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**ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR**

**TA 9012 - COMMUNITY MANAGED
LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
FINAL EVALUATION**



FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Managed Livelihood Improvement Project (CMLIP) has been implemented in four districts in four separate provinces from May 2003 to July 2005. Two international NGOs and one national non-profit-organisation were hired as service providers for 3 of the sub-projects while the Coordination Unit/NAFES assumed direct responsibility the fourth subproject in Kasi, Vientiane Province

The CMLIP in Khamkeut District, Bolikhamxay Province, undertaken by the Community Development Association (LCDA), has worked in 3 villages targeting 166 beneficiary households. The project has improved production skills and know-how for a large number of villagers and beneficiaries (468 participants) through various technical training events and study tours. The project has provided funds for the purchase of buffaloes, cows, pigs, chickens and fish fingerlings (229 participants with some households participating in more than one activity) and promoted vegetable and cash crop cultivation on a considerable scale. It may be concluded that CMLIP Khamkeut by its focus on skills training and income generation has managed to create tangible results in terms of increased household incomes and improving the livelihood for its targeted beneficiaries to a considerable degree. The project impacts are sustainable in terms of increased level of knowledge and improved integration in the market economy and there is a high probability that the institutional village structures, such as village funds, will continue to bring benefits to the population. In terms of capacity building for government staff the project could have done more.

Handicap International (HI) has had the responsibility for the sub-project in Kham District, Xiengkhouang Province. The project has focused on income generation activities, in particular chicken raising and livestock coupled with the establishment of village development funds and appropriate training. The agricultural interventions have brought about a change in the production cycle as dry season cultivation of cash crops is on the increase in many of the target villages. New and easily marketable cash crops such as soybeans (wet season) and watermelon (dry season) has been successfully introduced. In particular, water melon cultivation has been adopted on a large scale in one of the target villages. On the whole the CMLIP in Kham can be judged to be a project that has made a positive difference for the targeted population and produced rapid and tangible results for the poorest households. Successful institution building, especially in terms of the establishment of village development funds, makes it probable that achieved benefits are sustainable and prolonged beyond the lifespan of the project. Capacity building for government staff has not received much attention beyond initial training on PRA and participatory planning.

The service provider for CMLIP in Sob Bao, Houaphan Province, has been Quaker Service Lao (QSL). Training activities have been extensive with a focus on dry season cash cropping and organic agriculture (composting). A lot of attention and resources have been devoted to provision of buffaloes and cows which constitutes more of a long-term livelihood development strategy. The project has not engaged in chicken raising which has the potential of giving quick returns on the investment. Weaving has been an important non-farm income generation activity comprising 55 households. QSL staff posted on site has been kept low with only one project manager joining the six district staff on the project team. Although there has been a focus on the provision of buffaloes and cattle, the results of the project are considerable. Gravity water systems have been constructed in six of the target villages and dry season cropping of rice has been introduced in the poorest of the target villages. The large majority of households engaged in pig raising, weaving and basket making have been able to increase their incomes so as to cover expenses for food household necessities and schooling. On the critical side it should be noted that it would have been an advantage and a safeguard measure if more QSL staff had been assigned or hired for the project. In addition it appears that follow-up and supervision from senior QSL staff could have been more frequent.

CMLIP in Kasi District, Vientiane Province, which have been implemented by the Coordination Unit, has focused on improving rice production through reclamation of land for

wet rice cultivation and construction of small scale irrigation systems. However, the project has also supported a number of income generating activities, most notably weaving, through start-up funds provided on a revolving basis. Apart from the weaving activities which number 40 participants, the project has engaged in large and small livestock raising and cash crop cultivation.. Health-related activities include six gravity water systems, which have been constructed for nine villages, while village health volunteers have been trained for all 14 target villages. Due to the focus on rice cultivation and the fact that many households have received funds for income generation only a few months ago following, the second round of revolving fund allocations, so much of the impact is yet to manifest itself. On the whole one should acknowledged the fact that CMLIP Kasi has managed to produce, or prepared the ground for, results that translates into improved livelihoods for its target population. In terms of coverage the project has exceeded the original number of beneficiaries. Around 520 households have been involved and benefited from the project while around 320 households were originally identified.

