satisfactory process of formation especially since there is strong participation, well-defined governance, and the management is in place
- The training provided has attained its intended outcome but there is a need for follow-up training on good agricultural practices
- There is a need to improve the scope of market linkage
- The financial controls are weak and need to be strengthened
- It was not possible to assess the real risk in the loan portfolio but the product appears to be suited to the needs of the PG members.

C. Members' IGA activities

- Poor households are able to fund their IGAs and generate additional cash and secure food
- Sufficient income to loan coverage for some IGA shows that it can be supported with more funding to allow members to expand—especially weaving and pig raising
- Asset ownership is at considerable level which can be attributed to better income for the households
- SHG members were able to engage in an IGA to provide additional income and also to provide food for the family
- The level of adoption of good agricultural practices needs to be more intensified although there is already good practices in place
- Provide more training and extension services to reduce crop loss and product spoilage
- Train SHG members to learn how to do cost and return of their IGAs so they know if they get profit or not.