



**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED
NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**

EVALUATION REPORT



**UDF-LAO-09-326 Lao Encouraging and Applying Democracy for
Civil Society (LEAD)**

Date: 6 May 2013

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(i) Background

The project “Lao Encouraging and Applying Democracy for Civil Society” (LEAD) ran from 1 October 2010 – 30 September 2012, with a total grant of USD 375,000. It was designed by the Kenan Institute Asia (K.I.Asia) and implemented in partnership with the Rural Research and Development Training Center (RRDTC) and the government’s Lao Union of Science and Engineering Association (LUSEA). The target population consisted of 30 government officials, 250 civil society leaders and managers from 25 local organizations. As defined in the Project Document, the overall objectives were:

- to empower Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and leaders in Lao PDR to help them contributing meaningfully to Laos’ development; and
- to enhance the enabling environment so CSOs may operate more effectively.

(ii) Assessment of the project

Project design and objectives were **relevant**. Measures adequately addressed the beneficiary needs identified in the grantee’s initial context analysis and the project’s baseline study. The project foresaw the involvement of various staff levels of Lao non-profit associations (NPAs), aiming to ensure that these, once trained, will dispose of the technical knowledge and practical skills needed to transform their organizations into professionally run CSOs, which follow a strategic direction and that are managed in a business-oriented manner.

Despite initial delays and adjustments to the activity plan the project was **effective**. Overall satisfaction was high among participants of the LEAD project’s events, of which many for the first time ever comprised a methodological approach that combined lecture and practical exercises. Trainees confirmed to evaluators that they had throughout the programme frequent opportunity to test their new range of knowledge. Having supported leadership and institutional capacity building and having furnished government and NPA stakeholders the rare opportunity to jointly observe good practice project examples from different sectors, the project’s implementation partnership made an effective contribution to the strengthening of the capacity of NPAs in Lao PDR, both at individual professional and institutional levels. However, issues with the quality of some of the results have been observed, which evaluators attribute to the absence of a locally based project manager. These issues may put the project’s sustainability at risk.

Among the signs of **positive impact** evaluators noted the beneficiaries’ testimonials how improved skills have affected their day-to-day work, which e.g. include their business development efforts, their review of the mission statement for their organizations and their attempts to enhance their communication with potential donors and other NGOs. Some CSOs reported they obtained an international funding as a direct impact of the LEAD training program.

Cumulative expenditure for trainings/meetings, implementing partners/contractual services

and advocacy/outreach resulted in an acceptable average cost of approximately USD 278 per beneficiary. With a view to the imminent launch of LEAD II, additional investment in local staff for capacity building and resource mobilization purposes could have probably enhanced long-term **efficiency** and sustainability.

With regards to the **sustainability of the project's outcomes** evaluators expressed four main concerns: (1) the direct and indirect beneficiaries expressed their need to have continued access to reference materials and that not all of these have been made available in Lao language; (2) the importance that trainees nominated by NPAs participate in training that matches their actual tasks and levels of experience; (3) the necessity to better guide beneficiaries how to appropriately spend granted funding and to transparently report expenditure applying related rules/procedures; and (4) the long-term need to better engage with government stakeholders, thus securing their active collaboration with NPAs to identify local development issues that may be addressed through joint efforts. Such qualitative issues probably could have been avoided through a stronger local presence of a project manager, and would have enhanced the sustainability of some of the project's outcomes.

(iii) Conclusions

- Impressions from meetings and lively exchanges with more than 30 beneficiaries, during which they described to the evaluators how improved skills have already affected their work and subsequent results, lead to a conclusion consistent with the findings of the grantee's outcome surveys, according to which an important proportion of ***former project participants apply the newly acquired knowledge.***

- While the project's achievements are not to be disputed, the evaluators have formulated a number of ***concerns with regards to the effectiveness and sustainability*** of the project's outcomes. Since UNDEF has recently awarded a new grant enabling K.I.Asia to follow-up and build on the achievements of the LEAD project, related recommendations ***focus in particular on design and implementation aspects of the LEAD II project.***

(iv) Recommendations

Among our recommendations to address the concerns we noted in the comments on effectiveness and sustainability are:

- to actively encourage the participation of NPAs from outside Vientiane to participate in LEAD II activities, in order to ensure the subsequent small grant awards will be of benefit to a ***more significant number of end-beneficiaries from rural areas;***

- to maintain website visitor statistics and to keep records how LEAD II website user feedback was received and acted upon, so as to allow for the assessment of the usefulness of the grantee's approach to communication;

- to ensure that ***all reference materials*** used in trainings and workshops will

be consistently **available in Lao language**; and to **make the LEAD II website more useful** by uploading the project's training materials for online consultation and download (e.g. pdf);

▪ to foresee the presence of local project management capacity for LEAD II, either through K.I.Asia or RRDTC, for the sake of quality assurance in the context of the project's training and mentoring scheme. It is expected that this will enhance the UNDEF grantee's ability to

- (a) correctly identify and confirm individual training participants, i.e. all trainees nominated by NPAs without exception should meet precise criteria, thus ensuring that participation will be effective and useful for their daily work;
- (b) provide mentoring (i.e. help NPAs with the management and organization of their activities) and other assistance to small grant beneficiaries, such as monitoring of the micro-projects' performance and guidance on the rules/procedures governing their expenditure;
- (c) report and suggest corrective actions as and when required to the small grant facility's steering committee, and
- (d) soundly prepare and coordinate visits of the steering committee members and government personnel to micro-project sites.

II. INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

i. The project and evaluation objectives

This report contains the evaluation of the project entitled “Lao Encouraging and Applying Democracy for Civil Society (LEAD)”. The project ran from 1 October 2010 – 30 September 2012, with a total grant of USD 375,000 (out of which UNDEF retained USD 25,000 for monitoring and evaluation).

The project was designed by the Kenan Institute Asia (K.I.Asia). It was implemented in partnership with the Rural Research and Development Training Center (RRDTC), a Lao NGO, and the government’s Lao Union of Science and Engineering Associations (LUSEA). As defined in the Project Document, the overall objectives were to (1) empower Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and leaders in Lao PDR to help them contributing meaningfully to Laos’ development and to (2) enhance the enabling environment so CSOs may operate more effectively. The target population consisted of 30 government officials, 250 civil society leaders and managers from 25 local organizations.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to “undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved”.

(ii) Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was conducted by an international expert, working with a national expert, under the terms of the framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. In accordance with the agreed process, the evaluation aimed to answer questions across the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of *relevance*, *effectiveness*, *efficiency*, *impact*, and *sustainability*, as well as the additional criterion of *UNDEF value added* (see Annex 1).

The evaluation took place from December – March 2013 with the fieldwork in Laos conducted from 21 to 25 January. The evaluators reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials on civil society in Laos (Annex 2). Initial and final interviews were held with former project staff of K.I.Asia and RRDTC, involving K.I.Asia's senior project development manager and RRDTC's management team leader. Fieldwork focused on meetings and exchanges with representatives of the implementing partners and staff members of the participating CSOs, to confirm the project beneficiaries' experiences and to obtain updates of their most recent activities. These interviews and group meetings were carried out in Vientiane, involving 3 implementing partner representatives (of which 2 were project staff), more than 30 training beneficiaries (of which 3 were also recipients of small grants and 6 were also obtaining personal mentoring) and the secretary general of LUSEA (Annex 3).

