



LAO PDR

GPAR-SP QUARTERLY
Q4 NEWSLETTER

GPAR Saravane

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SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2006

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

-MOU
SIGNATURE
October 12, 2006

-Clarification: 27
infrastructure
projects planned
for Saravane Prov-
ince...More at p.4

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ment Plan in
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New financial procedures....

New mechanisms for Fi-
nancing District Planning
and Budgeting in Saravane
Province.

13 October 2006, a memoran-
dum of understanding was
signed between the Lao Minis-
ter of Finance (Mr. Bouachanh
Xathuxin, Director of the De-
partment of Treasury), GPAR-
SP (Mr. Bounthiem
Keosayavong GPAR SP Na-
tional Project Director and
Chief of the Cabinet of the
Office of the Governor of Sara-
vane Province) and UNDP-
UNCDF (Mrs. Setsuko Yama-
zaki DRR UNDP Lao)*. 'The
aim of the MOU is to clarify
mechanisms for financing, plan-
ning and budgeting for the dis-
tricts,' Mr Bounthiem

Keosayavong said. The fund



Bounthiem Keosayavong GPAR SP
National Project Director

will be managed by the treas-
ury department (MoF). 'The
funding will be transferred to
the Bank of Lao in accordance
with the disbursement arrange-

ments' he added. Therefore,
the Treasury De-
partment is respon-
sible for reporting
on transactions
and, on annual
statements. The
fund will be pro-
vided to the pilot
districts of Sara-
vane province in
accordance to prior
arrangements. It is
important to note
that in the funding
process, GPAR SP
(Project Support
Team) acts as an intermediary
party; the project does not
make or influence any decision,
the eligible districts have the

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No compliance, no funds!

Saravane Province is pilot-
ing a District Development
Fund in four pilot districts
which will gradually extend
to all eight. The DDF has a
timeframe of five years, It will
contribute to poverty reduc-
tion and the local attainment of
the millennium development

goals. The fund allocations are
determined by district popula-
tion size and their relative pov-
erty. Thus, the annual alloca-
tion provides a hard budget
ceiling within which the Dis-
trict must prioritise and plan
investments. The eight districts
from Saravane province will

receive annual allocations with
a totality of 1,208,288USD.
However, these allocations are
to be made within the five year
project timeframe. Hence, for
the present fiscal year 2007 -
2008 Saravane, Ta Oy, Lakon-
pheng plus Samuoy will be re-

(Continued on page 4)

GPAR-SP FACTS

Title

Saravane Governance, Public Administration Reform and Decentralized Service Delivery.

Project ID

00043575(UNDP),
00032148(UNCDF)

Programme period
2005-2009

Project Duration
5 years

Implementing Partner

Office of the Governor of Saravane Province in accordance with NEX procedures.

Other Partners

PACSA/PMO, FPD/MOF and GPD/CPI.

Donors

UNDP, UNCDF, EU.

Outcome Improve local level provision of public goods and services.

Budget
3,178.040 USD.

Status

The First three pilots are Executing their Annual Investment Plans: 27 infrastructure projects. Next year: Samuoy

District Investment Planning in Samuoy

The vice-governor of the province, Mr Bounthiem Phomasathit has announced the annual DDF allocation to Samuoy District of 19,861 USD. The announcement letter provides details of the annual DDF allocation to Samuoy District and requests the sectors and Kum Bans to begin their planning process. However, 'the annual DDF allocation to the district provides a hard budget ceiling within which the District must prioritise and plan investments'. This memorandum is publicly available at the Office of the Governor, at the District office, district line offices



Samuoy's District Planning Team

(education, health, agriculture transport and LWU) at the kum ban head office and it is also available to local citizens!

For this reason, GPAR SP with the provincial Training of Trainers, went to Samuoy

to start training on the DDF guidelines. 'The District is project owner of all investments,' Mr.Thavone Bounphavong NPM, said during the opening of the DDF Training in Samuoy.