On the whole the CMLIP can be characterised as a successful project that has made efficient use of available financial resources and time. A large number of activities have been implemented and the combined impact of these has improved the situation and livelihoods for a large majority of those households that were originally identified as poor and targeted as beneficiaries. Some of the project interventions will continue to produce benefits into the future, such as the small scale irrigation structures and the village development funds. As such it may be said that the project has achieved some sustainability in addition to the skills the project has contributed to among the target population.

In general the Service Providers along with the CU, in the case of CMLIP KASI, have handled the project implementation in a satisfactory manner with regard to logistics and implementation arrangements. Field implementation has been carried out by competent and motivated project teams, largely according to time plans although the overall implementation rate has been slower than foreseen, leading to a prolongation of the project by some months. Even though CMLIP as a whole has managed to meet its objectives to a large degree, there is room for improvement. The following recommendations can therefore be given:

Issue	Recommendation
Selection of identification activities	/ Consider / include domestication and management of NTFPs a project activity Stronger focus on income generation activities that give quick results for the poorest households Facilitate marketing of village products through exhibitions and fairs and the creation of links between traders and producers Food processing should be considered as a future project activity to add value to village products and avoid periods of market price drops Put more emphasis on networking activities between sub/projects as a way of increasing the exchange of development experiences and villager to villager technology transfers
Transfer of community development skills	Make sure that service providers (NGOs and non-profit-organisations) assign sufficient numbers of experienced community development staff to the project teams
Service providers	Continue to utilize national non-profit-organisations and international NGOs as service providers in connection with future projects
Involvement of government	Continue to utilise government sector services as implementers and part of project teams while at the same time making sure that necessary

		resources are available for them
Targeting outreach	and	Stronger focus on and targeting of the poorest and most vulnerable households in target villages
		Continue to concentrate project resources on the poorest villages and communities
		Make efforts to ensure that staff with ethnic minority language skills are present on the project teams
		Put in place mechanisms and measures that prevents resource capture by individual ethnic groups at the expense of other less dominant and integrated groups
Monitoring and impact indicators		Repeat the baseline survey in target villages 1 ½ -2 years after closing the CMLIP
		Develop a monitoring system with a few easily updatable progress indicators for tracking impacts in connection with future projects

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION		1
	1.1	Background	1
	1.2	Sub-Project Areas	1
	1.3	Objectives	1
	1.4	Methodology	2
2	KHAMKEUT DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT		2
	2.1	Component A	2
	2.1.1	Start-up and Logistics	2
	2.1.2	Beneficiary Identification	2
	2.1.3	Identification of Primary Needs and Activities	3
	2.2	Component B	4
	2.2.1	Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up	4
	2.2.2	Coordination, Planning and Reporting	4
	2.2.3	Activities and Produced Outputs	4
	2.2.4	Indicators	6
	2.3	Assessment of Implementation and Achievements	6
	2.3.1	Identification of Beneficiaries and Activities	6
	2.3.2	Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities	7
	2.3.3	Monitoring and Follow-up	7
	2.3.4	Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs	7
	2.3.5	Village Visit Findings	7
	2.3.6	Village Self Assessment	8
	2.3.7	Baseline Survey	8
	2.3.8	Institution and Capacity Building	8
	2.3.9	Gender Considerations	9
	2.3.10	Sustainability Assessment	9
	2.4	Summary Conclusions	9
3	KHAM DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT		10
	3.1	Component A	10
	3.1.1	Start-up and Logistics	10
	3.1.2	Beneficiary Identification	10
	3.1.3	Identification of Primary Needs and Activities	10
	3.1.4	Progress Indicator	11
	3.2	Component B	11
	3.2.1	Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up	11
	3.2.2	Coordination, Planning and Reporting	11
	3.2.3	Activities and Produced Outputs	11
	3.3	Assessment of Implementation and Achievements	12
	3.3.1	Identification of Activities and Beneficiaries	12
	3.3.2	Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities	13
	3.3.3	Monitoring and Follow-up	13
	3.3.4	Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs	13
	3.3.5	Village Visit Findings	13
	3.3.6	Village Self Assessment	14
	3.3.7	Baseline Survey	15
	3.3.8	Institution and Capacity Building	15
	3.3.9	Gender Considerations	16
	3.3.10	Sustainability Assessment	16
	3.4	Summary Conclusions	16
4	SOB BAO SUBPROJECT		17

