



ENHANCING INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE NAM-POUI, NAM-POUN, NAM LAY AND NAM-HOUNG BASINS IN LAO PDR

In April 2024, WWF-Laos submitted, in consultation with the Department of Water Resources of the Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, a Project Identification Form for the project 'Enhancing Integrated Watershed Management and Climate Resilience for Vulnerable Communities in Lao PDR', for funding consideration under the Least Developed Country Fund of GEF 8.

Symmetry was hired to develop the full funding proposal. The proposed project is focused on a vulnerable, naturally flood-prone, mountainous region of Lao PDR, namely the Nam-Poui, Nam-Poun, Nam-Lay, and Nam-Houng basins in Sayaboury Province, selected due to its high vulnerability to climate change.

The Symmetry team has been deepening its understanding of the socio-economic and environmental situation in the project area, key drivers of change, barriers as well as recommended interventions. Working closely with WWF Laos, the team has been engaging local stakeholders to better understand their needs and expectations. The critical intervention areas identified include means to integrate climate change adaptation into provincial water resource management and river basin management plans and climate-smart agriculture practices. The need for alternative livelihood options for vulnerable communities, especially for women who heavily depend on agriculture, is also being examined. Based on the background studies and extensive consultations, project interventions and activities are being prioritised with local stakeholders. This information is used to input into the GEF Funding Proposal template.

The Symmetry team, led by Dr Robert Mather and Richard McNally, is supporting the development of the GEF CEO Endorsement Request Document between November 2024 and August 2025. The project is expected to be implemented in Q1 2026 by the Department of Water Resources of the Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, WWF, and other implementation partners.