Even with bad weather conditions, the GPAR SP Provincial Training of Trainers (TOT) Mrs. Phouthone Kheobouathong and Mr. Bouathong Chanthepha with the assistance of Mr. Sirisomphou Duangkham (GPAP SP Planning and Rural Development Specialist) established Samuoy's District Planning Team. (DDF Planning Step 1) Today, Samuoy villagers are participating in government decisions.

Sharing experiences

'Sekong project could face difficulties in implementing activities because most of the citizens are illiterate'

Mr. Nouthone Khemmalay, Deputy Chief of Cabinet of Sekong province said during the Exposure Visit between Sev-dev project and GPAP SP held on November 2. After an opening speech from Mr Khemmalay, Mr Thavone Bounphavong, NPM GPAP SP presented the project outcomes and DDF planning steps, results and chal-

lenges. How can the villagers decide where to build a school? How should we communicate the results from the District Investment Plan (DIP)? These are two examples of the many questions that Sev-dev representatives asked to GPAP Saravane. In this sense, 'schools should be built based on the village level assessments of development priorities meeting and DIP will be publicly available to all citizens by meetings and using the information and notice boards,'

Mr. Thavone Bounphavong GPAP SP NPM answered. Twenty participants attended the meeting including representatives from UNDP, and District Heads from Sekong province. These co-ordination meetings are taking place every quarter in different provinces where the Governance Public Administration Reform initiative has pilot projects in order to share experiences and lessons learned.

Gender mainstreaming strategy at village Level

The GPAR SP gender strategy consists of three steps. First, it starts with the gender bias of the overall management guidelines, then the integration of the Gender analysis and impact into the DDF annual cycle and finally the identification of gender opportunities into public service delivery. To continue with this process, GPAR SP supported the Provincial LWU Gender Awareness Trainings in Saravane [November 8 to 12], in Ta Oy [November 23 to 27] and in Lakonpheng [December 20 to 24]. The main objective of these five-day meetings was to raise awareness and disseminate gender issues to participants as well as get feedback for the creation and implementation of the DDF District Investment Plan. During these five-day meetings, attendees learned about the importance of gender equality with their families, in their office and with friends. Additionally, they learned how gender issues are present in their

workplace and how they can deal with them. In Saravane District from a total of 38 attendees, 14 were men. Village representatives from remote areas came to the meetings to learn about gender mainstreaming. 'In remote areas men and women do not have the same rights' Mr. Khambau Deputy Naiban (chief of Khen muan village, Saravane District) said. In Ta Oy, the language barrier stops some the trainees from understanding the overall training. Training should then be translated to local minority languages in turn to upgrade the gender all-encompassing strategy. The trainee's recommendation was to enhance the gender coordination from district to village level authorities in order to improve the gender mainstreaming strategy. In both pilot districts, similar findings were encountered; low awareness of gender issues and shyness from participants. 'In three months, we will evaluate the impact of this training to re-

flect lessons learned,' Ms. Sivan Phim-bounnor Gender Rights and Development Specialist from Provincial LWU said. In subsequent trainings, GPAR SP will analyze the fact to allocate more resources to develop these trainings for example DSA for people from remote villages. The meetings reflect the need for further gender training to improve gender awareness at the village level. As a result, GPAR SP is including gender – sensitive indicators and analysis of impact on men and women in the project components.



Ms. Sivan Phim-bounnor
Gender Rights and Development Specialist
from Provincial Lao Women's Union
Training on gender

Capacity for development!

Improving the capacity of A) Village Representatives November was the month for capacity building of Lakonpheng village authorities. After the rainy season, representatives from 90 villages attended a Village Management Training with the assistance of GPAR SP project Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Mr. Chareun Bounithiphonh 'we should invite a representative of Village Lao Women's Union to encourage women's participa-

tion,' Mr. Chareun said. The training was held at Lakonepheng District Meeting Hall. After the refresher course on public administration law and understanding of DDF procedures, the trainees filled out an assessment questionnaire. This means of verification will help local authorities to improve the training and verify the understanding of the participants. In further trainings, participants will not sign or write their names on this questionnaire to

allow anonymous comments and better reflect lessons learned. Today, Saravane, Ta oy, and Lakonpheng village authorities know more about their duties and responsibilities.

