

CULS comes to Savannakhet to teach two intensive courses and other activities

After a semester of intensive planning, we finally arrived in Savannakhet to work with faculty members from Savannakhet University, National University of Laos and Souphanouvong University on a set of two capacity building activities.

In the course entitled Forest Silviculture and operations, we focused on silviculture and forestry operations, both in terms of traditional multifunctional forests and forest plantations. The Social Forestry and Resources course was aimed at improving the ability to manage forests in a sustainable way, whilst maintaining economically balanced enterprises.

In the meantime, those who were not occupied by teaching activities participated in meetings and other activities. One such meeting was focused on improvements to the curriculum of the proposed MSc. Forest Resource Management program. We worked through the pool of offered courses, their structure in the curriculum, and the materials needed to provide state-of-the-art education. Other than that, we also selected two students to participate in Erasmus+ mobility, and coordinated the dissemination and communication of the ForHeal outputs.



Multi-functional forestry is key for keeping it sustainable

One of the key messages of both courses we taught at Savannakhet University was that if we want to keep forests for the future and secure wood as a raw material for future generations, we need to consider all functions forests provide for us. Thus, we focused on how to grow and manage forests so that forests are sustained in time, how to protect forests without sacrificing biodiversity of the whole ecosystem. To do so, a forestry enterprise needs to create revenue, to balance all the costs. For this, production function needs to be maintained as well, timber needs to be extracted. Therefore, environmentally friendly and economically efficient harvesting technologies needs to be applied.



Stora Enso showed us how to do business in a socially responsible way

A part of both intensive courses, we went to observed forest plantations operated by Stora Enso Lao. We saw how the company manages to create value from their eucalyptus plantations, whilst providing benefits to the local communities. Whether it is through providing space for rice farmers, accessing remote areas by building new roads in the Xepon district or providing means for education to their employees, the company presents a valuable partner for all lao higher education institutions that deal with forestry.