(iii) Development context

Following a thirty-year struggle, the Lao People Revolutionary Party (LPRP) seized power in December 1975, abolished the monarchy and established the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Today, the country is among the last few remaining Communist regimes, two of which (China and Vietnam) are its immediate neighbors.

In terms of development, the government introduced in 1986 what it called the "New Economic Mechanism", opening Laos over the following decade to foreign investment and development aid. In 1997 the country joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and became an official member of the WTO in December 2012. A prime-ministerial decree in 2009 established two special economic zones in northern Laos for development by foreign companies. The current economic outlook is positive, with a projected annual GDP growth of 8%¹. Still classified as least developed country, the Lao PDR ranks as 138th of 186 countries listed on the 2012 UNDP Human Development Index.

For the first 15 years of the Lao PDR, the LPRP ruled without a constitution. During this period revolutionary justice prevailed: the party was the law. To better reflect the political and economic reality of contemporary Laos, the constitution's first version of 1991 was extensively amended in 2003². The government, since its establishment, has delivered basic social services, disseminated information and policies, and consulted the public through party-led mass organizations³. With hundreds of thousands of members, well-organized communication and outreach structures, and presence throughout the country into even the most remote villages, these mass organizations have played the role that civil society organizations (CSOs) traditionally occupy in other countries and political contexts.

Despite the existence of Article 44 of the Lao constitution, according to which civil society groups in the official form of "associations" are legally permitted, CSOs have been described as operating in one of the world's most limited civil society sectors⁴. The constitution states: "Lao citizens have the right and freedom of speech, press and assembly, and have the right to set up associations and to stage demonstrations which are not contrary to the laws". Theoretically, governmental or non-governmental organizations may legally support the government to contribute to the country's socio-economic development. However, civil society activity hardly exists in Laos. Organizations involved in the country's socio-economic development, such as the Lao Bar Association⁵, established by government decree in 1996, or the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, established by a statute passed by the National Assembly in December 2001, are semi-

¹ 7th National Social-economic Development Plan (2011-2015), source:

http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/LA_7th%20NSEDPlan_Eng.pdf

² Constitution of the Lao PDR, source:

http://www.na.gov.la/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=35:constitution-of-lao-pdr&lang=en

³ There are four officially party-led mass organizations, including the Lao Front for National Construction, the Lao Women's Union, the Lao People's Revolutionary Youth Union, and the Federation of Lao Trade Unions.

⁴ Asia Foundation, News release (August 2012) on the occasion of the first publication of a CSO directory for Laos. Source: <http://asiafoundation.org/news/2012/08/asia-foundation-supports-publication-of-first-ever-directory-of-civil-society-organizations-csos-in-laos/>

⁵ The first and longest existing CSO of Laos. The organization's website (currently not operational) used to disseminate information to improve awareness about citizens' rights among the Lao people.

governmental, and hence not fully independent⁶. The only popular associations officially authorized in Laos prior to 2009 were organizing committees for religious functions, producers' and water-users' associations, school associations, and sports clubs, none of which were remotely political or dealing with democracy issues. Any attempts to set up cultural and historical associations failed to receive permission from the Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC).

However, there are signs that the government has begun to acknowledge the role that local associations can play in national development, in particular to meet its goals related to the poverty eradication. It was in April 2009, when the Prime Minister's Office approved the Decree on Associations⁷, stating it aimed to increase the number of associations, streamline the registration process, and improve oversight. The Decree provided the legal basis for the establishment and registration of local non-profit associations (NPAs)⁸, in order "[...] to protect the rights and legitimate interest of the association, its members or communities"⁹. The Decree, which subjects registered NPAs still to political control by the government, was of limited effect. So far, only 99 of the more than 200 associations known to be in existence have applied for registration¹⁰.

In the absence of financial support from Lao government sources, the skills gap is the main obstacle for many local NPAs to become strong and sustainable in order to fulfill their mission. The majority of NPAs in Laos is in their early stages of development and often lack basic capabilities, such as identifying and applying for donor funds and is unable to meet the standard expectations of international donor agencies, such as developing business plans, designing projects, and fulfilling financial and audit requirements.

In addition, most Lao citizens are unaware about the existence of NPAs and the role they can or do play. This indicates that there is also a need to better explain to the wider public the likely benefits of communication and cooperation between governmental institutions and local CSOs, such as more and better services for those who need them, and a freer flow of education and information.

⁶ See <http://www.laocci.com> for a list of member associations under sponsorship and membership with the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

⁷ Decree No 115/PM of 29 April 2009, http://www.iccsl.org/pubs/Lao_PDR_Decree_Law_On_Associations.pdf. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) has been assigned with the registration of CSOs, and upon request provides applicants with a "Handbook of Associations" issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

⁸ It is relevant to note that these local organizations are called NPAs, or not -profit associations. In Laos, the terms "non-governmental" or NGO are perceived as being in opposition to the government and therefore considered not appropriate.

⁹ Article 2 of Decree No 115/PM.

¹⁰ According to MoHA's Civil Society Division, 99 associations have applied for registration. 33 of them have been approved, 17 officially established with temporary authorization, 23 in phase of consideration and 26 accepted for application.

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

(i) Project strategy and approach

The overall objectives of the “Lao Encouraging and Applying Democracy for Civil Society” (LEAD) project, as defined in the Project Document (UDF-LAO-09-326) in December 2010, were to (1) empower Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and leaders in Lao PDR to help them contributing meaningfully to Laos’ development and to (2) enhance the enabling environment so CSOs may operate more effectively. Accordingly, the grantee’s strategic approach aimed for three key outcomes:

- Building awareness of the importance of CSOs in Lao society and government;
- Building the capacity of local CSO leadership to effectively contribute to development needs; and
- Developing CSO sustainability through institutional capacity building.

Research conducted by K.I.Asia prior to the launch of the UNDEF-funded project found that only 10 of the country’s NPAs had the capability to manage (under guidance) projects funded by international donors. Capacity building focused on individual training, without considering actions aiming at strengthening at the organizational level. There was no consolidated approach supporting the development of independent CSOs with a sustainable perspective, featuring leadership and capabilities strong enough to implement a vision, retain staff and generate funding. In addition, coordination among existing CSOs was absent, i.e. gatherings with a sectorial focus, to share ideas and discuss how to approach the government on jointly identified issues, were not taking place. At the same time, K.I.Asia found that government agencies needed to achieve a better understanding of the role and importance of cooperation with CSOs.

K.I.Asia is a Thailand-based development organization working to promote results-oriented, sustainable development in Asia, with an emphasis on the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Established as an independent non-profit organization in 1996, the organization provides project management, consulting, training, and research services for corporate, government and multilateral clients. Focus areas include entrepreneurship, business and economic development education, public health and corporate responsibility. Based on its expertise, K.I.Asia intended to address the problems the Lao civil society sector faces.