B) Civil Servants. A meeting with the Committee of Organization and Personnel took place on November 27 to 29, this training has facilitated civil servants to carry out their day-to-day tasks in an efficient manner.

HOT NEWS

'New monitoring system for GPAR SP' Introduced by Stefan Shapiro UNCDF Technical Monitoring Advisor. November 9 to 13

Round Table Meeting



Mr. Bounthiem Phommasathit vice-governor of Saravane Province chaired the meeting

Disseminating the Socio-economic Development and the Poverty Reduction Plan 2006-2010.

On December 25-26 the Round Table Meeting was held to present the Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Plan 2006-2010. Representatives from provincial and district

departments, head of districts and NGO's were invited to participate in the two-day meeting. 'I would like to encourage all of you to implement this plan 2006-2010 in an efficient and transparent manner' Mr. Bounthiem Phommasathit vice-governor of Saravane province said. 'This plan will help improve our annual goals,' said Mr. Mahanakone Souliya Head of Agriculture Department. There will be 11 plans and 85 priority projects to implement for 2006-

2010, however Saravane will face a problem with implementing these projects due to lack of human resources and insufficient budget at district and village levels. The meeting aimed to disseminate the Socio-economic Development Plan and in doing so, co-ordinate the implementation of activities between the government sectors and non-governmental organizations working in Saravane Province.

...No funds!

(Continued from page 1)

ceiving allocations. Samuoy will be receiving 19,861USD, the other three districts will continue to receive the same allocation as last fiscal year: Saravane 102,686USD, Ta Oy 54,941USD and Lakonpheng 43,865USD. In order to receive these allocations each eligible district has to comply with minimum conditions such as: The District Planning Committee meet at least once a year, the District has approved its annual investment plan for the coming year and during the implementation and formulation of the District Annual Investment Plan, the districts have complied with the laws and regulations of Government of Lao PDR and with the spirit and provisions of the DDF Instructions, for

example: 'Local contributions should not exceed 15% of the total budget cost of each planned investment project'. Consequently, 'if a district fails to comply with these conditions they will be dis-

qualify to receive the local contribution included in their investment plans. Saravane District will only have 5 investment sub-projects instead of 15. The three district investment plans for year 2006-2007

Saravane, Taoy and Lakonpheng DIP FY06/07				
27 sub-projects				
	Saravane	Lakonpheng	TaOy	Total
a) By District	1	2	2	5
by Kumbane	4	7	11	22
Total	5	9	13	27
b) By sector				
Health & sanitation:	1	4	8	13
Education:	2	2	1	5
Agriculture and natural resources:	1	1	3	5
Economy:	1	n/a	n/a	1
Transport:	n/a	2	1	3
Total	5	9	13	27

qualified,' Mr. Bounthiem Phommasathit (Vice-governor of Saravane Province) said. 'Annually, I will appoint a special committee to assess the compliance to these conditions,' he added. Hence, Saravane District had to re-evaluate their DAIP to re-

qualify to receive the local contribution included in their investment plans. Saravane District will only have 5 investment sub-projects instead of 15. The three district investment plans for year 2006-2007 consist of 27 instead of 37 as stated in the previous newsletter. The reason for these conditions is to ensure public participation in the planning and investment process.

*Saravane DDF Eligible District Allocations FY2007 - 2008 MC for Access DDF allocations Circular no DDF/1/2006.

In-house learning

'Staff of the Governor's Office have been studying to improve their English language skills' said Natasha Lewis and Craig Salmon, VSA NZ Volunteers with the Science, Technology and Environment Office (STEO). 'Mr Vithanya, also from the STEO Office has assisted with translation' Natasha added. Lessons have included reading, writing, listening and speaking exercises. The first module of lessons (8 lessons) began in June and involved 24 staff (10 women) from many different

offices including Tourism, STEO, Administration, GPAR and Foreign Relations. For the second module of lessons (14 lessons), the more than 25 participants were divided into two groups, beginner and advanced. The beginner class was made up mainly of staff from the Department of Planning and Investment. Within this class there was a group of 10 diligent participants (5 women) who consistently attended lessons. 'These students are



progressing well and display increased confidence in interacting with foreigners' Natasha said. A third module of lessons will begin in January 2007. After work, Natasha and Craig are giving classes twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday's) from 4 to 5:30pm at the Planning Meeting Room.

