

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY VIENTIANE



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Lessons learned from Australian aid review

A recent independent evaluation of Australian rural development programs has underlined the value of Australia's work with NGO partners to address rural poverty in the Lao PDR, and offered important lessons to secure better program results in the future.

The evaluation of the Laos-Australia NGO Cooperation Agreement Program (LANGOCA), commissioned by the Australian Government, will be the subject of lessons learned workshops with NGO and Lao Government representatives on 27 June 2014.

The workshop will be an opportunity to share the results and experiences of LANGOCA, an A\$14 million (LAK109 billion) program that aimed to increase the resilience of poor rural communities. The program linked disaster management and UXO clearance activities with livelihoods programs in five provinces: Vientiane, Khammouane, Sayaboury, Saravan and Sekong.

LANGOCA was implemented in partnership with Care International, Oxfam, World Vision Laos and Save the Children.

Since 2007, the program resulted in the clearance of UXO from 528 hectares of land, freeing land for agriculture, which has generated much-needed income for more than 25,000 poor rural people.

More than 2,400 rural households benefitted from rice bank and irrigation systems, resulting in increased productivity and access to food during the lean season. More than 4,425 people benefitted from improved access to safe water and sanitation.

Sayaboury has become a model for disaster risk reduction in the Lao PDR as a result of LANGOCA activities.

Australia's Ambassador to the Lao PDR, John Williams, said the LANGOCA evaluation confirmed Australian Government programs were working effectively to support the Lao Government's rural development priorities.

"The review was an important step to reassure us that Australian assistance is delivering concrete results for poor rural communities in the Lao PDR," Ambassador Williams said.

"It also highlighted the outstanding qualities of Australia's NGO partners, and their ability to achieve development results in partnership with the Lao government."

The Ambassador said the review had also produced a range of important lessons that would help strengthen the future impact of aid investments.

Australia's annual A\$55.6 million (LAK449 billion) development assistance program in the Lao PDR is focused on education, human resource development, rural development (including UXO clearance), trade reform and natural resource management.

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