

Water for Asian Cities Programme, Lao PDR



Capacity building of the Community Action Teams (CATs), the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Units (WATSANs)

The UN-HABITAT will assist in establishing the CAT and WATSAN in each Project town, including recommended compositions, and duty statements. It will also train members of CATs and WATSANs in various aspects of project planning and implementation and help them formulate their operation plans with the participation of stakeholders and ensure that the plans are effectively implemented.

Capacity building of the Provincial Branch of Nam Papa (BNP)

Training and capacity building of BNPs will focus on the middle management and the operation and maintenance staff, and will be organized in different forms:

- in-country short training course and seminar using available trainers,
- materials and facilities, and
- study tours in neighboring countries for senior and middle management personnel.

UN-HABITAT will assist the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) in assessing the training needs of each BNP, in designing a capacity building and training programmes with clearly defined scope, time and monitorable targets, including on-the-job training, and making arrangements with institutions and national trainers for formal training where appropriate and in delivering training programmes and providing capacity building to BNP staff.

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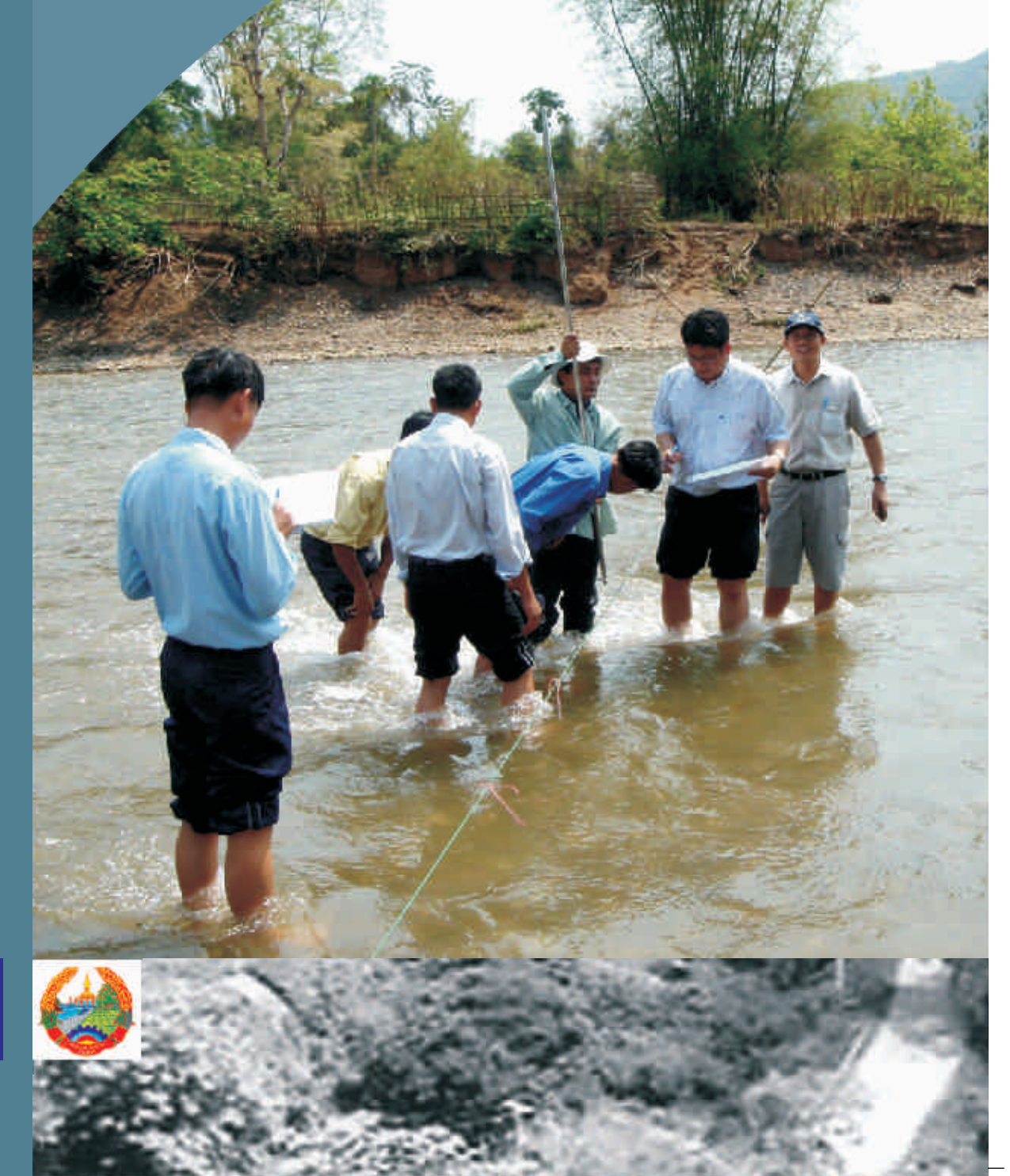
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Background

The Water for Asian Cities (WAC) Programme is a collaborative initiative between the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Governments of Asia. The WAC Programme was first announced at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) and a letter of intent was signed in Johannesburg on 31st August, 2002. The WAC Programme was officially launched at the Third World Water Forum (WWF) on 18th March, 2003 and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between ADB and UN-HABITAT on the same day in Osaka, Japan. The first Asian Ministerial Forum was held in Osaka, Japan on 19th March, 2003 and adopted a Ministerial Declaration on Water for Asian Cities Programme.