4.1	Preparation Phase – Component A		17
4.1.1	Start-up and Logistics	17	
4.1.2	Gender Training	17	
4.1.3	Beneficiary Identification	17	
4.1.4	Identification of Primary Needs and Activities	17	
4.2	Implementation Phase – Component B		18
4.2.1	Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up	18	
4.2.2	Additional funds from QSL	18	
4.2.3	Coordination, Planning and Reporting	18	
4.2.4	Activities and Produced Outputs	19	
4.3	Assessment of Implementation and Achievements		20
4.3.1	Identification of Beneficiaries and Activities	20	
4.3.2	Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities		20
4.3.3	Monitoring and Follow-up	21	
4.3.4	Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs	21	
4.3.5	Village Visit Findings	22	
4.3.6	Village Self Assessment	22	
4.3.7	Baseline Survey	23	
4.3.8	Institution and Capacity Building	23	
4.3.9	Gender Considerations	23	
4.3.10	Sustainability Assessment	24	
4.4	Summary Conclusions		24
5	KASI DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT		25
5.1	Preparation Phase – Component A		25
5.1.1	Start-up and Logistics	25	
5.1.2	Beneficiary Identification	25	
5.1.3	Identification of Primary Needs and Activities	26	
5.2	Implementation Phase – Component B		26
5.2.1	Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up	26	
5.2.2	Coordination, Planning and Reporting	26	
5.2.3	Activities and Produced Outputs	26	
5.3	Assessment of Implementation and Achievements		28
5.3.1	Identification of Activities and Beneficiaries	28	
5.3.2	Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities		28
5.3.3	Monitoring and Follow-up	29	
5.3.4	Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs	29	
5.3.5	Village Visit Findings	29	
5.3.6	Village Self Assessment	30	
5.3.7	Baseline Survey	30	
5.3.8	Institution and Capacity Building	30	
5.3.9	Gender Considerations	31	
5.3.10	Sustainability Assessment	31	
5.4	Summary Conclusions		31
6	OVERALL PROJECT ASSESSMENT		33
6.1	Staffing Resources		33
6.2	Village Development Funds / Saving and Credit Schemes		33
6.3	Sub-Project Expenses		33
6.4	Ethnicity		34
6.5	Strategies and Selected Activities		36
6.6	Targeting and Beneficiary Identification		37
6.7	Performance Indicator Monitoring		37
6.8	Institution and Capacity Building		37
6.9	Community Ownership and Sustainability		37

6.10	Gender Issues and Effects	38
6.11	Overall Performance and Impact	38
7	RECOMMENDATIONS	40
7.1.1	Experiences and Potential Future Improvements	40
7.1.2	Summary of Recommendations	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Selected Beneficiary Households/Families	2
Table 2: CMLIP Activities in Khamkeut District	4
Table 3: Saving and Credit Schemes in Khamkeut Target Villages	6
Table 4: Change in Impact Indicators for CMLIP Khamkeut	8
Table 5: CMLIP Activities in Kham District	12
Table 6: Village Development Funds in Kham Target Villages	12
Table 7: Poor Households Before and After CMLIP Interventions	14
Table 8: Change in Impact Indicators for CMLIP Kham	15
Table 9: Rice Deficit in CMLIP Villages in Sob Bao	17
Table 10: CMLIP Activities in Sob Bao District	19
Table 11: Poor Households Before and After CMLIP Interventions	22
Table 12: CMLIP Activities in Kasi District	26
Table 13: Field Team Staffing	33
Table 14: Sub-Project Expenses According to Latest Budget Revisions April 2005	34
Table 15: Ethnic Composition of CMLIP Target Villages	34
Table 16: Summary of Recommendations	41

ANNEXES

- Annex A: Overview of CMLIP Activities
- Annex B: People Met and Interviewed
- Annex C: Visited Project Villages

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

This report presents the findings, observations and results from a final evaluation of the “Community Managed Livelihood Improvement Project” (CMLIP) in Lao PDR. CMLIP is closely linked to the “Community Managed Irrigation Sector Project” (CMISP) as it was planned and formulated as a an “add on” component to expand the number of beneficiaries and target poor households that due to unsuitable agricultural land did not benefit from the irrigation interventions. The CMLIP is financed by the “Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction” (JFPR) through the Asian Development Bank. The funding of the CMLIP was approved by the Government of Japan in September 2001.

