Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in Lao PDR

Mr. Thongphanh Ratanalangsy, Mr. Khamphachanh
Mr Bill Maynard TA
The Structure

The presentation is divided into parts

• The context and situation in Laos
• How the problems are being addressed
The Context

- **Landlocked country**
- 236,800 km² area
- 5.5 million people
- Density 22/sq Km (22 persons / km²)
- Total forest area is 11.6 million ha
- Share borders with five countries
The Challenge

- Surrounded by 3 of world’s largest timber importers
- Weak governance structure
- Rapid increase in physical infrastructure
What We Think We Know

- Very varying statistics on volumes of illegal timber
- High volumes of bush meat and wildlife
- No hard data on levels of land encroachment
Checkpoints

- Over 40 International Boarder crossing
- 3 or 4 internal Check points in each Province
- Total over 60
Big Fish – Small Fry

- We all know the main drivers
- Laos is not unique - bar its proximity to major sources of demand
- No problem in identifying the small fry, too much information
- Few means to tackle the big fish
What Can Be Done

- Many of the building blocks are in place:
  - The Forestry Law & Wildlife and Aquatic Law
  - The Department Of Forest Inspection (DOFI)
  - 360 personnel across 17 Provinces
What Else

- There is a large network of information gathering
- There are interagency agreements in place
- There is vertical reporting from POFI to DOFI to MAF to avoid interference
But

- Even with the best laws, regulations, and guidelines are required.
- 95% of the 360 staff have been transferred within MAF and don’t have enforcement background.
- DOFI was set up outside the national 5 year planning cycle so has no resources.
The Intelligence Cycle

- We do have information
- We don’t know how to analyze it
- We don’t know where to focus our efforts
Cooperation

- Need to identify the right partners
- Need to understand their strengths and weaknesses
- Need to make it happen on the ground
- Need to be clear about responsibilities
Managing The Information

- Different levels in DOFI have different functions
- Define the responsibilities at each level
- Only collect information you are likely to use
The Department needs to be ready to tackle the core drivers of forest crime:

- It needs to build its capacity and ability
- When it does move against the main targets
The Flip Side

- What is not legal must be illegal
- Guilty until proven innocent, where is the burden of proof
- Matching up the *Enforcement* of the law with *Endorsement* of certification, Chain of Custody and Trade Chain Approach
Conclusions

- The Department Of Forest Inspection is looking to learn and develop the skills of fundamental police work.

- With 360 staff we hope to have all the angles in the circle covered.

- But we need to target the resources.
What Is The Operational Budget?
Answers on a postcard to:

- Mr. Thongphanh Ratanalanhsy or
- Mr. Khampachamh Boungnakeo
  Department Of Forest Inspection
  Thatdam Road
  Vientiane
  Laos PDR

thongphanhr@yahoo.com
kboungnakeo@yahoo.com
Thank you