The suggested approach of the LEAD project involved a range of capacity building measures, targeting both the individual and organizational level, in order to ensure that Lao CSOs in the future will be directed by competent leaders, on the basis of jointly understood visions and mission statements that provide these non-profit associations with a sustainable institutional perspective.

In the long-term, the grantee expected the LEAD project to enable NPAs to contribute meaningfully as public participants to the development of the country, by:

- enhancing, within the small space that the Decree on Association has generated, the enabling environment for CSOs; and
- increasing the effectiveness of non-profit associations.

(ii) Logical framework

The Project Document translates K.I.Asia's programmatic approach into a structured plan of project activities and intended outcomes, including the achievement of the project's overall and specific objectives. The framework below aims to capture the project logic systematically, allowing to clarify at a glance how intended outcomes and impacts, which evaluators observed in the Project Document's result framework, link and in the long-term lead to the objectives promoted by the grantee.

Project Activities & Interventions	Intended outcomes	Medium Term Impacts	Long Term Development Objectives
<u>1. Awareness Raising</u>			
Training and capacity development needs assessment	Needs of CSOs, staff and management identified and discussed; application of participatory approaches promoted	Increased knowledge among government and civil society participants	
Civil society stakeholder meetings	Access to relevant information (events, communication platforms, practical examples)	=> <i>Improved enabling environment for CSOs</i>	
Government stakeholder workshop	=> <i>Better understanding of the importance and role of CSOs in society and government</i>		
Communication initiatives: website, newsletter			
Mixed CSO/government official visit to Thailand			
<u>2. CSO Leadership Building</u>			
Leadership summit	Sector focus established (health, tourism, education, poverty reduction)	New knowledge applied by trainees / participants	NPAs contribute meaningfully as public participants to the local development needs of Laos
Civil society workshops	=> <i>Local CSO leadership capacity built</i>	=> <i>Improved effectiveness of non-profit associations</i>	
CSO management training			
<u>3. Institutional Capacity Building</u>			
Training for institutional capacity building	Professional capacity and project proposal elaboration capabilities developed	New knowledge applied to transform existing CSOs into professionally managed non-profit associations	
Competition and award of small grants to CSOs	=> <i>Institutional capacity of non-profit associations strengthened</i>	=> <i>Improved basis for CSO sustainability</i>	
CSO mentoring			

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) *Relevance*

Baseline Situation

The socio-cultural and political context described above and the fact that the Decree on Associations (2009) acknowledged the possibility of civil society participation, confirm the relevance of the project's objectives and intended activities.

K.I.Asia also conducted a baseline survey, collecting CSO feedback on their training needs and assessing the extent to which training was required, thus determining the status of the Lao NPAs' capacity development and the issues that occurred in the context of previous training activities. The survey considered questionnaire responses of nine NPAs and findings from interviews with three international NGOs, as well as two mass organization and four government representatives. It confirmed that NPAs are in dire need of capacity building assistance. Of the approximately 220 local CSOs, only 10 NPAs have some capacity to manage an internationally funded project under guidance. The grantee concluded that while CSOs were growing quickly, most of them were missing the internal capacity to manage their growth effectively.

Baseline Survey: NPAs' Feedback on Training Needs

- Proposal writing: 100%.
- Institution/organization development: 90%
- Leadership training: 80%
- Project management: 80%
- Monitoring & Evaluation: 80%
- NPAs often claimed previous training on similar topics was not practical, did not meet their needs and was difficult to follow as provided in English only.
- In a number of cases NPAs nominated wrong staff to participate in training or the training did not match the participant's level of experience.
- There was also frustration over previous training not being followed-up by on-the-job technical assistance.

Baseline Survey: Key Issues

- Most NPAs lacked business development and administrative skills, hence were unprepared to apply for donor funding.
- Marketing tools (e.g. annual reports, newsletters, websites) were rarely used, which is mostly linked to low levels of communication skills.
- In the absence of strategy development and leadership skills, NPAs often failed to convey their vision among members and donors.

The project response

Evaluators found various examples of relevant project design, which addressed the NPAs' baseline survey feedback:

1. Awareness Raising

K.I.Asia's strategic approach was to start off with a *Civil Society Stakeholder Meeting*, in order to discuss and confirm the findings of the baseline survey. The event also intended to introduce participants to the LEAD project and its planned training schedule. Designed as a trust-building measure, with this meeting the grantee aimed to reassure NPA leaders that the project's activities were taking into account their most important needs and concerns.

The objective of the *Government Stakeholder*

Workshop on civil society was not only to present the LEAD project's objectives to government staff, but to also clarify the opportunities for and benefits of cooperation between government and CSOs, thus aiming to directly contribute to an improved environment for collaboration between CSOs and government authorities.

A visit by a mixed group of NPA leaders and government officials to Thailand. Thai CSOs, which were among the winners of the 2011 Thailand NGO Awards, were chosen for the visit to provide the Lao participants with examples of good practice in Thai CSO/government cooperation, aiming to demonstrate how good governance can make a real impact on development.

2. CSO Leadership Building



The *Business Development Training for CSOs* was designed in response to one of the central needs identified by the baseline study, i.e. to guide CSOs in settling for a strategic direction and in managing CSOs in a business-oriented manner. The activity, which was part of the CSO management trainings module, was designed to support NPAs with the identification of

Example used to introduce practical exercise “reaching a deal”: needs addressed through matching NGO and donor priorities.

suitable donors and funding opportunities, as well as to provide guidance how to engage and interact with donors. Conceptually, the two-day training included a series of practical and trainee-feedback-driven exercises, which most importantly ensured that trainees focused on the analysis of, response to and fulfillment of donor expectations, i.e. (a) how to assess, select/prioritize and make first contact with donors (also making a clear distinction between reactive, proactive and donation-driven fundraising); (b) how to review and prepare a response to a donor's request for proposals; and (c) how to reach a deal with a donor, manage the relationship and address donor complaints.

Practical Exercise
“Addressing Donor Complaints”

Oh no! Our biggest donor is very upset!
Our project manager failed to meet the project milestone and we had no idea! Apparently, the project design was not very good and we are way behind schedule. Worse, we may not have enough money to continue the project unless we get that payment. Come up with at least 10 key points explaining the below. Remember, we need to keep this donor!

- What went wrong
- What you will do to fix the problem
- Why they should still trust you
- Why they should make the next scheduled payment

The *Civil Society Workshop* under the capacity building component introduced methodological approaches to cooperation with the government, i.e. problem-tree analysis and the cluster concept. It was the first time that these approaches to jointly identified sectorial issues (related to health, tourism, education, poverty reduction) were going to be made available to and discussed by the entire range of CSO stakeholders of Laos.

3. Institutional Capacity Building

A fundamental aspect identified by the baseline study was that CSOs were lacking (a) administrative, (b) analytical and (c) business capacities. K.I.Asia therefore designed an *Institutional Capacity Building* training programme, comprising of 10 different courses (some of which were offered at basic and intermediate levels), which focused on capacities vital for a CSO's operation. The course package addressed needs through training related to above (a) e.g. in human resources, accounting & finance training; above (b) e.g. in SWOT analysis, participatory rural appraisal; and above (c) e.g. in proposal writing, project development, project management and communication; thus aiming to ensure Lao NPAs' preparedness to apply for and manage donor grants.

