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Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times" et en français dans l'hebdomadaire le "Rénovateur".

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➤ **Vientiane Times :**

- [World Bank adds US\\$15 million for environmental protection](#)
- [Nam Ngiep 1 dam construction on track](#)
- [World Bank pledges US\\$16.8 million for early childhood learning](#)
- [Budget constraints hinder building of new Phongsaly capital](#)
- [CARE reviews success of 12 year poverty reduction project in Xayaboury](#)
- [EU highlights friendship with Laos on Europe Day](#)

World Bank adds US\$15 million for environmental protection

(By Times Reporters)

The World Bank has agreed to provide additional funding of more than 121 billion kip (US\$15 million) to finance the Second Lao Environment and Social Project (LENS2), according to the bank's website. The World Bank Group's Board of Executive Directors on April 29 approved the funds from the International Development Association for Laos LENS2, previously called the Protected Area and Wildlife (PAW) project. This US\$15 million in additional funding supplements the more than 191 billion kip (US\$23.7 million) already provided in April 2014. The LENS2 project aims to strengthen overall government capacity in environmental assessment management, while continuing to improve the management of National Protected Areas and reduce the trade in illegal wildlife in eight provinces. "Further improving environmental protection is a priority for Laos," the World Bank's Country Manager for Laos, Sally Burningham was quoted as saying on the website. "We are very pleased to support efforts to strengthen the country's environmental protection management systems." Under the LENS2, gov-

ernment departments or agencies and local non-profit associations are encouraged to formulate their own environmental 'sub-projects' and apply for funding from the Environmental Protection Fund, a financially autonomous Lao organisation established in 2005, according to the bank. Worldwide, over 50 similar environmental funds have been created to finance and support environmental initiatives. The first LENS project, which ran between 2005 and 2013, funded more than 150 sub-projects through the Environmental Protection Fund, producing tangible results at a local level. The LENS2 project is an important part of the World Bank Laos Country Partnership Strategy for 2012-2016 which aims to improve public sector management, competitiveness and connectivity, sustainable natural resource management, and inclusive development by supporting policies and institutional reforms. The project is also in line with the draft of the Lao government's 8th five-year National Socio-economic Development Plan for 2016-2022, which underscores the importance of protecting the environment.

(Vientiane Times 05 May 2015)

Nam Ngiep 1 dam construction on track

(By Times Reporters)

The construction of a major power plant, the Nam Ngiep 1 hydropower project, saw actual overall cumulative work progress until the end of March at 12.4 percent, with power production scheduled for early 2019. Lao Holding State Enterprise (LHSE) reported yesterday that the project developers are carrying out construction of the project through four separate main construction contracts, namely the civil works, the electrical and mechanical works, the hydraulic metal works and the 230kV transmission line works. The project construction started at the end of last year and the cost of the project is more than 7.24 trillion kip (US\$906 million), LHSE reported. The project is a Lao and foreign joint venture, under the name Nam Ngiep 1 Power Co Ltd. It is jointly owned by KPIC Netherlands, a subsidiary of Japan's Kansai Electric Power, with 45 percent of the shares, EGAT International of Thailand with 30 percent and LHSE with the remaining 25 percent. Following the completion of the project, it will have an installed capacity of 290 megawatts (MW) with a generating capacity of 1,592 GWh per annum to sell the majority of its production to Thailand with the balance being sent to the national power grid. According to last year's report, the main dam and power station will generate 272 MW of power for export to Thailand. About 6km downstream from the main dam, the re-regulating dam and power station will generate 18MW of electricity for sale to Electricite du Laos (EDL) for contribution to the domestic grid.

The project has a concession period of 27 years and once the concession period has ended the ownership of the plant will be transferred to the Lao government in its entirety. The developers signed the project concession agreement with the Lao government in August 2013. The Ministry of Energy and Mines reports that there are 26 power projects under construction with an expected completion date of 2020 and these will have a total installed capacity of about 6,112MW. Eight power plants are currently under construction and will be complete by the end of this year. Five of the projects are scheduled for completion next year, seven will come on line in 2017, one will be finished in 2018 and three plants will begin operation in 2019. Twenty-seven power plants are currently operational in Laos with a combined installed capacity of about 3,304MW. Laos is aiming for a total installed capacity of about 12,000MW by 2025, a ministry report has noted. The abundant resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries give Laos the potential to produce more than 25,000MW of electricity. LHSE is a shareholder in four power plant projects (Nam Theun 2, Xe Pian-Xe Nam Noi, Nam Ngiep 1 and Hongsa Mine-Mouth Power Project) that have a total installed capacity of 3,658MW with a generating capacity of 21,215 million KWh per annum and a combined investment cost of around 55.46 trillion kip (US\$6.93 billion), including US\$536.64 million invested by LHSE.

