



Local Project Appraisal Committee
KHOUN RADIO SUPPORT PROJECT
Bringing local news to local people



15 February 2006: 1.30 – 3.00pm, Ameerah Haq Meeting Room, UNDP

Participants:

Chair: Mme. Setsuko Yamazaki, Deputy Resident Representative UNDP

Xiengkhouang Province

Mr. Bouaso Mingkhamdeng, DDG Department of Information and Culture
Mr. Sivone Boutdachanh, Deputy District Chief, Khoun
Mr. Bounthong Nola, Head of Department of Information and Culture, Khoun
Mme. Pany Khounyotha, Lao Women's Union, Khoun
Mr. Yalyvang, Village Chief of Baan Phonyaeng

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mme. Sisomboun Ounavong, Director of UN Division, DIC

Ministry of Information and Culture

Mr. Vanethong Phonchanheung, DG Mass Media Department
Mr. Dy Sisombath, DDG Mass Media Department
Mr. Bounthan Inthaxay, Lao National Radio

CPI / NERI

Mr. Syviengxay Oraboune, Deputy Chief of Policy Research and Analysis Division

GPAR Central

Mr. Bryan Holford, Project Advisor GPAR Central

UNDP

Ms. Viengmala Phomsengsavanh, Governance Unit
Mr. Phiphob Luangsivilay, PSU
Ms. Sirixai Phanthavongs, Environment Unit
Mr. Thilaphong Oudomsine, Governance Unit
Mr. Jamshed Kazi, ARR, Governance Unit
Mr. Matthias Meier, Governance Unit
Ms. Oraxone Vissapra, Governance Unit

LEAP

Mr. Andrew Bartlett, CTA, Lao Extension for Agriculture Project

Agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction (Mme. Setsuko Yamazaki, DRR)
2. Presentation of the draft project document (Mr. Jamshed Kazi, ARR; Mr. Matthias Meier, PO)
3. Comments and remarks by participants
4. Summary and closing (Mme. Setsuko Yamazaki)

Introduction:

Mme. Setsuko Yamazaki welcomed the participants to the local PAC meeting, explaining that the purpose was to review the draft Project document for a new access to information project in Xiengkhouang. She pointed out that the local PAC meeting is a forum for reviewing a project document with UNDP, concerned government organizations and partners. She invited the group to participate actively and provide feedback. She extended her appreciation and a warm welcome to the representatives from Xiengkhouang Province and from central government organisations.

Presentation of the project document:

Mr. Jamshed Kazi, Chief of Governance Unit, and Matthias Meier, concerned Programme Analyst, gave an overview of the project document with emphasis on the situation analysis, the key components of the project intervention and the project budget.

The pilot project will work towards achieving two major outcomes, i) Improving access to information through local reporting and radio programme-making in local languages; and ii) Increasing the voice of the Lao citizens – in particular of ethnic people and women – in news-making to help them participate in development decisions that affect their lives.

This pilot project is in accordance with the Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC) plan to improve access to information of local communities. It will help the Ministry to pilot operating and training modalities with active involvement of the concerned communities. The project will also pilot low-cost equipment and its suitability for cost-effective replication. MIC representatives have taken an active and critical part in the design of the project interventions, in numerous discussions and the two formulation missions in December 2005 and January 2006.

The volume of the project in the initial phase in 2006 is 120,000 USD, fully contributed through a UNDP Headquarters Special Fund for Governance.

Discussion:

There was active participation from the local representatives from Xiengkhouang and central government officials, in particular from the concerned Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC). In general, the project proposal was very well received by the participants of the PAC and broad agreement and support was expressed across the board.

Specific comments:

The following points were highlighted:

1. Xiengkhouang representatives expressed a keen interest in implementing this project. It was mentioned that radio was a very effective means of communication to cater the information needs in particular of the rural population.
2. Representatives from Khoun mentioned that many of the elderly people were illiterate or do not speak Lao – these would clearly benefit from this initiative.
3. Clarification was sought regarding the Management Arrangements and the collaboration with GPAR Xiengkhouang. Mme. Sisomboun Ounavong from DIC recommended to highlight responsibilities more clearly in the project document, in particular with regard to the provincial Department of Information and Culture, who will be the implementing partner.
4. Mr. Vanethong Phonchanheung from Mass Media Department explained that the project document is fully in line with the policy of MIC. He also informed the LPAC that Lao Telecom had reacted favourably to the request from MIC to use Lao Telecom's existing antenna infrastructure in Khoun for this radio project.
5. Mr. Andrew Bartlett from LEAP Project, which is supporting Agriculture Extension activities in Khoun District, and Mr. Bounthan Inthaxay from Lao National Radio praised the project for its contribution to local development. They also highlighted the need for the project to gain a good understanding about the "receiving end" of radio broadcasting – that is people's information needs and how they would be able to receive radio programmes. Some innovative ways (e.g. school radio, public address systems) were mentioned that can be further explored in the baseline study. Mr. Jamshed Kazi pointed out the project emphasizes on access to information, which gives the possibility to include a range of interventions beyond the scope of radio to better reach people. Mr. Matthias Meier explained that local conditions vary very much from place to place and need to be better understood. The project has a provision to procure radio receivers, if needed. In some districts of Laos, however, nearly every household has a radio receiver.
6. Mr. Syviengxay Oraboune from the National Economic Research Institute (NERI) pointed out the strong linkages between poverty and lack of access to information. He encouraged the project to explore these linkages, e.g. in the field of marketing and knowledge transfer.

Conclusion and Endorsement:

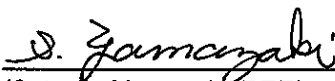
The chair concluded that the project enjoyed wide support and is approved by the LPAC, subject to the following modifications in the project document:

1. Management Structures and responsibilities need to be clearer in the Project document. In the Annual Workplan responsibilities for specific activities need to be attributed.
2. The Provincial Department of Information and Culture is the designated implementing partner. DIC is asked to advise on the protocol for signing the project document (subject to govt. clearance).
3. There is broad agreement that specific local information needs exist that need to be studied by the project, including linkages to poverty reduction and education.

4. It is important to consider the radio recipient's situation and whether and how the audience can be reached, including what modalities and equipment should be used.
5. Technical issues, such as the joint use of antenna infrastructure with Lao Telecom need to be further explored.
6. The project document should better elaborate how this initiative is related to GPAR and Governance reform in Lao PDR.

After integration of these points, the responsible partner will submit the final project document to DIC for consideration.

Date: 19 February, 2006

Approved: 
(Setsuko Yamazaki, DRR)