B. Sub-Project Areas

The CMLIP TA Paper recommended to start activities in 2 or 3 provinces of the 5 CMISP assisted provinces, selecting villages that already had irrigation activates, or neighbouring villages with strong economic, social and cultural links to these. The identification process finally resulted in 4 districts in 4 different provinces being selected as sub-project areas, namely Khamkeut District in Bolikhamxay, Kasi District in Vientiane Province, Kham District in Xieng Khuang and Sob Bao District in Hua Phan

The guidelines for selecting target villages and beneficiaries were as follows:

- the targeted beneficiaries must live within the same subdistrict (but not necessarily in the same village) where the CMI subproject is located
- they should have strong social, economic, and cultural links with the CMI subproject
- the water users associations (WUAs) and the respective village committees should have good performance records for the management and operation and maintenance (O&M) of the CMI subproject, and for handling other village affairs
- selection of the beneficiaries will be based on the results of a baseline survey and benchmark study of prevailing income levels

C. Objectives

TA paper defines the goal of the CMLIP as follows:

to reduce poverty, especially among the landless and poorest families.

Expected Immediate Objectives were formulated as the following:

- *Create sustainable, area-based, and community-owned alternative sources of income for and with the targeted poor through their increased involvement in farm-based production and related activities, such as (a) livestock development and extension services, (b) improvement of cash crop and diversified farming systems, (c) fish culture, (d) construction and management of market and storage facilities, and (e) access to potable water.*

- *Develop appropriate basic skills for relevant village committees, subcommittees, and village-based user groups, and the appropriate units of the relevant provincial agriculture and forestry services office (PAFO) and district agriculture and forestry services office (DAFO) to manage, operate, and maintain the developed interventions.*

D. Methodology

The evaluation approach has mainly consisted of 3 different types of activities:

- interviews with key informants including Service Provider leadership and staff, concerned provincial and district authorities and executing agency staff (Coordination Unit / NAFES)
- study and review of background document and data sources such as the TA Paper, baseline survey reports and available sample surveys and project reports
- field and village visits including interviews with beneficiary households and families

II. KHAMKEUT DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT

A. Component A

1. Start-up and Logistics

The CMLIP in Khamkeut District was started at the beginning of April 2003. As provided for in the contract between CU/NAFES and the service provider, the Lao Community Development Association, the first 4 months of project implementation were devoted to participatory planning and activity identification. A project office was provided by DAFO while renovation of the office, electricity installations, telephone and furniture was paid for by the project. Within April the project had received a Toyota 4wd pickup and 2 motorcycles for transportation purposes.

The district nominated one coordinator for the project and 4 other district staff, two from DAFSO (plant production and livestock), one from the district health office and one from Lao Women Union. LCDA staff were posted to Khamkeut within one month of the start-up and comprised one site manager, one agriculture specialist and one livestock specialist. The project manager and the programme officer were based in Vientiane, with the programme officer holding the responsibility for the day to day support and follow up of the project.

2. Beneficiary Identification

As a starting activity of Component A government staff were trained on PRA techniques which were subsequently carried out in the target villages throughout May 2003. It involved wealth ranking as one important item to identify potential beneficiaries in the community. After an analysis of the collected information by the project team results were fed back and discussed with the village leaders. Two village planning workshops at district level were also arranged in order to identify activities and beneficiaries.

