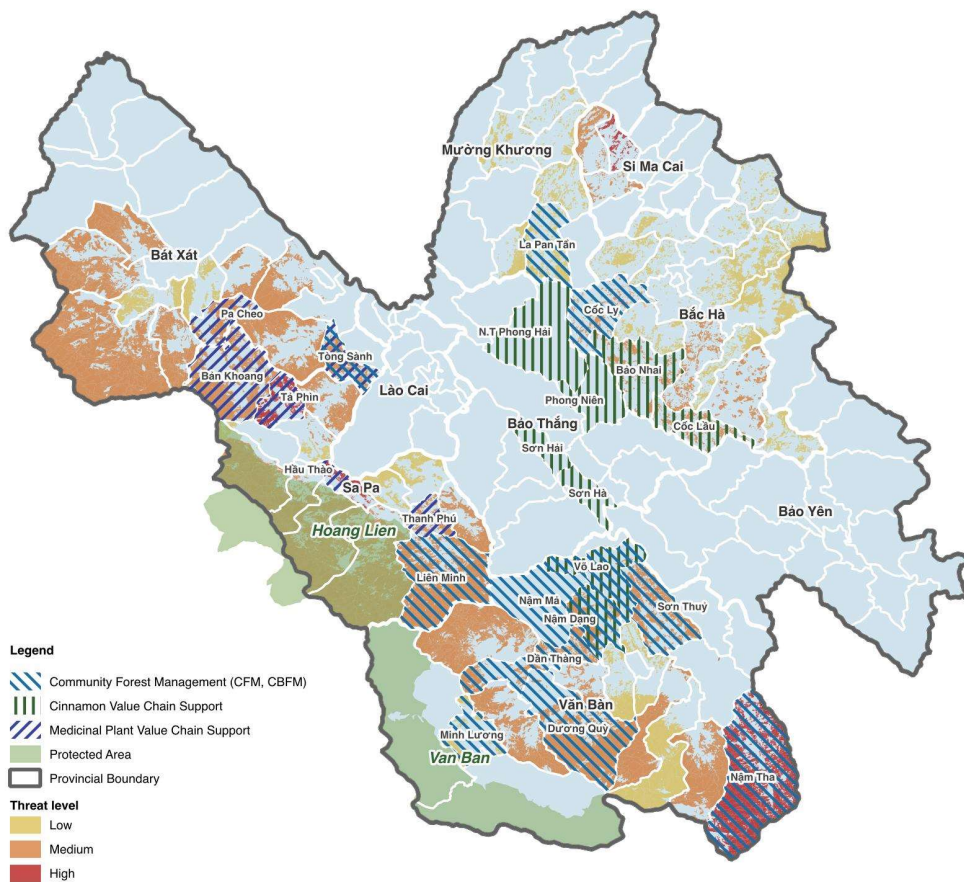


2023 PROVINCIAL PROFILE: LAO CAI



Key Provincial Facts

Total population: 761,890 people, including the following ethnic minority communities: Dao, Hmong, Tay, and Nung, Xa Pho.

Total forest area: 382,861 ha, of which 266,753 ha is natural forest and 116,108 ha is plantation forest.

Forest coverage: 57.7 percent

Value chains the Project supports: Cinnamon and medicinal plants.


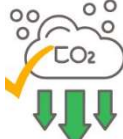







- Legend**
- Community Forest Management (CFM, CBFM)
 - Cinnamon Value Chain Support
 - Medicinal Plant Value Chain Support
 - Protected Area
 - Provincial Boundary

- Threat level**
- Low
 - Medium
 - High

The shaded areas above show where project activities take place and areas that are facing threats of deforestation and degradation based on the project's baseline evaluation.

Summary of Progress to Date in the Province

The numbers below represent verified accomplishments through FY 23.