The Water for Asian Cities Programme aims at supporting the implementation of the water and sanitation related Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and targets in Asian cities, specifically promoting :

- Pro-poor urban water governance,
- Urban water conservation and demand management,
- Integrated urban environmental sanitation, and
- Income generation for the urban poor through community-based water and sanitation services.

The overriding thrust of the Water for Asian Cities Programme is to enhance capacity at city, country and regional levels and to create an enabling environment for new flows of investments in the urban water and sanitation sector, with a view to meet the water and sanitation related MDG in Asian Cities.

The Programme Challenges and Strategy

Lao PDR as part of the Mekong sub-region is experiencing high urbanization rate ranging up to 4-5 per cent per annum. The high percentage increase in secondary towns is creating additional burden on the local authorities for providing basic infrastructure. Nearly two-thirds of a total of 145 district towns do not have access to safe water. Water supply and sanitation coverage in secondary and district towns remain a major concern for the Government.

The national growth and poverty eradication strategy of the Government of Lao PDR has identified water supply and sanitation as one of the four high priority sectors to be developed in order to meet the Government's growth and poverty eradication objectives. To meet this goal, the Government has prepared an urban water sector investment plan estimated at US\$ 266 million to guide development for the period 2005-2020 which will ultimately serve an additional 1.95 million urban population.

In pursuance of the national strategy, the Government of Lao PDR expressed keen interest to participate in the Water for Asian Cities Programme when a UN-HABITAT Mission visited Vientiane, Lao PDR in November 2004. Later the Government of Lao PDR also participated in a planning workshop and supported the UN-HABITAT's rapid appraisal of water and sanitation situation in the selected secondary towns of Lao PDR.

In July 2006, UN-HABITAT through a letter of intent had expressed its interest to collaborate with the Government of Lao PDR within the framework of the Water for Asian Cities Programme. Through this framework, UN-HABITAT is providing Technical Assistance focusing on capacity building and community development as local level support to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) financed Northern and Central Regions Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project. The Government of Lao PDR had subsequently accepted this offer of UN-HABITAT and in October 2006, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with UN-HABITAT for supporting the ADB assisted water and sanitation sector project in Northern and Central region towns of the Lao PDR.

Northern and Central Regions Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project (NCRWSSSP)

The NCRWSSSP is a collaborative project co-financed by the ADB grant, NORAD, OPEC and UN-HABITAT and executed by the Department of Housing and Urban Planning of the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, Lao PDR. The Project started in the beginning of 2006 and is expected to complete by 2010.

Goals and Objectives

The development objective is to improve the quality of life of small town residents in Lao PDR and enhance the small towns' roles as market services, and manufacturing centres supporting the rural hinterland. These objectives aim to help the Lao PDR to achieve its goal to provide 24-hour per day access to safe drinking water for 80 percent of the urban population by the year 2020. This goal is within the framework of equitable and sustainable development and poverty reduction as outlined in the Government's National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES, 2004).

The specific objectives of the NCRWSSSP are to:

- improve the quality, reliability and sustainability of water supply services in about 12 selected small towns in Northern and Central regions, and
- improve the environmental conditions in these small towns.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- constructing new optimally sized water supply system using appropriate technologies,
- rehabilitating/improving selected urban facilities,
- enhancing public hygiene awareness and motivating public participation in the village improvement initiatives,
- strengthening the sector planning, managing, and regulating capacity, and
- promoting the private sector's participation in water supply services.

Scope of the Technical Assistance of UN-HABITAT

The Technical Assistance of UN-HABITAT will cover project implementation assistance to the Community Action Teams (CATs) and to the village Water and Sanitation Associations (WATSANs) to enhance their capacities to implement the Participation and Awareness Community Action program (PACA), and to operate and maintain the community environmental improvements.

Twelve small towns covering about 89,000 residents by 2010 and 100,000 by 2015 shall be benefited with provisions of safe and reliable piped water supplies and improved environment that will have a direct impact on the health and living conditions of the town committees. About 100 core villages will benefit directly from village environment improvements, access roads, improved drainage and sanitation.

There are three main components making up the scope of the Technical Assistance of UN-HABITAT:

1. Water Quality and Quantity Assessment, and Settlement, Community and Social Mapping;
2. Capacity building of the Community Action Teams (CATs), and the Community Water Supply and Sanitation Units (WATSANs); and
3. Capacity Building of the Provincial Branch of Nam Papa (Water Supply Enterprise).

Water quality and quantity assessment, and settlement, community and social mapping

UN-HABITAT provided training to technical staff of eight provincial Nam Papa Branches in assessing and monitoring of water quality and quantity focusing on all potential spring and stream sources for each town. Water quality test kits including instruction manuals were provided to each provincial Nam Papa concerned during the workshop on Water Quality Assessment and Flow Measurement of Small Streams held in Luangprabang in March 2006.

For the community mapping of the 12 towns, UN-HABITAT organised a workshop on Settlement, Community and Social Mapping held in Oudomxay Province in May 2006. The workshop brought together the Personnel of the NCRWSSSP Coordination Unit (PCU) and the Project Implementing Unit (PIU) of each target province to train them on the use of satellite imageries for mapping so that they could participate effectively in the social mapping to be conducted in 12 target towns of the Northern and Central regions.

In addition to basic maps showing the physical infrastructure of the towns, the following maps showing particular social features will also be produced:

- Map showing locations of poor households
- Map showing locations of households of different ethnic groups
- Map showing locations of households with different types of latrines
- Map showing locations of households led by women
- Map showing locations of houses of different types.