'Success will come to those who try'...Lao Proverb

...For Financing District Planning and Budgeting

(Continued from page 1)

responsibility and are the decision-making party. Accordingly, the districts are responsible to use the allocations exclusively to finance the activities established in their annual investment plans. The districts have to report and maintain accounting records for expenditures made, based on the government accounting system, rules for district financial management and reporting (MoF rules) in line with government regulations. For example, the Saravane District fund flow consists of three installments, after the use of all three and the completion of

all planned activities; Saravane District have to prepare a final financial report to be certified by GPAR-SP and the provincial finance department. The latter, has to inspect and control the districts operations and accounts on a regular basis.

This MOU led to Mr. Mike Winter's (UNCDF Technical Advisor) field mission to Saravane District on October 13 to 18. The technical support mission included a series of financial management and budget execution procedures for the implementation of the District Investment Plans. As a consequence, district authorities, know how to distin-

guish between the ordonnateur (budget authorizing officer) and the comptable (the disburser of payments). GPAR SP will continue to strengthen the capacities of district authorities in the coming year. 2006ManagementArrangementsMOUGPARSP/MoF/UNDP-UNCDF13 October 2006 at page 2.

Mike Winter UNCDF Technical Advisor advised Mr. Thavone Bouphavong (NPM) in financial procedures



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P.O Box 56
Office of the Governor
Saravane District and Province
Lao PDR.
Phone: 856 -034 -212012
Fax: 856 -034 -212011
E-mail: gparsrv@yahoo.com

'Towards good governance and quality
service delivery'

The GPAR Saravane Newsletter aims to present a summary of the government project activities to the wider donor community in Lao PDR, the national policy-makers in Vientiane as well as the national/international community in general. The newsletter is therefore focusing on the current activities from the pilot districts of Saravane Province; Ta Oy, Lakhonpheng, Saravane and Samuoy thus, improve the local communication and assist the Government of Lao PDR in its efforts to implement its overall governance agenda. For further information and request please contact us at gparsrv@yahoo.com If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter, please send your draft (100-150 words / arial /12pts/ A4) to the address enclosed and we will publish your article in the coming editions.



Saravane

Made by: Adriana G Serdan UNV with support of UNDP.

Information Board...



→ With the aim to promote gender equity and support local professionals, GPAR SP has hired a local translator Ms. Thiphaphone Singsavang (Noi). Ms. Noi studied English at the National University of Laos, she has experience as interpreter and translator for a Swiss Organization. Recently she worked for the Foreign Relation's Office at the OoG in Saravane Province.

← For more than one year, Mr. Vongsackda was working as our Capacity Building and Communication Specialist. On behalf of GPAR SP we would like to thank Mr. Thanongsack for his valuable work. We wish him great success!

GPAR SP news

- Last November 12-18th, Mr Thavone Bounphavong with Mr. Thilaphong Oudomsine participated in the UNCDF Local Development Asia Workshop in Hua Hin, Thailand. It was the first time that a NPM from Lao PDR join this kind of meetings.
- Mr. Thavone has also participated at the Training on Prince2 and Second Results Management Guide and Atlas Compatible (Sept 28-29); GPAR LP inception workshop (Oct 2-3); Refresher Course of Financial Management (Oct,27); and GPAR Retreat in Xiengkhoung (Nov 24).

Forthcoming Activities

1. DIP Training in Samuoy, and refresher course in Saravane, Ta Oy and Lakhonpheng.
2. Village Development Priorities
3. Sector Development Priorities
4. Kumban Development Priorities
5. DPT project Screening
6. DPT Appraisal.
7. TPR

GoL with the support of the UNDP, UNCDF, EU.