The wealth ranking as well as the planning workshops led to the identification of target beneficiaries as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Selected Beneficiary Households/Families

Beneficiaries	Villages
---------------	----------

	Napae	Nahat	Thongpae	Total
Poor and non-CMI beneficiaries	20	27	53	100
Poor and CMI beneficiaries	27	10	8	45
Informal leaders / resource persons	6	9	6	21
Total	53	46	67	166

A selection of beneficiaries was carried out through household and village leader interviews, where villagers were put into 5 categories according to assets, rice production, housing etc. The levels (categories) and the criteria were as follows

1. Poorest households : 6-12 months rice deficiency, no or very limited rice production land, non-permanent housing
2. Poor households: 4-6 months rice deficiency otherwise similar to level 1 but with better coping strategies, e.g. working together with relatives, sharecropping
3. Medium poor households: considerable paddy land and less than 2 months of rice shortage, enough labour, permanent housing
4. Better off households: sufficient rice production, permanent house, hand tractor, some cash income
5. Rich households: large paddy areas and selling surplus rice, hand tractor, permanent house

3. Identification of Primary Needs and Activities

Village leaders and selected villagers were prepared for the participatory village planning through a study trip to 3 other livelihood development projects. The village planning was carried out over a 10 day period during the first half of June. Important considerations for selecting activities were previous experience and knowledge of the villagers, potential for livelihood improvement, marketability of the produce, likelihood of sustainability, ability of villagers to contribute and gender significance in terms of involving women and reduction of work burden. The village planning and the district workshops identified the following potential activities:

- Improvement of rice production
- Soil improvement by using leguminous plants
- Promotion of vegetable growing during rainy season
- Promotion of fruit trees
- Fruit tree nurseries at school levels
- Capacity building for village vet volunteers
- Promotion of chicken raising group
- Promotion of animal feed
- Promotion of fish raising and breeding group
- Clean water supply
- Community market
- Improvement of sericulture
- Capacity building for villagers

B. Component B

1. Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up

The project team set up during Component A continued its work as Component B started in November 2003, being jointly responsible for operational planning and field implementation. The district staff devoted most of their time to the project. Implementation of activities has been according to type of activity and sector with the responsible team members going separately to the target villages.

2. Coordination, Planning and Reporting

Quarterly tripartite meetings between the district, the CU/NAFES and the LCDA have been held on site to review and monitor activity implementation and to approve plans for the coming quarter. Additionally, there have been monthly progress and planning meetings between the Sub-project and the district counterpart services. Finally, the project team has met on a weekly basis to fine-tune and adjust operational planning. Reporting to the district and concerned sector services has been one on a monthly basis.

3. Activities and Produced Outputs

CMLIP Khamkeut has during Component B implemented activities and produced outputs as resumed in the table below.

Table 2: CMLIP Activities in Khamkeut District

Project Activity	Output
Improvement of rice production through group formation, supply of seeds and training	85 villagers (45 women) trained on making and application of compost 25 framers in 3 villages supplied with improved rice seeds 9 farmers in and trained on new transplanting methods
Soil improvement by using leguminous plants and compost	40 farmers trained on soil improvement activities
Promotion of vegetable growing during rainy season through training and study trip	6 villagers (3 women) participated in study trip 31 villagers (households) trained on vegetable growing techniques (25 production group members)
Promotion of fruit trees	76 people (21 women) trained on trained on grafting and seedling propagation More than 3000 fruit tree seedlings provided for 48 households (production group members) 3 nurseries set up and supported
Fruit tree nurseries at village school	
Training of village vet volunteers and provision of vaccines and equipment	24/23 people trained in 2 training events and vaccines/funds provided for 3 villages
Promotion of chicken raising	73 people (37 women) trained on chicken raising 3 chicken raising groups with 76 household members formed and given funds (400,000 Kip each)
Promotion of animal feed cultivation	76 and 115 people trained on maize production for feed in 2 events 272 kg of maize seed provided to 116 households