Mentoring was designed to meet the need for on-going post-training technical assistance, as expressed in interviews during the baseline survey, and also confirmed by the participants of the initial Civil Society Stakeholder Meeting. Based on the results of a self-assessment conducted jointly with an experienced mentor, this exercise aimed to identify the specific key issues and needs NPAs face, in order to prioritize them and to create a customized plan targeting improvements over time. This, and the intention that these issues were to be fixed by NPAs themselves with the assistance of the mentor, represent a concept, which is considered relevant. Mentoring was provided on-site, by e-mail and phone, with improvements mainly targeting aspects of finance, human resources, marketing and project development.

(ii) Effectiveness

The final narrative report indicates that due to the novel nature of the project initial negotiations with its implementing partners RRDTC and LUSEA took longer than anticipated. To accommodate the feedback obtained in this context, adjustments to the project design were made, leading subsequently to a slightly delayed launch of the project. Among the changes that occurred to the project's original design:

- The project manager role was assigned to a Bangkok-based K.I.Asia resource person, as applications obtained for a locally-based expat manager were of unsatisfactory quality;
- An activity initially foreseen to assist participating CSOs with the process of formal registration as NPA was abandoned, since already provided by another project, and replaced by adding resources to LEAD's small grant facility.

Despite these changes the project produced all outputs foreseen, with quantitative results often surpassing the initial plan. The following examples demonstrate that this was to the advantage of individual project beneficiaries, as the number of CSO staff individuals

reached by LEAD outputs was usually higher than planned. However, issues with the quality of some of the results have been observed, which evaluators attribute to the absence of a locally based project manager. These issues have been addressed in the sustainability section below.

1. Awareness Raising

At the *Civil Society Stakeholder Meeting*, the grantee and NPA leaders successfully achieved agreement on the project's suggested activities, to address the needs identified in the baseline survey. Given that 61 instead of the targeted 30 participants attended the event, there is little doubt that LEAD was solidly supported by and highly accepted among stakeholders. The meeting also reassured them that particular concerns they had expressed were going to be given due consideration, i.e.:

- Both the target audience (i.e. entry knowledge levels required) and timing of each training activity were going to be clearly communicated in advance;
- All training activities were designed to include practical, tailored exercises simulating and tools addressing the daily challenges met in the workplace, and a provision for post-training technical assistance was made;
- Training courses and materials were going to be provided in Thai or Lao language, with particular attention being paid to correct and consistent technical terminology.

As part of the project's *Communication Initiatives*, nine electronic newsletters were disseminated as planned by email to 330 (planned: 300) subscribers, in English and Lao language. Although the LEAD project website's (www.Kiasia.org/lead) function was to (a) support the dissemination of information about the project, upcoming events and contact details, (b) provide access to application guidance for the small grants facility and (c) offer the newsletter via download option to a wider readership, K.I.Asia was unable to provide documented evidence about its effectiveness. While evaluators assume that the website increased the potential outreach of the project's newsletter, they were unable to obtain website visitor statistics or anecdotal evidence to confirm whether website user trends or newsletter readership feedback were assessed and/or acted upon.



A former Business Development trainee informs about his recent successful project proposals

Seventeen (planned: 10) participants took part in a *visit by a mixed group of NPA leaders and government officials* to Thailand. The number of government representatives fell slightly short of target (4 instead of 5), but almost triple the number of NPA leaders compared to plan participated (13 compared to 5 planned). According to interview feedback collected by evaluators, participants appreciated the rare opportunity to jointly witness good practice project examples, which included visits to projects addressing e.g. health and education sectors. The tour also included meetings with representatives of local and international

NGOs (e.g. Foundation for Slum Child Care, World Vision Foundation), and donor and government organizations (Microsoft, Chevron, USAid) overseeing the work of NGOs. Taking into account the participant feedback collected by K.I.Asia, it can be assumed that the study visit effectively contributed to a better understanding of the importance and role of CSOs in society and government: 86% confirmed that they have gained useful knowledge and 93% expressed general satisfaction with the study visit.

2. CSO Leadership Building

Overall satisfaction was reportedly high among participants of the *Leadership Summit* (87.7%) and the *Business Development Training for CSOs* (91.6%).

Thirty-five (planned: 30) top-level management staff from the government sector, NPAs and party-led mass organizations attended the *Leadership Summit*, held for the first time ever in Laos, during which executives from Thailand and a K.I.Asia consultant presented their approach to leadership development and management. Participants surveyed after the summit expressed their appreciation for the presentation of practical examples of community foundations and economic development partnerships, and about the ways these contribute to community growth and prosperity. In interviews with the evaluators, they also confirmed that the event helped them to improve their leadership capacity and to better understand the benefits of effective engagement in partnerships. The summit was complemented by a *CSO Management Training* at a later implementation stage (attended by 36, compared to planned 25 participants), providing insights into concepts of conflict management and the promotion and communication of a new vision, thus inspiring CSO leaders to become change agents not only in society, but also within their own organization.



Phonexay Inthaleuxay, Director of the Dongsavath Children and Youth Development Center (DC&DC), demonstrates a hand-washing station, one of the activities financed through the small grant awarded by LEAD

According to the grantee, it was the first time ever that *Business Development Training for CSOs* was delivered in Laos by applying a methodological approach that combines lecture and practical exercises. The 33 (planned: 25) management-level trainees throughout the event had frequent opportunity to test their new range of knowledge from opportunity assessment, via proposal writing techniques, to donor relationship management. Therefore, 86% of the participants considered that their time was usefully spent to help

improving their CSO's organizational effectiveness, and many post-training survey participants requested more training to continue strengthening the leadership within their CSOs. The interviews conducted by evaluators confirmed the significant effects of this training, as a number of trainees related recent grant awards to the application of their newly gained proposal writing skills (cf. impact section below).

3. Institutional Capacity Building

Three micro-projects were initiated through the establishment of a *Small Grant Facility* and a project competition, on the basis of a request for proposals inspired by the UNDEF funding application procedure and supported with USD 15,000 from the LEAD project's budget. Fifteen applicants participated in the process, which enabled successful competitors to experience all steps from project identification to completion, and helped them to work towards their socio-economic development goals, while practicing their new organizational capabilities. The micro-projects and the results presented to the evaluators were needs-based, useful (i.e. introduction of household water treatment facilities and maintenance by *CDEA*; training of volunteer teachers and support for after-school activities for children by *DC & DC*; support for women engaged in income-generating handicraft activity by *Vivncaus*) and clearly represented the outcome of the CSOs' attempts to promote democracy through community involvement and to become sustainable organizations capable to deal with the expectations of international donors.