(Vientiane Times 05 May 2015)

World Bank pledges US\$16.8 million for early childhood learning

(By Times Reporters)

The World Bank announced on Monday that it will provide more than 135 billion kip (US\$16.8 million) to support the teaching of *new reading techniques for Lao children*. According to the announcement published on the bank's website, primary schools in Laos will receive new funding to support the new method for teaching reading to Lao children. The use of Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA), a globally tested approach for teaching children how to read in early grades, is expected to improve the quality of pre-primary and primary education. The Second Global Partnership for Education project will be financed with a US\$16.8 million, four-year grant for Laos' schools from the Global Partnership for Education, a multilateral partnership promoting a quality education for all children in the world's poorest countries. Around one million pre-primary and primary students will benefit from the new approach to teaching reading under the project. In addition, almost 9,000 principals or heads of incomplete schools [those which do not offer five grades of primary education], alongside 1,000 provincial and district education staff, as well as 8,900 village education development committees will benefit from capacity building training. "This project will help address

some of the main factors constraining the quality of education in the Lao PDR – funding, allocation of resources and teaching effectiveness," Country Manager for the World Bank in Laos Sally Burningham was quoted as saying. The project will be implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports, with implementation support provided by the World Bank Group in collaboration with local donors. In order to improve the quality of reading education in early grades, the grant will help the ministry to develop and pilot the EGRA method for teaching and learning of reading in grades 1 and 2. The broader use of the EGRA approach and of testing reading abilities at younger ages will inform policy options and programmatic decisions to address the gaps in learning outcomes among different ethnolinguistic groups in Laos. This project builds on the experiences of the first Global Partnership for Education project in Laos, which was implemented between 2010 and 2014, and complements support for the education sector in Laos from other development partners. Universal access to quality education is one of the main goals of the draft 8th five-year National Social and Economic Development Plan (2016–20) for Laos.

(Vientiane Times 06 May 2015)

Budget constraints hinder building of new Phongsaly capital

(By Times Reporters)

Building of the new provincial capital in Phongsaly is experiencing delays and construction work in Bounneua district is making slow progress as government funding dries up. It was planned that more than 2,000 billion kip would be made available for construction of the new provincial capital over a 10 year period but the government has approved only 58 billion kip since work began

in 2010, according to provincial authorities. So far, only the Department of Education and Sports, provincial hospital and the politics and public administration school have been built, a senior official in charge the project, Mr Thongsing Inthaseng, told *Vientiane Times* yesterday. The provincial Administration and National Assembly offices are currently under construction and

more than 10 kilometres out of the planned 80 kilometres of new road has been built. “To accelerate the project, we have suggested that the government consider asking each of the state bodies involved to create their own budget and seek grants or loans to build their own offices and install facilities,” Mr Thongsing said. As an example, he said the Ministry of Public Works and Transport should be responsible for road construction and water supply, while the Ministry of Energy and Mines should finance the installation of electricity. If the project was funded only by the government's annual budget, he was certain it would not be finished within the planned 10 year timeframe. Each year, the government allocates only about 10 billion kip to the project. The project was approved by the government in 2009 after the provincial authorities originally hatched the plan more than 20 years ago. The existing provincial capital is constrained by mountainous terrain and

lacks sufficient water for irrigation and industry, so the decision was made to relocate. The provincial authorities reserved most of the land needed for the project in 1994, so they will not need to pay compensation to local residents who have to give up their property. They will only need to pay compensation for lost crop production, while no households will be moved from the existing provincial capital to Bounneua district, Mr Thongsing said. Phongsaly district, the current provincial capital, cannot easily be expanded because of its location. As the population increases, the authorities need more land for crop cultivation and more water for irrigation and other purposes. Bounneua district was chosen as the site for the new capital because it is mostly flat land and is near to the Boun River, which can be used as a water supply. Bounneua is 42 kilometres from Phongsaly district and is home to 14 villages.

