

International and Domestic Research Collaboration

Memorandum of Understanding between NIAES and NAFRI of Lao PDR

On 16 August 2004, NIAES and the National Agriculture and Forest Research Institute (NAFRI) of the Lao People's Democratic Republic established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Scientific Collaboration. NAFRI is the representative organization for agro-environmental research in Laos. Its headquarters are in Vientiane, and several local research centers are located around the country.

The objective of the MOU is to promote research collaboration on agro-environmental issues, mainly in Laos. The “Geo-scientific and agronomic study for enhancing CO₂ sink capacity and sustainable food production in the slash/burn ecosystems of the mountainous mainland of Southeast Asia” was begun in 2004 to investigate the long-term and wide-area carbon balance in the slash/burn ecosystem of northern Laos, and to develop alternative land-use and ecosystem management options for the region (Project Leader: Dr. Yoshio Inoue of NIAES). The MOU also covers collaborative activities by participants from the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute and Kyoto University in Japan.

The project involves a number of on-site surveys and experiments, as well as the collection of geospatial and statistical information; these activities are supported in part by NAFRI under the MOU. The research project has been smoothly executed, and it has resulted in the development of a volume of original data sets and new



Entrance to the NAFRI headquarters in Vientiane.

scientific achievements from the agro-environmental, geo-scientific, and socioeconomic perspectives. As part of the collaboration, Dr. Linkham Douangsavanh, head of the socioeconomic research laboratory at NAFRI, was invited to NIAES for 4 months in 2005 to work with Dr. Inoue.

This is the first MOU between a Japanese research institution and NAFRI. We hope that collaboration through the exchange of scientists, data, and techniques will greatly benefit both institutions in terms of domestic and international agro-environmental issues. (Y. Inoue)