Project Activity	Output
Promotion of fish raising and breeding group;	Fish raising group formed with 25 members and 29 people from 2 villages trained on fish breeding techniques
Construction of gravity water systems Training on small scale enterprise and marketing	Fish fingerlings provided (revolving fund) to the 25 group members 3 households in one village trained on hatching and fingerling production Gravity water systems built in the 3 target villages
Promotion and improvement of sericulture	15 people (5 women) trained on planning and marketing 6 people (all women) trained on sericulture techniques in Vientiane Funds for 6 sericulture houses provided in 2 villages
Training for district staff	9 people took part in a study trip to Vietnam 4 study trips on village fund management (1staff), vegetable growing (2), chicken raising (1) and sericulture (2) arranged
Training and promotion of village saving funds	Gender training for 18 district staff arranged 6 staff (1 woman) trained on project management Study trip for 18 people (6 women) to FIAM micro finance project in Vientiane Training on village saving fund management and accounting for village development committees in 3 villages
Food processing training Promotion of pig raising	Village savings funds set up in 3 villages 3 people took parting 3 day training in Vientiane Pig raising group with 62 members formed 48 people training on improved raising techniques
Provision of buffaloes	Funds provided (500,000 Kip) were provided for each member 15 buffaloes provided for selected beneficiaries in 3 villages
Provision of Cows	20 cows have been provided for 20 selected beneficiaries
Promotion of Maize cultivation	Maize cultivation group formed (150 members) and 127 (89 women) trained on cultivation techniques 3 kg of maize seeds provided for each member

a. Revolving Funds / Saving and Credit Schemes

Revolving funds for various income and livelihood improving activities are administered by the Sector user Groups. The selected beneficiary households are given priority when new loans are allocated. No interest is paid the first year.

In addition the project trained fund managers and facilitated the establishment of village savings and credit schemes open for all villagers. Those who join a scheme are required to save and make deposits on a monthly basis before they can take loans for investing in productive activities or for other acceptable social purposes. The borrowed amount plus interest is returned at the expiry of the loan term. Since the saving and credit schemes were established they have seen a considerable growth in capital and membership as shown in the tab below.

Table 3: Saving and Credit Schemes in Khamkeut Target Villages

Village	December 2004			March 2005		
	Savings USD*	Interests USD	No of Members	Savings USD	Interests USD	No of Members
Napae	1 799	434	111	1 577	-	117
Nahat	690	118	52	1 151	22	54
Thongpae	1 474	295	135	1 836	73	153
Total	3 963	847	298	4 564	95	324

* 1 USD = 10 500 KIP

4. Indicators

In the proposal for Component B results and matching performance indicators were suggested for each of the identified activities. The indicator specifies yield increases, scale of production for group members, quantities for sale cash income, etc.

C. Assessment of Implementation and Achievements

1. Identification of Beneficiaries and Activities

Due to the fact that progressive and resourceful villagers may serve as role models to others it was decided to include also a number of these in the target group. On the average for the 3 target villages this group constitute around 12% of the total number of beneficiary households. In Nahat village the percentage of village is as high as 19% of the total number of beneficiaries. The decision to include such a relatively high number of non-poor households in the target group may be raised as an issue if this has excluded other poor households in the village or led to less project resources and funds being used on them. On the other hand, it may be justifiable if this is a necessary measure to preserve the social harmony and balance in a village or contributes significantly to the uplift of the other targeted households.

Apart from the above expressed concern the conducted village interviews suggest that those households identified as beneficiaries and target population through the PRA and wealth ranking indeed were among the neediest and poorest in the target villages. It thus appears that the wealth ranking methodology used was appropriate and managed to select beneficiary households in conformity with the directions and criteria given in the TA paper.

The 4 month planning and setting-up phase (Component A) provided ample time for the project team to carry out a truly participatory planning process. The PRA tools and techniques that were used, such as village map and wealth ranking, are standard components of a village PRA exercise. Interviews conducted during the village visits indicate that the tools used and the time spent in the villages to collect information and identifying the beneficiaries of the project has been sufficient and given the villagers a sense of having been listened to. This has contributed to entrench a feeling among the target population that the selected activities are of their own choosing.

2. Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities

Meetings with the district authorities and the project team indicate that the implementation arrangements have been adequate to meet the challenges of an efficient activity implementation. The composition of the team in terms of technical and community development experience appear to have been appropriate in relation to type of implemented activities and to transferring know-how and new techniques to the target population. When additional technical resources have been necessary they have been provided by external expertise from different institutions.

The secondment of district staff to the project team has not, according to the team members themselves and the head of the DAFO, strained the capacities of the district sector services to any significant degree. This was due to the fact that the services were sufficiently staffed to absorb and take over the normal tasks and duties of the district team members.