(Vientiane Times 06 May 2015)

CARE reviews success of 12 year poverty reduction project in Xayaboury

(By Times Reporters)

The Poverty Alleviation in Remote Upland Areas (PARUA) Project provided an opportunity to pilot adaptive and resilient livelihood strategies with activities that proved most effective at enhancing food security for the local Prai population, which were then scaled up with excellent results. After some 12 years the PARUA Project, managed by CARE International and funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), has come to an end. A celebratory event was held in Xayaboury province last month to look back at the progress made and to officially close the project. The ceremony was chaired by the Deputy Governor of Xayaboury province, Mr Yanyong Sipaserth, and attended by officials from national, provincial and district levels. The project has been a core part of CARE's programming in Laos for more

than a decade. Over three phases between 2003 and 2015, PARUA worked closely with local authorities at province and district level. Local authorities were engaged in the project from the outset by chairing the Project Steering Committee as well as benefiting from targeted capacity building activities which strengthened rural planning and development administration. Presentations at the event described a long list of project achievements for local communities. These included improved knowledge of livestock rearing and animal husbandry, supported by much improved veterinarian practices. Communities have also seen substantial increases in productive assets and household incomes, as well as improved water supply for both domestic and agricultural purposes.

The improved capacity of the local Prai people was another significant achievement, with a particular focus on the unique ability of Prai women to help other Prai women. These and many other achievements were outlined during commentary by the donor, the district, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and by representatives from the communities themselves. Country Director of CARE International, Mr Glenn Bond, spoke passionately about the project's outcomes. "The final evaluation tells us that villages where CARE worked witnessed a near doubling of average household livestock assets, and a greater-than doubling of average household income, between 2009 and 2014," he said. "The project has also helped with a major reduction in the percentage of underweight children, which was more than halved between 2008 and 2014. Whilst PARUA did not achieve these things alone, the project made a meaningful contribution to this impact and this is something of which both CARE and partners are rightly proud." "Many elements have been drawn together to allow PARUA to accomplish these outcomes. An innovative and responsive programme design certainly helped, as did the participatory learning approach applied throughout and the focus on community ownership. But most of all, there were three

key features that ensured PARUA would succeed: committed staff, a committed donor and committed implementing partners," Mr Bond added. "SDC have been a model donor. By committing resources over a long period they have helped CARE consolidate changes at community level. Moreover, they have been a communicative, flexible and pragmatic partner willing to learn and adapt with us on this journey. On behalf of CARE Laos I would like to acknowledge these strengths and thank SDC for their significant support." The ceremony concluded with the handing over of two buildings from CARE to the district of Xaysetthan, and the exchange of many gifts and certificates of appreciation between the province, the donor and CARE. Participants are optimistic that the effects of PARUA will continue to be felt well into the future, both in Xayaboury and beyond. Mr Bond summarised as follows: "I am confident that the villagers, local officials, district and provincial authorities will... maintain and build upon the positive changes we have seen. CARE Laos will do the same, learning from both our strengths and our shortcomings over these 12 years. By replicating the best features of PARUA elsewhere, we will see the impact of this work multiply many times over, a fact of which everyone here today can be proud."

(Vientiane Times 07 May 2015)

EU highlights friendship with Laos on Europe Day

(By Times Reporters)

European Union Delegation Chargé d'Affaires Mr Michel Goffin addressed a press conference in Vientiane yesterday to mark Europe Day on May 9, which this year celebrates the 65th anniversary of the origins of the European Union. Accompanied by the French, German and British ambassadors to Laos, Mr Goffin said he welcomed the chance to look ahead and highlight how the EU contributes to the important partnership with Laos. Since signing the Trade and Co-operation Agreement with Laos in 1997, the

EU has been a constant and present partner, sharing its assistance and expertise, Mr Goffin said. The coming month will see Laos undoubtedly reasserting its course for several years with discussions on the Amendments to the Constitution and the renewal of the leadership, of the government and of the legislature, he added. This period offers a unique chance to impulse further efforts for strengthening the rule of law in Laos and promoting inclusive and sustainable growth. All citizens need to feel they are included in

the development of Laos towards a modern and equitable society. The EU stands ready to accompany this transition and has allocated more than EUR 200 million (more than 1.8 trillion kip) to Laos under its bilateral cooperation programme over the period 2014-2020 to improve basic education and food and nutrition security and strengthen good governance as well as the rule of law and human rights. The EU also wants to look to the future and reiterates its appreciation for Laos' longstanding commitment to enter into a genuine dialogue with the EU on fundamental rights. The 6th Laos-EU Working Group on Human Rights and Governance is scheduled to take place this September. In the spirit of political dialogue, close partner-

ship and mutual interest, the EU is looking forward to discussing the evolution of the human rights situation in Laos and in the EU, as well as of their bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this area, in particular on the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations and the ratification of international conventions such as the Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances. The EU will continue to assist and support Laos in fulfilling its international obligations. Mr Goffin added that over the past 65 years, the EU has benefited from peace, wealth and democracy. Today, the EU's assistance to Laos is increasing and cooperation is highly productive, he said.

(Vientiane Times 08 May 2015)