Marketing flyer “Who We Are / What We Do” developed by the NPA Vivncaus (Sisterhood for Development) during the mentoring phase

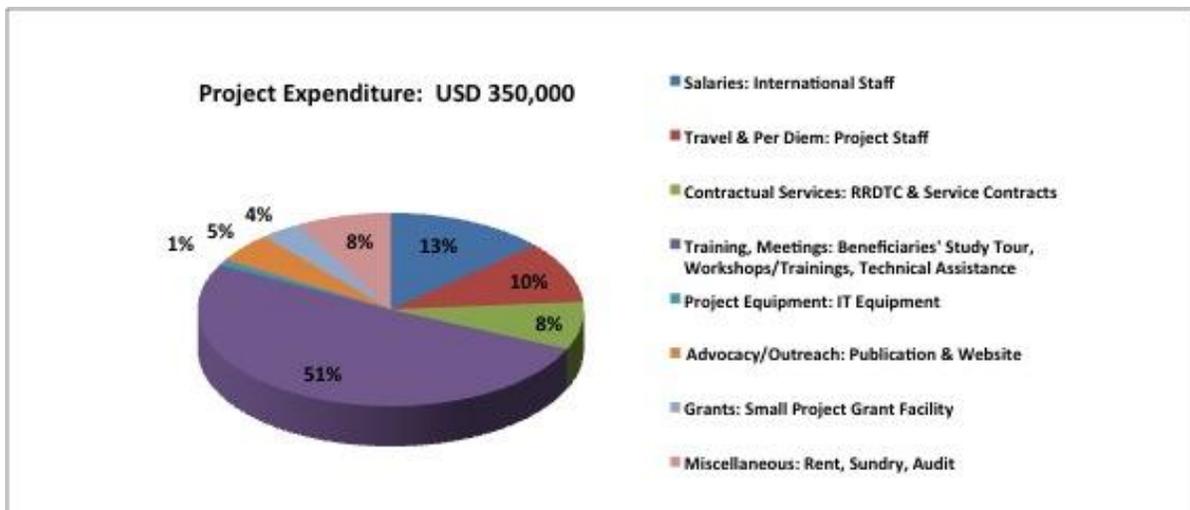
In order to provide targeted support to specific capacity development needs, interested CSOs were given the opportunity to benefit from ongoing technical assistance, which LEAD provided in the form of intensive training in *Mini-Labs* and/or *Mentoring*. Guided by a detailed checklist, participating CSOs conducted a self-assessment of key issues and needs, and together with K.I.Asia prioritized those needs, in order to develop a plan for making improvements, including the preparation of various key documents, needed to transform their CSOs into professionally-led NPAs. The following period of *Mentoring* was conducted on the basis of a schedule agreed in this plan, during which an experienced mentor assisted 12 (planned: 10) NPAs in a series of individual sessions with a review of their suggested improvements, mainly by reviewing key documents (e.g. Business Plan, Marketing Brochure, Annual Report, Project Proposal, Finance & Accounting System), which the NPAs either drafted following their own approach or on the basis of templates provided by the LEAD project. 18 NPAs, which according

to the results of the assessment needed more intensive technical assistance, were trained in small groups in topical 1-day *Mini-Labs*. This activity was a conversion of the initially

planned regular “open-hour” at the LEAD project office (which would have dealt with trainee questions of follow-up nature rather than with in-depth practical training), to increase the effectiveness of the project’s technical assistance component.

(iii) Efficiency¹¹

Activities generating a better understanding of the importance and role of CSOs in society and government (e.g. stakeholder events, communication and study visit) and the development of improved institutional and leadership capacities (involving the transfer of executive, management and technical expertise) represented the project’s principal focus. Accordingly, 64% of the budget was reserved for expenditure related to trainings/meetings (51%), implementing partner and contractual services (8%) and advocacy/outreach (5%). Breaking the amount spent for above activities (USD 223,500)¹² over the total number of 702 direct beneficiaries¹³ provides an acceptable average cost of approximately USD 278 per beneficiary, as each of them benefitted from participation in multiple training sessions.



K.I.Asia and the partnership incurred little expenses to purchase 3 laptops and 1 printer (1%). Given the project was managed by a Bangkok-based project coordinator and involved also the intervention of K.I.Asia’s senior international expertise, the expenses allocated for travel (10.4%) and miscellaneous purposes (7.9% covering e.g. office rent, printing/copying and audit) appear acceptable. The amount invested in micro-projects (ca. 4%, after transfer of funds from the cancelled CSO-registration activity) has been excluded from above considerations, given its small size and the relevance of its contribution to the promotion of democracy through community involvement and to the achievement of sustainability by the participating NPAs. Given the above, the project was efficient. However, additional investment in local staff (i.e. RRDTC) for capacity building and resource mobilization purposes, could have probably enhanced long-term efficiency and sustainability. Since a follow-on project activity has been launched, such an approach would have enabled

¹¹ Quantitative assessments made in this section are based on the total amount of project expenditure, which excludes the budget amount reserved for evaluation by UNDEF.

¹² Expenditure budgeted for project management (i.e. salaries) is not included in these percentages/amounts.

¹³ This figure is based on data provided by K.I.ASIA.

K.I.Asia to delegate larger parts of the future project coordination role.

(iv) Impact

For all but one of the project's 22 workshops, more than 60% of the participants confirmed in K.I.Asia's outcome surveys that they continue to apply in their workplace the knowledge gained through training provided by the LEAD project (cf. also the anecdotal evidence in the boxes below). Solely the responses of participants of the government stakeholder workshop display lower levels of impact. Most impressively, all trainees of the project's budgeting and goal/objective setting workshops claimed to apply the new knowledge they have acquired through the project. On the basis of interviews held with the project's 3 implementing partner representatives, and many focus-group and one-to-one meetings involving more than 30 training beneficiaries (of which 3 were also recipients of small grants and 6 were also obtaining personal mentoring), evaluators have independently formed the view that the project generated positive effects. Selected anecdotes are provided below¹⁴. They are grouped along some of the key issues identified in the grantee's initial contextual analysis (= baseline, cf. section on relevance) to demonstrate how the project contributed to an improved effectiveness of NPAs.

Business development and administrative skills needed to transform existing CSOs into professionally managed non-profit associations

The project coordinator of the *Gender Development Association* (GDA), who participated in almost all workshops of the LEAD project, praised the session, during which he had opportunity to share the trainer's **proposal writing** experience: "The training was highly relevant to my job, as I have a better orientation about the different donors and the sectors they target." He claims that his new knowledge, which he also disseminated among other colleagues, helped him to improve his ability to formulate proposals meeting the expectations of international donors. "I have started to make use of the SWOT analysis since and I also ensure to draw lessons by requesting donors to inform me about the reasons for the rejection of a proposal." He proudly announced that a project proposal he recently submitted to the UNDP's Global Environment Facility (GEF) was successful. The project, which obtained a grant of USD 43,000, aims to improve the quality of bamboo products originating from two districts in and outside of Vientiane, and is expected to start in June 2013.