It was confirmed by village interviews that project team members had managed to maintain a frequent presence in the target villages. The reporting system has, according to the district authorities, been adequate in keeping them informed about project implementation and progress.

3. Monitoring and Follow-up

The LCDA programme officer has monitored the project through regular visits to the project and the target villages. Monitoring has also been provided through filed visits by the provincial coordinator from PAFO and other concerned sector services. The quarterly meetings have also provided opportunities for monitoring field trips by the CU.

4. Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs

The interventions and activities the project finally selected for Component B conforms well to what was identified through the PRA. The exceptions seem to be the provision of buffaloes and cows. These activities are more long terms strategies for livelihood improvement and do not give immediate results in terms of generated cash. Raising of small livestock like pigs and chicken along with cash crops (vegetables) are activities that potentially can yield results rapidly are well represented among the range of activities and extended to a considerable number of beneficiaries (see Appendix A) It thus seems that the type and mix of activities have been suitable for bringing livelihood rapid improvement to the target population

5. Village Visit Findings

All 3 target villages, Nahat, Napae and Thongpae, were visited during the field trip. The activities that appear to have given the best and quickest returns included vegetable growing and chicken and pig raising. For instance, in Napae village it was mentioned that before the project there were no households in the village that used to sell chicken while this had become a common practice for many now.

In addition to the income generation activities villagers expressed great appreciation for the setting up of village development funds and the training they had received in that connection. This had enabled villagers to start activities that before had been out of reach for them because of lack of funds. It was noted that the village funds had grown substantially since they were installed and that they now served a larger number of people than the originally identified beneficiaries.

The construction of gravity water systems was seen by the villagers as a highly beneficial intervention as it had improved health conditions and significantly relieved the work burden of women.

According to the villagers own assessment they would be able to carry on livelihood improvement activities utilizing and following the set-up rules of the different revolving funds and the village funds to expand activities. According to interviewed beneficiaries the original loans had enabled them to start diversifying their livestock raising and income generation activities, for instance, with the money earned on chicken raising they would buy pigs and grow corn for feed.

In connection with the training of village veterinaries and provision of funds for vaccines it was noted that the problem of high mortality rates for small and large livestock had been significantly reduced.

Finally, it was noted by villagers that poor families now had means of creating cash incomes and that these increased incomes had enabled them to cover the household's food requirements and send their children to school.

6. Village Self Assessment

When asked about the impact of the project in terms of reduced rice deficiency village authorities in all 3 target villages expressed that it had been significantly reduced. In Nahat it was said that before many households had lacked rice but the number had been reduced to 4 - 5 by now. It was also said that the effect of the project was visible through the fact that few people from the village now had to go and look for casual labour while this had been common before. In Thongae it was estimated that 10 households experienced rice deficiencies before but now the number were down to now 3.

7. Baseline Survey

The result and indicators identified in the project proposal has not been followed up and reported on. The baseline survey was repeated for some 50 households in May 2005 but the recorded data appear to be inconsistent and partly contradictory. For instance, compilation of the data show a considerable increase in rice production while there are insignificant increases in irrigated Riceland and even a decline in rainfed rice. Household incomes data also show a relatively large increase and should along with the other results be considered only as indicative for a general trend and not be taken at face value. However, the data and the trend of improved livelihood they represent corroborates the impressions and findings from village visits that indeed a positive change is taking place.

Table 4: Change in Impact Indicators for CMLIP Khamkeut

Indicator / Parameter	Change
Lowland irrigated paddy fields	0.07 ha
Lowland rainfed paddy fields	0.02 ha
Upland fields (shifting cultivation)	-0.17 ha
Upland fields (permanently cultivated)	0.14 ha
Fishpond area	27 m ²
Cattle/cow	0.77 heads
Buffalo	0.77 heads
Goat	0.85 heads
Pig	4.62 heads
Poultry	92.31 heads
Rice produced	2 888 kg
Rice purchased for self consumption	-282 kg
Surplus rice sold	77 kg
Income from agricultural/livestock production	2,444,615 Kip (228 USD)
Income from seasonal employment	400,000 Kip (37 USD)

8. Institution and Capacity Building

Perhaps the most important village institutions that have been created by the project are the different village development funds and their management committees. These appear to have been adequately set up and backed by sufficient training on fund management and

accounting. The present capital in the village saving fund is solely a result of the villagers' own saving efforts as no start-up funds were injected by the project. After more than one year of operation the saving funds are functioning according to their intended purpose and are in steady growth

A number of technical training events have been arranged for villagers and production group members, and according to observations the new production technologies are practiced by a considerable number of villagers. There are indications that new production skills are being transferred internally in the village through a process of spontaneous adoption.

