

# Terminal Evaluation

## Asia

### I. Outline of the Project

- Country: Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Project title: The Project for the Development of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the National University of Laos
- Issue/Sector: Higher Education
- Cooperation scheme: Technical Cooperation Project
- Division in charge: Technical and Higher Education Team I, Group II, Human Development Dept.
- Total cost (at the time of evaluation): 840 million yen (This project had been operated as one combined project with the project for Lao-Japan Human Resource Cooperation Center, till end of march 2004.)
- Period of Cooperation  
(R/D):  
1 Sep 2000 - 31 Aug 2005  
(F/U):  
(E/N)  
(Grant) 12 Jan 2000
- Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Ministry of Education, National University of Laos
- Supporting Organization in Japan: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Kobe university, etc.
- Other Related Cooperation: The Project for Construction of Facilities and the Lao-Japan Human Resource Cooperation Center in the National University of Laos

### 1. Background of the Project

Lao P.D.R. undergoes a transition to the market economy since 1986. The human resource development is one of the most important assignments in the Socio-Economic Development Plan of Lao P.D.R. In order to promote the human resource development, the Lao government established the National University of Laos, including the Faculty of Economics and Management (FEM), in 1995 with the support of Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Lao government also requested the technical cooperation to Japan after the end of aid from ADB in September 2001.

In response to the above request, JICA dispatched long-term expert for providing the advice on the establishment of FEM and development of lecturers and curriculum since 1997. Also several survey teams were sent to examine the technical issues and the purpose, outputs, activities of the program.

Then the Record of Discussions (R/D) was signed on July 6, 2000 and the project was started from September 1, 2000 as 5-year technical cooperation project. For the first 4 years of the Project, it had been operated as one combined project with the Project for the Lao Japan Human Resource Cooperation Center. In April 2004, JICA headquarters was restructured. Along with the reform, the combined project was completely divided into two different projects.

### 2. Project Overview

#### (1) Overall Goal

FEM graduates contribute to development of a market economy of Lao P.D.R.

#### (2) Project Purpose

Students graduate from FEM with essential academic and professional knowledge and skills.

#### (3) Outputs

- 1) Quality of teaching staff is enhanced.
- 2) Curricula and teaching materials are developed and improved.

- 3) Necessary equipment and facilities are available.  
 4) Management system of FEM is improved.

#### (4) Inputs

##### Japanese side :

Long-term Expert:	10 persons
Short-term Expert:	47 persons
Long-term training in Japan:	15 persons
Short-term training in Japan:	15 persons
Long-term training in third countries:	8 persons
Short-term training in third countries:	14 persons
Equipment (including local cost):	52 million Yen

##### Lao Side:

Counterpart:	68 persons (at the time of evaluation),
Local Cost:	charges for electricity, water, domestic communication and cleaning etc.
Land and Facilities:	land for the FEM building and furniture for administrative staffs etc.

## II. Evaluation Team

### Members of Evaluation Team:

- 1) Leader: Mr. Senya Mori, Resident Representative, JICA Laos Office
- 2) Economics and Management: Mr. Toshihisa Toyoda, Professor, Faculty of Economics Sciences, Hiroshima Shudo University
- 3) Evaluation Analysis: Mr. Isao DOJUN, Chuo Kaihatsu Corporation
- 4) Cooperation Planning: Ms. Sachiyo Ito, Technical and Higher Education Team I, Group II (Technical and Higher Education), Human Development Dept., JICA

### Period of Evaluation:

31 Jan 2005 - 24 Feb 2005

### Type of Evaluation:

Terminal

## III. Results of Evaluation

### 1. Achievement

It is expected that most of Outputs, such as 1) enhancement of quality of teaching staff, 2) development and improvement of curricula and teaching materials, 3) improvement of equipment and facilities, and 4) improvement of management system of FEM, will be achieved. However, some part of them would not be fully achieved within the cooperation period (by the end of August 2005), such as research capability of teaching staffs, development and improvement of textbooks, and improvement of management system of FEM.

### 2. Summary of Evaluation Results

#### (1) Relevance

The Project Purposes and the Overall Goal are well relevant with main objectives of the Five-years Scio-Economic Development Plan (2001-2005), especially such as "to create continued economic growth" and "to develop human resource in various areas". Moreover, there are needs for human resources who contribute to development of market economy of Laos and employment needs for graduates of FEM, and also the Project is conformity with Japan's Official Development Assistance policy to Laos. Therefore, relevance of the Project is high.