The *Community Development and Environment Association* (CDEA) was one of the three NPAs who successfully applied for support in the LEAD project's **small grant project competition**. When interviewed by evaluators, CDEA staff attributed their success to newly applied proposal features, among them a more structured approach, formulations that catch the attention of donors and the inclusion of a needs assessment based on distinct problem and solution trees which clearly addressed issues and ways to resolve these. Awarded with a total grant of USD 6,000 USD, the project provided water filtration for 54 rural households in the village of Khanvieng (Xiengkhuang province). Newly acquired communication skills and participatory approaches supported the project's preparation phase, i.e. village meetings served to identify the need for and to explain the benefits of water filtration. Additional knowledge gained in **project cycle management, human resources management** and **action/financial planning** also greatly facilitated the project's implementation.

¹⁴ In line with current development practice, an effort was made to identify recent anecdotes or to obtain, where possible, details of relevance complementing the grantee's available report documentation, to conduct an independent assessment of impact.

Communication and other promotional tools to improve PR and marketing

A number of NPA trainees confirmed that they have started to plan and implement public relation campaigns by making more extensive use of electronic media, following their participation in the **communications** workshop: “We now prefer to disseminate our mission statement and exchange about our activities by email and through social networks, because these are easy to maintain and have a good outreach”, said a NPA representative, and another added: “Before, we had our website set up externally. Afterwards nobody knew how to maintain it, so it was soon out of date.” Since 2012, social network presence brought e.g. the *Gender Development Association* more than 1,000 online followers. First benefits included the access to and sharing of information with a US-based organization how to best support disabled children. Representatives of other NPAs, among them *Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association*, have told evaluators that the LEAD **mentoring** helped them to convert their previously project-based reporting into annual synthesis reports, which they now use as a promotional tool for introducing themselves to international donors.

Strategy development and leadership skills needed to convey a NPA/s vision among its members and donors

“I feel more confident in managing the future of my association”, says the director of Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE), The NPA, which was formerly referred to as the *Women's Rights Study Association*, is in the process of transformation: “Participation in LEAD enabled us to develop a **strategic plan** for our new association. We have just completed the formulation of our new mission statement 2013-2015. Our vision, objectives and activities are based on SWOT analysis findings and the sharing of needs and ideas identified by our partners, members and staff.” The NPA used to promote gender equality by training students, teachers and lawyers of the faculty of law. “We now want to promote CEDAW and gender mainstreaming at the level of local and provincial governments, with the help of our former law student trainees.” A weakness identified by their SWOT analysis and to be addressed in the future was that the past planning of joint activities with implementing partners often lacked integration and sequence with the academic plan of the faculty of law. “Expanding our target group, we also needed to consider our need for increased donor funding. Thanks to LEAD we were able to **identify** additional appropriate **donors**, which helped us to focus and save time needed for our future business development efforts”.

These examples demonstrate that the grantee successfully provided beneficiaries with the knowledge and skills needed to overcome the challenges identified in the baseline situation¹⁵.

Besides, these capacity building and attitudinal effects, some of the CSOs interviewed testified they received an international funding as a direct result of the LEAD training program.

¹⁵ Evaluators have met approximately 4.2% of the project's target population. It must be noted that both the grantee and UNDEF deemed field visits outside Vientiane capital unnecessary. Regrettably, there were no NPA representatives from rural areas among the evaluators' interview partners, as the grantee mobilized NPA representatives from Vientiane capital only.

(v) Sustainability

Evaluators came across a number of issues that risk undermining the sustainability of the project's results. Among these were (1) availability/ accessibility of reference materials in Lao language, (2) participation of NPA staff in training matching their tasks and levels of experience, (3) clarity and transparency concerning the use of the small grant facility's funding, and (4) the level of involvement of government stakeholders. While the project's achievements are not to be disputed, additional efforts will be required, to ensure the sustainability of the project's achievements:

1. Availability/accessibility of reference materials in Lao language

Depending on the origin and/or language capacities of the grantee's project staff, training was delivered either in Thai or English language. During the interviews beneficiaries confirmed that they had no difficulty in following presentations, when held in Thai. English speaking project staff was supported by Lao interpreters. As a general rule, the grantee's training was accompanied by PowerPoint presentations in Lao language. However, in a number of cases trainees mentioned that handouts and hardcopies of additional reference materials were provided in English language only. Therefore, former trainees often suggested to evaluators in the focus group meetings that reference materials should be (a) made available in Lao language (together with the Lao PowerPoint presentations), and (b) made accessible on-line (e.g. on the LEAD project's website); both in order to ensure their long-term availability, and in particular to support former project participants who engage as multipliers in the sharing and transfer of knowledge within their NPAs.

2. NPA staff trained in subjects matching their actual tasks and levels of experience

The grantee made a deliberate effort to clearly identify the target audience of and entry knowledge levels required, when inviting NPAs to nominate its staff to participate in the training measures of the LEAD project. When evaluators attempted to determine the impact of the project's capacity building on the work of former trainees, various project beneficiaries admitted that their professional tasks did not correspond to the subject of the training they participated in. An important example was the participation of NPA staff with accountancy and administrative functions in training measures addressing CSO leadership building. Evaluators assume that this development was owed to the grantee's decision to coordinate the project from its Bangkok base, and that the local implementation partner's resources (RRDTC was in charge of the preparation and confirmation of each event's participant lists) lacked the capacity required to ensure participation by appropriate levels of NPA staff ahead of time. While interviews confirmed that participation in such cases still had significant positive effects (e.g. improved team-working and organizational skills), the probability of future internal knowledge transfer to those actually concerned (in particular from bottom to top organizational levels) is deemed unlikely and is hence considered at risk.

3. Clarity and transparency concerning the use of the small grant facility's funding

Evaluators established that USD 832 (14%) of the LEAD small grant facility's funding awarded to the Community Development and Environment Association (CDEA) were transferred to the Khangvieng Village Community Development Fund. The amount, which is the unspent remainder of funds after completion of the water filtration project, now enables local households to apply to a village committee for borrowing up to USD 125, for

investments in livestock or seeds. Since the activity was not included in K.I.Asia's reporting to UNDEF, evaluators requested clarification. K.I.Asia reestablished the process as follows: CDEA informed K.I.Asia's mentor and its project coordinator in an e-mail about the remaining balance and requested permission to transfer the funds to the Community Development Fund, which was subsequently granted by the mentor. According to K.I.Asia's most recent inquires (made upon evaluators' request) funds appear to be spent for the stated new purpose, as K.I.Asia has meanwhile obtained photographic and other documentary evidence. While purpose and amount of the re-allocated funding appear acceptable, CDEA's spending of the granted funds is normally bound to its initial project design, as the grant was awarded through a competitive procedure. At the same time K.I.Asia as the manager of the small grant facility needs to ensure transparency in the context of its accountability to UNDEF. It is therefore advisable that CDEA is made aware of the fact that the permission for alternative use of the funding was exceptional, as the use of donor funding granted through competitive procedure is usually limited to the purpose of the project's initial design.

4. Involvement of government stakeholders

Vis-à-vis government stakeholders, the LEAD project ensured information and awareness raising measures of a scale previously unseen in Laos, but promotion of active involvement in the project proceedings was of very limited extent. In order to improve the central government's understanding of the importance and role of CSOs, capacity building measures in the long-term also need to address the development of cooperation processes that prepare government authorities to (a) include NPAs in the identification of sectorial priorities for state budget formulation purposes and to (b) establish transparent and regular procedures that enable NPAs to apply for national funding to implement activities consistent with jointly agreed priorities.

