



Inter-Parliamentary Union

Technical Cooperation Programme

PROJECT PROFILE:

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



Created 25/08/2006

Project details

Title:	Capacity-building project for the National Assembly of Laos
Status:	Closed
Duration:	3 Years (1997-2000)
Budget:	US\$ 1,570,730
Donor partner:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

Background

As a result of the 1991 Constitution and the rapid economic growth experienced up to 1997, the role of the National Assembly was enhanced during the early 1990s and its activities expanded. However, the Assembly's ability to perform its functions has been severely restricted by limited resources and expertise.

Parliamentary staff lacked practical experience, in-depth knowledge of parliamentary procedures, administration as well as foreign language skills.

Even though the parliament building was recently built, its facilities, in particular the library, were not suited to the Assembly's functions.

Following a request made by the Laotian authorities, the IPU conducted two assessment missions to Laos in 1995 and 1996. These missions resulted in the development of a project in cooperation with the UNDP and were jointly financed by NORAD and the UNDP.

Areas of activity

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the National Assembly's capacity to effectively perform its constitutional functions of passing legislation, oversight of the Government and representing the people with the additional goal of facilitating the Lao PDR's transition to market economy.

The three main areas of activities were:

- Increase knowledge and skills of MPs and staff of the NA through workshops and seminars on parliamentary procedures, organization and the functions of the parliament.
- Improve the legislative process and oversight functions of the parliament
- Strengthen the capacities of the provincial offices.

Target beneficiaries

The beneficiaries include members and staff of the parliament of the Lao PDR. The increased effectiveness and enhanced outreach of the Parliament via the provincial offices also benefited civil society.



Orientation Seminar for Members of Parliament of the Lao PDR

Outcomes

In April 2002, a final evaluation was conducted by the UNDP, which concluded that the project had made satisfactory progress. Among the main achievements noted were:

- The introduction of "question time" and article-by-article voting, and improvements in public consultations;
- Enhanced communication between the National Assembly and six provincial offices and greater effectiveness in dealing with constituent issues;
- Greater understanding of international parliamentary practice through 15 study visits by members and staff;
- English-language training for members and staff;
- Improvement of the library and installation of sound and electronic voting equipment in the plenary hall;
- Enhanced knowledge and awareness of gender issues in parliament through a three-day seminar.

Experts providing advice to the project included:

- Mrs. Inger Figved, Head of the Information and Documentation Department of the Norwegian Parliament.
- Dr. Socorro L. Reyes, Centre for Legislative Development.
- Mr. S. Gopalan, former Secretary General of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament
- Mr. Bruno Baufumé, Director of External Relations, French Senate