## **(2) Effectiveness**

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Most of Outputs have been achieved as scheduled, which are the students' understanding of lectures, the number of research activities, the percentage of lecturers who hold master or higher degree, preparation of regulation for faculty management and so forth. In general, the Outputs of Project have well contributed to the achievement of the Project Purpose, which means that the effectiveness of the Project is high enough. While, due to introduction of new concentrations, there remains many textbooks to be improved or newly prepared, and also there is room to improve quality of research capacity of lecturers.

## **(3) Efficiency**

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Because of effective utilization of training in third countries, dispatch of experts from third countries and distance education using JICA-Net etc., certain good efficiency had assured in general. On the other hand, there were weakness on assignment of Japanese experts for project management and input for assistance on improvement of management system of FEM. And although several training on management and administrative matters were provided for core members of the faculty, knowledge and skill they learned have not been utilized enough for the application in their work. Also it took time to employ necessary number of administrative staff. Insufficient frequency of Joint coordinating committee meeting and time consuming decision making were pointed out as weakness of the Project also.

## **(4) Impact**

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### (1) Possibility of achieving the Overall Goal

It is too early to evaluate the full contribution to development of a market economy by FEM graduates, because only 4 years have passed since the first graduate students of FEM entered in a society. However, it should be pointed out that some graduates entered the core governmental organizations related to economic policy of the country, and also the fact that 80% of organizations, which employed graduates of FEM, are satisfied with their performance and with their academic and professional knowledge and skills. The future impact on the progress of a market economy is highly expected.

### (2) Impact to on and by the special course (night course) of FEM

Target of the Project is the regular course (day time course) of FEM, while the Special course (night course) of FEM is conducting by FEM (not a target of the Project). However, as teaching staff, textbooks and facilities are also used for regular course and the special course. As for the impact on the special course, capacity building of teaching staff, improvement of textbooks by the Project and availability of good facilities have made good impact on the quality of education in the special course.

In turn, there is also the impact by the special course on the teaching ability of FEM lecturers. By teaching at the special course, they are developing their teaching capacities through the experience and can earn an additional income. An important positive impact of the night course has been to help the financial sustainability of FEM. The revenue of tuition fee from the night course is utilized for entire operation of FEM. Considering current limited budget from the government, this revenue is an important financial source that can be utilized for operation of FEM

### (3) Impact on the other universities in Laos

Textbooks revised and newly created by the Project were donated to the universities in Luang Phrabang and in Champasak, which have faculties of Economics and Management, and also the central library of the National University of Laos. There is a plan to sell textbooks in public. It is expected that textbooks will be utilized more widely by students of other universities and business colleges. FEM lectures started to train the teachers regularly at the said two universities. In addition, some of FEM graduates teach in other universities than the National University of Laos, including public and private institutions.

## **(5) Sustainability**

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### (1) Organizational sustainability

To assure organizational sustainability of FEM, it is necessary to strengthen the operational and management capacity of the faculty more systematic way of work and by making decision making process quicker and clearer, sharing information among Lao staff.

Regarding teaching staffs, partially because many teaching staffs are studying abroad at the moment, the teaching load of lecturers is extremely heavy to make up for such absence teachers. Even under such severe situation of the lecturers' side, the students enrolled in FEM have increased, which cannot be controlled by the faculty. This may endanger the FEM's organizational sustainability. It is necessary that more feasible plan for human resource management of lecturers is developed.

## (2) Financial sustainability

TFEM budget provided by the government is limited for covering salary for public employees and cost for utilities etc. While, FEM has income from students of special course (night course) as tuition fee. There are some other incomes from sales of textbooks and survey data. (Textbooks are printed using budget of Japanese side and donated to FEM.) A fund has been established, which will be mainly used for research promotion in FEM, as accumulating the various income mentioned above. We can expect the higher financial sustainability, if the funds are well maintained by earning enough income. In spite of such progress in financial sustainability a feasible plan for assuring financial sustainability should be made up to bear the cost for procuring books for the library after the completion of the Project.