(vi) UNDEF Value Added

It is the grantee's view that the Lao PDR's government policy in areas such as civil society development is guided by the example of Vietnam. When awarding K.I.Asia with funding, UNDEF supported two projects in Vietnam and this almost certainly facilitated K.I.Asia's efforts to explain the project's purpose, when applying for an operations permit at MoHA, NGO registration at MoFA, and conducting negotiations to conclude an implementation partnership with LUSEA.

In addition, a number of civil society projects implemented by UNDP in Lao PDR have reportedly contributed to the positive perception of the UN among members of the Lao government.

V. CONCLUSIONS

i. Many of the LEAD activities were designed to respond to stakeholder needs identified in the grantee's initial context analysis and the project's baseline study. As a consequence, it was the first time ever that a CSO support project in Lao PDR envisaged to practice certain methodological approaches (such as: encouraging different NPAs to jointly identify issues, in order to establish sector focus; combining lecture and practical exercise to solve concrete business development challenges) and to deliver in-depth knowledge tailored to specific needs (most importantly: CSO leadership and management skills). We therefore conclude that the **project's design was relevant** to facilitate the transformation of Lao NPAs into professionally led CSOs that contribute meaningfully to local development needs.

ii. Although the launch of project activities was subject to initial delays and adjustments, the grantee managed to produce all outputs foreseen by the project's final implementation plan. Results often surpassed this plan, which was particularly advantageous for the project's beneficiaries, as the actual number of NPA staff individuals reached by LEAD outputs was higher (702) than planned (590). Except for its communication component, for which no evidence exists about actual outreach of website and newsletters, there is evidence that the project supported leadership and institutional capacity building. These accomplishments lead us to the conclusion that the work of the implementing partnership represents an **effective contribution to the strengthening of the capacity of NPAs in Lao PDR, both at individual professional and institutional levels.**

iii. Meetings with more than 30 beneficiaries have provided the evaluators with an impression consistent with the findings of the grantee's outcome surveys, according to which an important proportion of former project participants apply the newly acquired knowledge. They described in lively discussions how their improved skills (e.g. in strategic planning, human resources management, financial planning, internal and external communication) have affected their work and the subsequent results. Unsurprisingly, beneficiaries most often referred to the business development training as their personal favorite, since increasing numbers of winning project proposals certainly are the most tangible merit of the project. Other signs of **positive impact** notably include improved efforts of strategic development at organizational level, leading to a clearer definition of an NPA's vision and a better focused set of objectives and activities; as well as significantly enhanced approaches to the development of public relations, in order to improve communication with potential donors and other NGOs. Findings are, however, based on meetings with NPA staff based in Vientiane capital, which is why little can be said about the **potential impact** on NPAs from rural areas.

iv. Cumulative expenditure for trainings/meetings, implementing partners/contractual services and advocacy/outreach resulted in an acceptable average

cost of approximately USD 278 per beneficiary. While the purchase of computer hardware represented an insignificant cost (1%), a transfer of ownership (e.g. to the winners of the small grant competition or the local implementing partner) could have further enhanced the **sustainability** aspect of the project. Travel costs were acceptable, as the Bangkok-based project coordinator was also involved in the transfer of international expertise. Since the aforementioned relationship between inputs, outputs and the project's impact appears reasonable, it is our view that the project was **efficient**.

v. While the project's achievements are not to be disputed, we have formulated a number of concerns with regards to the **sustainability of the project's outcomes**. These include (1) the need to ensure continued accessibility to reference materials and their availability in Lao language; (2) a more rigorous approach to the final confirmation of individual training beneficiaries, to ensure NPA trainees participate in training matching their tasks and levels of experience; (3) better guidance and/or more transparently applied rules/procedures governing the use of granted funding, and (4) the long-term need for more active involvement of government stakeholders with NPAs in the process of needs identification and tackling of jointly identified issues. In view of UNDEF's recent award of a new grant enabling K.I.Asia to follow-up and build on the achievements of the LEAD project, we will include in the following section a number of recommendations with regards to the design and implementation of the LEAD II project.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that UNDEF has recently awarded a new grant (UDF-LAO-11-453), enabling the grantee to follow-up and build on the achievements of the LEAD project, the following recommendations to UNDEF and K.I.Asia aim to strengthen the outcome of both the recently launched LEAD II project and future similar projects:

i. The pertinence of the project's design and effectiveness is among others owed to the fact that the beneficiary conducted (1) a sound initial contextual research and (2) a representative baseline survey among future project beneficiaries. Unlike the present case we sometimes witness grantees, which tend to skip the conduct of interviews or questionnaire surveys among potential beneficiaries. It is our view that the delivery of such "out-of-the-box" activities risk to overlook the specific needs and preferences of the beneficiaries targeted by projects promoting civil society development. *In accordance with our findings on relevance and effectiveness, we therefore recommend to UNDEF to encourage applicants to plan for the conduct of representative surveys among their future beneficiaries*, to ensure relevant methodological approaches are chosen and in-depth knowledge tailored to specific needs is going to be delivered.

ii. The 3 micro-projects supported by LEAD's small grant facility were a remarkable achievement, as they were needs-based, useful and clearly represented the highly successful outcome of the CSOs' attempts to promote democracy through community involvement. We therefore welcome that the grantee's approach for LEAD II will extend the grant facility to 16 beneficiaries with a total budget of over USD 100,000. LEAD II activities are foreseen to include rural NPAs, but are planned to take place in Vientiane only, for cost reasons and because most NPAs are located there. The LEAD I evaluation found only limited evidence about the impact on NPAs from rural areas. ***Based on our observations on effectiveness, we therefore recommend to the grantee*** to (a) actively encourage NPAs based outside Vientiane / in rural areas to participate in LEAD II activities and the subsequent grant competition and/or (b) support (based on merit) the award of a significant number of projects proposals (e.g. 35%), which were prepared with the involvement of and that target rural communities.

iii. A website will once again be the means to ensure the sharing of project information with beneficiaries and stakeholders. ***Based on our observations on effectiveness, we therefore strongly recommend to the grantee*** to maintain LEAD II website visitor statistics and to keep records how website user feedback was received and/or acted upon, so as to allow for the assessment of the usefulness of the grantee's approach to communication.

iv. After review of the LEAD II budget we assume that computer

hardware purchased through previous project funding will be used again. ***In accordance with our findings on efficiency, we therefore recommend to the grantee*** to foresee transfer of ownership (e.g. to most needy winners of the small grant competition, or the local implementing partner) following project completion, to further enhance the sustainability aspect of the project.

v. We have taken note that LEAD II intends to duly consider the beneficiaries' preference for Thai language training, supported by Lao language materials. In discussions with evaluators LEAD I beneficiaries frequently commented not to have received Lao language materials other than hardcopies of the PowerPoint presentation. ***Based on our observations on sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee*** to ensure this time round that (a) all reference materials used in trainings and workshops will be consistently available in Lao language; and (b) the LEAD II website will be used to allow for access (i.e. downloadable files) to training materials in the long-term.

