

Capacity Development Training in Lao PDR Twinning Partnership on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Lao PDR-Japan

17-18 September 2014

New Rose Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Organized by Department of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (DESIA), Lao PDR
in association with Environment Resources Management (ERM) Japan with support from ADB

Background

For developing countries in Asia, application of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements has been consistently identified as a priority concern of environmental compliance and enforcement. Yet, effective implementation of the EIA laws in these countries remains patchy, especially in relation to compliance and enforcement of environmental management and monitoring plans (EMMPs) which identify measures to be taken in order to reduce adverse environmental and social impacts to acceptable levels or offset them in appropriate manners. Therefore, EIA implementation needs to be enhanced through further capacity strengthening.

Under Technical Assistance (TA) 7566-REG on environmental safeguard of Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Environmental Compliance and Network (AECEN) aims to increase capacity for EIA implementation through its subproject – “Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Clearinghouse and Capacity Strengthening through Twinning.” The subproject strives to achieve its aims by facilitating knowledge capture and dissemination of information on international best practices in EIA implementation through exchange of knowledge and know-hows as well as mutual learning.

For twinning partnerships, Lao PDR was selected to participate in the subproject as one of the mentee countries, and Japan has been acting as a mentor country. Useful perspective, experience and strategies are expected to be shared to advance implementation of EIA laws and regulations in Lao PDR through hands-on activities under the subproject.

Under the subproject between Lao PDR and Japan, there are three key activities planned in order to achieve the subproject’s aim. The first activity, a consultation workshop in January 2014 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, brought together partners from both mentor and mentee countries, identified priority assistance needs, discussed and agreed on objectives and design of the partnership, and secured commitments from both countries for its implementation.¹ Following on the first activity, a workshop was held in June 2014 in Yokohama, Japan to strengthen capacity of the government officials in charge of EIA implementation from the mentee countries (Lao PDR and Sri Lanka) responding to their needs identified at the consultation workshops. Partners and experts from Japan provided the participants both from Lao PDR and Sri Lanka with good practices of EIA implementation in Japan through workshop and study tour. The workshop also provided a platform for all the participants from both mentor and mentee countries to understand the differences in EIA implementation in different countries, share experiences and to discuss improving EIA implementation for mentee countries.²

The third activity, a training workshop – to be conducted in a mentee country – aims to share lessons from the workshop in Japan to a wider audience mentee country and address further narrowed-down needs from the mentee country. During the second workshop held in Japan, a set of training needs for the third activity was identified by the participants from Lao PDR. Through a discussion between the participants from Lao PDR and the experts from Japan, a hands-on training exercise for EIAs for hydropower projects was

¹ Please refer to <http://www.aecen.org/events/consultation-workshop-twinning-partnership-environmental-impact-assessment-eia-between-lao-pd> for further details.

² <http://www.aecen.org/events/capacity-development-workshop-twinning-partnerships-eia-lao-pdr-japan-and-sri-lanka-japan>

agreed on as a priority area for the planned training workshop. ERM Japan Ltd, as a mentoring organization, has agreed to dispatch its staff members to be speakers and modulators for the capacity development training in Lao PDR.

Objectives and expected outputs of the capacity development training

As stated above, the scope of this capacity development training is limited to EIAs for hydropower projects in Lao PDR. Target participants will include different offices under DESIA.

Objectives of the capacity development training scheduled to be held on 17-18 September 2014 are as follows:

- To strengthen capacity on assessment of social and environmental impacts due to construction and operation of hydropower projects;
- To provide hands-on knowledge on prevention, control and mitigation measures of social and environmental impacts caused by construction and operation of hydropower projects; and
- To enhance understanding about monitoring the potential impacts resulting from operation of hydropower projects.

Expected outcome:

Government officers from DESIA are expected to have:

- Increased understanding and knowledge on conducting EIA for hydropower projects; and
- Better understanding of monitoring the potential impacts resulting from operation of hydropower projects.