

PROJECT BRIEF

United Nations Development Programme



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

SUPPORT TO INTEGRATED IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE IN BOLIKHAMXAY PROVINCE (SIRA)

Project background

The Support to Integrated Irrigated Agriculture in Bolikhamxay Province (SIRA) project aims at improving the overall livelihoods and food security of local communities in the two poorest districts of Bolikhamxay Province by supporting the development of irrigated agriculture and the community-based management of watershed resources such as forests and fisheries. Lao PDR has been on track to achieving its poverty reduction targets, but has reportedly been significantly off-track in achieving its goals related to nutrition. The project, which was closed in June 2015, has benefited over 7,700 farmers, expanding rice cultivation from 150 hectares to 500 hectares in the dry season. The project accomplished this by repairing three small irrigation schemes and established water, watershed, fishery and village forest management and user groups within the communities, which now serve to promote more sustainable management of watershed resources.



Final quality check for one of the division structures in Name Sae irrigation sub-project in Viengthong District, Bolikhamxay Province. Photo: UNDP Lao PDR/Singha Ounniyom

Project Summary

- Project period: June 2012-June 2015 (closed)
- Geographic coverage : 5 villages in Bolikhan District and 3 villages in Viengthong District, Bolikhamxay Province
- Focus Area: Environment and Energy
- Implementing partners: Bolikhamxay Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)
- Partners: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry- Department of Irrigation, Department of Planning and Investment of Bolikhamxay Province, Department of Natural Resources and Environment of Bolikhamxay Province; UNDP Lao PDR
- Target beneficiaries: over 7,700 people with equal share of women and men
- Website:
www.la.undp.org/content/laopdr/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/integrated_irrigated_agriculture_bolikhamxay.html

The project improved shifting cultivation practices and promoted village forest management and diversification, guaranteeing economic and ecological sustainability for farmers despite increasing climate-change impacts.

Project Objective

The primary objective of this project was to contribute to sustainable livelihoods improvement and food security through development of irrigated agriculture and the promotion of more sustainable management of watershed resources.

Outcomes: The SIRA project came to an end in June 2015 and achieved the following six major outcomes:

For more information: www.la.undp.org
United Nations Development Programme
Lane Xang Avenue, P.O. Box 345, Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR

October
2015

1. The project had a positive impact on the communities in terms of improved food security and more sustainable livelihoods.
2. Water supply is now available in both wet and dry seasons for irrigating the area of the Nam Pou project in Bolikhan District and Namyang and Phondou projects in Viengthong District.
3. Irrigation projects are co-managed by government authorities and the Water Users' Association.
4. Agriculture production increased and diversified in the Nam Pou project in Bolikhan District and Namyang and Phondou projects in Viengthong District.
5. Improved Fisheries in the Nam Pou reservoir through establishment of agreements between the government and the communities
6. Technical and managerial capacity of provincial and district level government staff enhanced.

The following activities were undertaken successfully:

1. The Nam Pou watershed management plan was completed with community participation at village, district and provincial levels, and made publicly available. The implementation of the village forest management plan and land use plan is in progress in five villages inside of the Nam Pou watershed which covers a total area of 9,119 hectares.
2. Completion of infrastructure rehabilitation works in Nam Yang, Nam Sae and Nam Pou, providing water for two-season cultivation to an agriculture extension area of 630 hectares in Viengthong and Bolikhan Districts.
3. Water User Groups were created and their activities supported, optimizing water management and improving agricultural practices. Co-management of irrigation projects has been initiated in Nam Pou, Nam Yang and Nam Sae. Six training workshops on participatory water management, gender and irrigation co-management, Water User Group mandate and regulations were held for 728 members (242 females) of Water User Groups, farmers and government officials. Trainees gained a better understanding of water use planning and management activities. During the construction period, 615 farmers (218 females) actively participated in land clearance and canal cleaning activities at three irrigation construction sites organised in July and December 2014.
4. Over 300 farmers were trained in watershed management (rice seeds preparation, techniques for selection, storage, and transportation and dry season vegetable extension). Cash crop farming was also piloted by 40 households (18 females) for 7.4 hectares in four villages in Viengthong District. In May 2014, a training on harvesting techniques for rice and cash crops was provided for 85 farmers (18 females). After the training, most trainees were more successful in preventing loss during harvest activities and at identifying quality seedlings for the next plantation. A training on how to grow nine selected cash crops including string bean, lettuce, cabbage, and coriander was also held in Viengthong District with the participation of 37 farmers. The trainees were able to apply the techniques learned to growing new crops on their farm land and in house gardens. It is expected that the agriculture production for

the next harvesting season will increase and be more diversified in Bolikhan and Viengthong districts as a result of the provided technical support.

5. A fisheries co-management committee was established in Nam Pou in 2014 and several workshops were held, including on policies, practices and the country's new fishery regulations. Fisheries regulations were approved and are now being implemented at the Nam Pou Fish Conservation Zone. A fish hatchery and nursery facility was equipped for the community at the Bolikhan District Agricultural Technical Research Center in Bor Village, resulting in increased fish stocks.
6. Assessment of capacity needs for provincial and district officials in 2013 and 2014 resulted in the prioritisation of capacity development in watershed management, fisheries management, office management and project management. Project staff were also trained twice in 2014 in the UNDP National Project Implementation Modality and Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines. Their capacity in project planning, finance, budgeting and reporting has improved. The delivery rate at the end of 2014 reached 95 per cent of the annual plan.

The achievements of the project also aligned with the objectives of the Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015), and the Agricultural Development Policy Framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

The implementation of the project by the Provincial Authorities was also important in testing and demonstrating the transfer of responsibilities, functions and resources from central ministries to the provinces and onwards to the districts to increase ownership sustainability.

The project was primarily supported by the India-Brasil-South Africa Trust Fund (IBSA) for South-South Cooperation, and was implemented by UNDP Lao PDR, with guidance from the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in New York.

Funding:

- Total project budget: USD 1,323,000
- Donors:
 - IBSA: USD 1,323,000
 - Local beneficiaries: USD 84,000 (in-kind)

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