vi. As far as the target group of the LEAD II project is concerned, a more rigorous approach to the final confirmation of individual training beneficiaries is required, in order to ensure NPA trainees participate in training matching their tasks and levels of experience. ***In accordance with our findings on sustainability, we therefore recommend to the grantee*** that the confirmation of individual training participants will be coordinated in situ. We have noted that K.I.Asia foresees to take the lead of this task, but it is our strong belief that this is a matter of pre-training quality assurance, which requires the involvement of a local project manager.

vii. In view of the expanded LEAD II small grant facility it is essential that end-beneficiaries obtain better guidance on the appropriate use of the funding they were granted. ***We therefore believe that it is essential and recommend to K.I.Asia*** to ensure the involvement of a local project manager, who will (a) advise mini-grantees on the rules/procedures governing project expenditure; (b) report and suggest corrective actions as and when required to the grant's steering committee, and (c) soundly prepare and coordinate site visits by steering committee members and government personnel. Such capacity could also help NPAs with the management and organization of their other activities (mentoring support).

viii. We have noted that LEAD II will address the previous absence of active involvement of government stakeholders. The approach taken by LEAD II to involve (a) MoHA in the grant award process (i.e. the confirmation of and agreement to needs identified by NPAs), and (b) line ministries in the monitoring of mini-projects (i.e. the supervision of the way NPAs address jointly identified issues) is highly commendable. We support K.I.Asia's suggestion to motivate government stakeholder participation through the organization of international study visits. However, ***based on our observations from other UNDEF-funded projects, we recommend to the grantee*** to plan for study visits that expose beneficiaries not necessarily to Thailand, but to a country, which has successfully applied comparable measures in a similar development context (e.g. Vietnam).

IX. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? ▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? ▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached? ▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? ▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? ▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value-added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

UNDEF

- Final Narrative Report, including Annex
- Mid-Term Progress Report
- Project Document
- Revised Results Framework
- Milestone Verification Report
- LEAD II Project Document

K.I.Asia

- LEAD Results Matrix
- Small Grant Case Studies
- Business Development Training materials
- Mentoring Matrix and Tools

Other sources

- Asia Foundation, News release (August 2012) on the occasion of the first publication of a CSO directory for Laos, <http://asiafoundation.org/news/2012/08/asia-foundation-supports-publication-of-first-ever-directory-of-civil-society-organizations-csos-in-laos/>
- List of member associations under sponsorship and membership with the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, <http://www.laocci.com>
- Handbook of Associations, edited by the Public Administration and Civil Service Authority, issued by the Prime Minister's Office

National Legislative Acts, Policies

- Constitution of the Lao PDR, http://www.na.gov.la/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=35:constitution-of-lao-pdr&lang=en
- Decree on Associations, No 115/PM of 29 April 2009, http://www.iccsl.org/pubs/Lao_PDR_Decree_Law_On_Associations.pdf
- 7th National Social-economic Development Plan (2011-2015), http://www.la.undp.org/content/dam/laopdr/docs/Reports%20and%20publications/LA_7th%20NSEDPA_Eng.pdf

ANNEX 3: SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEWS

January 21st, 2013, RDDTC office:

- Staff members and project resource persons:
 - John DaSilva, Project Development Manager, K.I.Asia
 - Denwood Holmes, Regional Consultant, K.I.Asia
 - Sisavath Chanthaleuxai, Management Team Leader, RRDTTC (implementing partner)

January 22nd, 2013, RDDTC office

- Mr. Olame Silaxa, Community Knowledge Support Association, CKSA
- Mr. Somphet Akkhavong, President, Lao Association for Disadvantaged People, LDPA
- Mr. Bounlap Pathilath, Project Coordinator, Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association, SEADA
- Mr. Youththasith Phisamy, Vice-President, STPL
- Ms. Khitsamone Outhammavong, Community Knowledge Support Association, CKSA
- Ms. Khambang Thippavong, Programme Coordinator, Lao Biodiversity Association, LBA
- Ms. Phonethip Thevongsa, Accountant, Gender Development Association, GDA
- Mr. Khammani Vongphommachanh, Lao Skills Development Association, LSDA
- Mr. Tingkham Khotphanya, Coordinator, Lao Positive Health Association, LYAP/ LaoPHA
- Mr. Khamphet Phanthavong, Lao Skills Development Association, LSDA
- Ms. Innakhone VoraChak, Co-Director, Sustainable Agriculture and Environment Development Association, SEADA
- Mr. Khammany, Vice President, VYDA
- Mr. Khamchan Sivanhthong, Deputy Head of Labor Management Division, Lao Trade Union
- Ms. Phetchinda Sinpaseuth, Lao Women's Union
- Mr. Khamphasong Chanhtharak

January 22nd, 2013, site visit (small project grantee)

- Mr. Phonexay Inthaleuxay, Director, Dongsavath Children and Youth Development Center, DC&DC

January 23rd, 2013, RDDTC office

- Mr. Oulathong, Project Coordinator, Gender Development Association, GDA
- Mr. Sengathit Laddavan, Facilitator, Lao Positive Health Association, LYAP / LaoPHA
- Mr. Korraканh Thopphavong, Administrator, Lao National Network of People living with HIV/AIDS, LNP+
- Ms. Maimona Vue, Administrator/Accountant, Vivncaus Sisterhood
- Ms. Champa, Team Assistant, Vivncaus Sisterhood

- Ms. Michitta, Volunteer, Coalition for Lao Information, Communication and Knowledge, CLICK
- Mr. Vankham Xayarack, Deputy Chief of Cabinet, Lao Trade Federation

January 24th, 2013, RDDTC office

- Ms. Hongkham Chanphaseut, Administrator, Coalition for Lao Information, Communication and Knowledge, CLICK
- Mr. Phayao Phimmason, HR Manager/Trainer, Association for Development of Women and Legal Education, ADWLE
- Ms. Kingmani Keomanichan, Accountant, Community Development and Environment Association, CDEA
- Ms. Inthana Bouphasavanh, Director, Association for Development of Women and Legal Education, ADWLE
- Mr. Champa Vongphachan, Member of Board of Directors, Poverty Reduction and Development Association, PORDEA

January 24th, 2013, site visit (small project grantee)

- Ms. Noimaniphone Lorbieyao, Project Manager, Vivncaus Sisterhood

January 25th, 2013, site visit (implementing partner)

- Mr. Somphone Phanousith, Secretary General of Lao Union of Science and Engineering Associations, LUSEA

January 25th, 2013, RDDTC office

- Staff members and project resource persons:
 - John DaSilva, Project Development Manager, K.I.Asia
 - Denwood Holmes, Regional Consultant, K.I.Asia
 - Sisavath Chanthaleuxai, Management Team Leader, RDDTC (implementing partner)

ANNEX 4: ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
K.I.Asia	Kenan Institute Asia
LEAD	Lao Encouraging and Applying Democracy for Civil Society
LPRP	Lao People Revolutionary Party
LUSEA	Lao Union of Science and Engineering Associations
MIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	Non-profit Organization
RRDTC	Rural Research and Development Training Center
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
WTO	World Trade Organization