

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE FOR SMALL-SCALE RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN A CHANGING CLIMATE (LDCF2)

Project ID: 00081322

Background and Project Description

This project aims to increase climate resilience for vulnerable communities in Sekong and Saravan Provinces, in the south of Lao PDR. This area has the highest poverty rates in Lao PDR, thus communities in these provinces are especially vulnerable to floods and drought, as well as extreme climate events such as storms and flash floods, which are occurring with increasing frequency in the region. Important rural infrastructure such as irrigation channels, rainwater storage systems, check dams, roads, bridges and water supply have been damaged in storm events, most recently the 2015 Ketsana storm. The project combines improved standards in rural infrastructure with ecosystem-based adaptation, such as using road-side vegetation to protect road degradation, to contribute to the conservation of water resources and protect rural infrastructure from the impacts of climate change.



The new climate resilient drain allows flood waters to escape freely without interfering with the irrigation system. Photo: UNDP Lao PDR/Anders Poulsen

Project Summary

- Duration: May 2013 - December 2017
- Geographic coverage: Saravan and Sekong Provinces
- Focus Area: Environment and Energy
- Implementing Partners: Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)- Department of Disaster Management and Climate Change (DDMCC); UNDP
- Website:
http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/LDCF2.html

Main Objectives and Outcomes

The overall objective of the project is to improve local administrative systems through participatory decision making that reflects the genuine needs of communities and natural systems vulnerable to climate risk. Local administrative systems affect the provision and maintenance of small-scale rural infrastructure which in turn impacts disaster preparedness of communities.

Therefore, the expected outcome of the project will be the integration of genuine needs of vulnerable communities into local planning and budgeting processes, so that the development prospects of these communities are improved, despite increasing climate risks.

Some of the existing challenges to disaster preparedness in Lao PDR include:

- Weakness in climate change analysis and planning at provincial and district levels
- Financial constraints regarding additional costs of building greater resilience into rural infrastructure
- A 'siloed' approach to local planning whereby ecosystem functions and services are not taken into account
- Limited incentives to encourage local officials and decision-makers to address climate related risks.

The Government of Lao PDR has successfully accessed funds from the Least Developed Countries Fund to address these challenges through the project. There are three components of this project:

1. Inclusive planning, budgeting and capacity development for reducing climate and disaster related risks
2. Local investment for reducing climate risks and 'climate-proofing' communities
3. Securing ecosystem services and assets through enhancing critical ecosystem functions.

Results and Achievements to Date

Capacity development

Capacity development of local, district and government stakeholders has been achieved through the implementation of project activities, i.e. during prioritisation and selection of infrastructure projects, design of infrastructure projects in the four selected districts, development of tender documents and finally in implementation of the four projects in Lakhonpheng, Saravane, Kaleum and Thateng districts. 'On the job' training has been widely successful in developing capacity of local officers and departments in climate management related planning and activities.

A capacity needs assessment was also implemented by the project, leading to the development of a capacity development plan which emphasizes proficiency in activities linked to project implementation.

District Development Fund

The District Development Fund is the project's implementing mechanism. The project was instrumental in achieving amendment to the District Development Fund Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the United Nations Capital Development Fund, to include a climate resilience grant facility, with climate resilience performance criteria to be used for future fund approval and allocation.

District Development Fund guidelines have therefore been revised to integrate climate resilience into the planning process of the next round of climate change preparedness and disaster risk reduction projects.

A major element of the revised guidelines is the addition of a District Climate Vulnerability Index (so far non-existent in Lao PDR) which ensures funding reaches the district levels.

Incentives have been incorporated into the revised guidelines, where performance criteria related to mainstreaming climate resilience are included. Fund allocation according to district performance creates an incentive for districts to integrate appropriate and self-driven climate resilience into district development planning.

Safeguarding vulnerable ecosystems

Two ecosystem areas were selected from the 2014 *Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment Report*: Phu Tai Yeune Forest area in Thateng District (Sekong Province), and Sa O Wetlands in Khongsedone District (Saravane Province). Several meetings and workshops were organised to develop a management roadmap for these ecosystems. The starting point in both areas will be Participatory Land-Use Planning, in collaboration with the Department of Land Planning and Development of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The two existing ecosystems are located within the Sedone watershed area.

Funding:

- Project budget: USD 4,980,000
- Contributing donors:
 - LDCF (GEF) in cash USD 4,700,000
- Co-Financing:
 - Government in-kind USD 375,000
 - UNDP in cash USD 280,000

For more information:

Dr Margaret Jones Williams, Environment Unit Manager, UNDP Lao PDR; E-mail: margaret.jones.williams@undp.org; Tel: (+856 21) 267 710

Mr Anders Poulsen, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP Lao PDR; E-mail: anders.poulsen@undp.org

Ms Chitlatda Keomuongchanh, Programme Analyst, UNDP Lao PDR; E-mail: chitlatda.keomuongchanh@undp.org; Tel: (856 21) 267 782