## (3) Technical sustainability

Many lecturers of FEM have acquired necessary knowledge and skills through technical transfer and long or short-term training. The number of teaching staffs, who have master or doctorate degrees, is increasing steadily, which is an important achievement to assure the technical sustainability. Some of teaching staffs have improved research capability through the experiences of consultancy works and research activities. In this way, through the implementation of the Project, knowledge and skills of teaching staffs have been strengthened steadily.

A teaching staff is public employee and has high status in Laos. Therefore, most teaching staffs are expected to remain as lecturers at FEM. There are many features to assure technical sustainability in future, although capacity development of lecturers is necessary continuously.

### **3. Factors that promoted realization of effects**

Main positive factors are as follows.

- (1) Japan side had done cooperation such as exchange of opinions with FEM and provision of advice before starting the Project.
- (2) Smooth and effective human network and cooperative relations among some core universities in Japan, Thailand and the Philippines.
- (3) Utilization of various kinds of scholarships.

### **4. Factors that impeded realization of effects**

Negative factors against smooth implementation of the Project and organizational sustainability of FEM are as follows.

- (1) Chief Advisor, who is well familiar with and has experiences of the university's education, had not been assigned.
- (2) Due to assignment of the chief advisor and the coordinator for both projects (FEM and Lao-Japan Center), their involvement to the Project was not sufficient.
- (3) Full-scale support for strengthening management system of FEM had started in the latter half of the project period.

### **5. Conclusion**

Most of Outputs will be achieved within the project period. However, achievement of development and revision of textbooks, research capability development of FEM lecturers, and improvement of the faculty management will not be achieved fully. Therefore, the Evaluation Team concludes that the follow-up activities are necessary for above-mentioned aspects.

### **6. Recommendations**

3-6-1 Recommendation to the activities in the remaining period of the Project (by the end of August 2005).

- (1) Continued support for revision and new creation of textbooks and its publishing.
- (2) Technical transfer on field work survey and research activities
- (3) Strengthening of management capacity

3-6-2 Recommendation for activities after the completion of the Project

- (1) Practical knowledge and skills of lecturers and students
- (2) Improvement of the management of FEM

## **7. Lessons Learned**

### **(1) Technical cooperation in the field of social science in higher education**

FEM was newly created as an institution for higher education. For Japan side, this is the first experience of technical cooperation project for the support of establishment of a university faculty in social science. Even under such challenging conditions, the overall achievement of the Project has been quite well so far.

We recognize that this outcome was made possible partially through the thoughtful formulation and preparation of the Project. Japanese experts had been dispatched and worked with the Lao side and the ADB advisors. And Japan received some trainees from FEM. During the Project formulation period, the mutual understanding between Lao and Japanese was promoted on the policy of faculty development and the contents of the Project activities, which contributed to the smooth implementation and higher achievement of the cooperation.

### **(2) Cooperation between core universities**

Some core universities in Japan, Thailand and the Philippines have developed the human network and cooperative relations among their faculties, which have clearly contributed to the smooth and effective activities of the Project, including dispatch of experts and training lecturers. implementation and higher achievement of the cooperation.

### **(3) Necessity of technical cooperation for a management**

The capacity development of the management in the university and the faculty is crucial for their sustainable development, especially when they are newly established. The necessity of technical cooperation in this field should be examined in an early stage of the cooperation.

### **(4) Evaluation of overall goal in a long period of view**

For the human resource development in the field of higher education, it takes longer time to realize a certain impact in the society. In the FEM Project, for instance, the impact on the Overall Goal, "FEM graduates contribute to development of a market economy of Lao P.D.R.", may be reassessed after a certain period later. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct evaluation during project implementation also in the viewpoint of long-term for this kind of project.

### **(5) Project's chief advisor in the field of higher education**

In case of the cooperation for capacity development in the field of higher education, especially when its counterpart is university, the Project team (Japanese side) should be headed by Chief Advisor who is well familiar with and has experiences of the university's activities in areas of education, research and faculty management.

## **IV. OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED**

Lao government and the National University of Laos have a plan to establish a master course at FEM in October 2007 and the request of assistance was made to Japanese government. The Evaluation Team evaluates that the cooperation for the capacity development of faculty level has not yet accomplished and the follow-up activities after the completion of the project are necessary. Considering such current situation, the Evaluation Team recommended that the feasibility of establishing the master course should be examined throughout the Project and follow-up period. The Lao side agreed to keep in exchanging opinions and sharing information with Japanese side for further consideration.