 <p>4,675 ha. of forest areas under improved management</p>	 <p>168,529 tons of CO₂ emissions reduced</p>	 <p>\$823,923 funds committed towards conservation-friendly enterprises</p>
 <p>4 conservation-friendly enterprises supported</p>	 <p>1,068 people supported to adapt to climate change</p>	 <p>4,157 people who received livelihood benefits</p>
 <p>2,436 people trained</p>	 <p>5 laws, policies, plans, regulations, or standards developed</p>	 <p>865 people using climate information or are implementing risk-reducing actions to adapt to climate change</p>

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN LAO CAI

In 2023, through the Sustainable Forest Management Project (the Project), USAID supported Lao Cai to reach key achievements on community forest management (CFM), and medicinal plant and cinnamon value chain development. The Project worked with four communities of Van Ban, Bac Ha districts and Sa Pa town, where the total forest area managed by communities is about 4,645 hectares. The Project helped allocate 1,987 ha of forest and forest land for two communes of Red Dao and Mong ethnic minorities in Lien Minh commune, Sa Pa town. Forest land use right certificates were retrieved from individual households and then allocated to communities for better sustainable forest management. The Project also helped Bac Ha Protection Forest Management Board develop a community-based forest ecotourism plan covering 2023-2030 to strengthen CFM and to better protect, conserve, and promote traditional cultural values. Lastly, the Project developed a Forest Protection Plan and provided patrolling equipment to improve forest management of 4,600 ha.

After identifying medicinal plants and cinnamon as two key value chains contributing to sustainable forest management in Lao Cai province, the Project implemented activities to develop these value chains by improving institutional capacity, production, and processing, and through community-business matchmaking and market linkages. The Project provided technical support and equipment for select conservation-friendly enterprises and helped to design a Red Dao Medicinal Plant Performance Space in Sa Pa town, which is now in the process of calling for investments. Cinnamon is considered the most important key crop in Lao Cai province, which is why the province is prioritizing the Project's support of the cinnamon value chain. In 2023, the Project established a total of 14 organic cinnamon farmers' groups and provided training on forestry (planting, tending) techniques and training on pre-processing support, which helped improve 1,300 ha of cinnamon forest and benefited 2,800 people. The Project also provided nursery management support for 20 nurseries, signed partnership agreements with two nurseries, and delivered two tons of high-quality seeds for the plantation of 1,300 ha of forest.



A Red Dao farmer thinning cinnamon trees based on recommended practices. Photo credit: Quoc Hoang

“The Project supported us to develop a Sustainable Forest Management Plan and trained our community to be directly involved in the forest monitoring process. Since then, we have realized that there are many precious plant species in our forest, and many activities our community can do to better protect and develop forests, and to preserve water for people, agriculture, and forestry production.”

Mr. Chao Lao Si, Red Dao person – village head of Chu Cang Ho, Tong Sanh commune, Bat Xat district, Lao Cai province

Obtaining Certification of Cinnamon Seed Stands

In 2023, the USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project conducted a survey and identified 25 hectares of 15-year-old cinnamon trees owned by 33 households in Bac Ha and Van Ban districts where it was possible to produce high-quality seeds for seedlings. The Project provided technical support to local Red Dao communities in two communes to make boundaries, select and save the best trees, and thin the rest, and to maintain the recommended density of about 600 trees per ha. This practice helps increase productivity and produce better seed quality. The Project helped 33 forest owners prepare documents for the necessary cinnamon high-quality seed stand certification legally required of nurseries that purchase seeds. In September 2023, Lao Cai Forest Ranger Department officially issued certification, valid from 2023-2028 for this area. This 25-ha of cinnamon forest will provide more than 30.2 tons of seeds, which will produce more than 56.5 million good-quality seedlings for plantation for 17,120 ha of cinnamon. With the official certification, the cinnamon forest owners are now able to sell their high-quality cinnamon seeds to cinnamon nurseries. In addition, the 17,120 ha of improved forest can potentially contribute to carbon sequestration of more than one million tons of CO₂ (17,120 ha x 60.3 t C/ha).