The district staff has taken part in a few study trips and training events but perhaps the most important and effective capacity building for them has been the skills transfer through working together with 3 experienced NGO workers that has a long experience in community development.

9. Gender Considerations

Gender issues have been focused by the project through gender training, inclusion of female headed households as beneficiaries and income generation activities carried out by women. Gravity water systems has significantly reduced the work burden for women and released time that that can be spent on productive activities initiated by the project.

10. Sustainability Assessment

Village visits and interviews indicated a raised awareness on development and improvements and it was emphasized that the project had brought new knowledge and skills. As noted above, village authorities were generally optimistic about their ability to continue the activities initiated by the project although they at the same time requested a continuation. It seems likely that the various village funds will continue to be operated in line with the regulations set up by the project and thus contribute to improved livelihoods for a larger group of villagers than the originally identified beneficiaries. However, continued external monitoring is necessary to provide a safeguard that this will actually happen.

At the same time it is to be noted that the results and impacts the project has created so far are to a large degree non-reversible for the households that have already benefited from them. In this respect it may be said that some degree of sustainability has already been created.

D. Summary Conclusions

CMLIP Khamkeut is a project that has produced sustainable results for its identified beneficiaries and other households in the target villages. Income generation activities started early and tangible benefits in terms of increased household income are now visible. The project has focused on chicken and pig raising as well as vegetable growing and sericulture in order to generate cash income, and this has proven to be a fruitful strategy.

Whether the rice production improvement activities have been equally successful is more questionable although a yield sample carried out by DAFSO indicates that yield increases have been experienced by members in the production group.

Critical points that can be raised include targeting of beneficiaries and capacity building for district staff. It may be argued that a larger number of poor households could have been included as beneficiaries and that resources and attention should have been more concentrated on these. This could have been possible with the available resources in terms of project team staff and funds.

Training for district staff has been limited to a couple of study trips and training events. Both as a motivational factor and as a capacity building measure more training could have been offered by the project.

III. KHAM DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT

A. Component A

1. Start-up and Logistics

Preparation for Component A started in October 2002 with discussions between the CU and the HI/ANS Project Manager. Subsequently an office was opened in Phonsavanh to facilitate implementation of the Preparation Phase.

The initial activities consisted of a baseline household survey and PRA in the target villages. Handicap International (HI) relied on staff from their Savannakhet team to train and carry out the PRA. Altogether 6 district staff and 3 provincial staff were trained in different PRA tools and techniques while only 3 of the district staff were part of the 5 member PRA team which was led by 2 community workers from the Savannakhet team.

Village leaders were prepared for the project implementation through a 6 day training session in January 2003. In total 66 village leaders including village headmen and LWU representatives, received training. In addition 36 of the village leaders took part in a study tour to Vientiane to visit demonstration farms and research stations. As a part of the mobilisation effort video sessions on improved agriculture and animal husbandry were arranged in the target villages.

The baseline surveys covered 81% of all the households and the results, along with the PRA findings were fed back and discussed with villagers. In addition to the standard baseline survey designed by NAFES/CU Additional socio-economic household data were collected using an adjusted and tested questionnaire.

The initial team from HI consisted of a project manager and 2 community workers supported by a training specialist and an agricultural specialist. Coordinators from the PAFO and DAFO were assigned to the project from the start.

2. Beneficiary Identification

The collected socio-economic household as well as the baseline survey data formed the basis for selection of beneficiary households. The following selection criteria were applied:

- Theoretical Rice Production per household member (includes ability to by rice utilizing 40% of total household income)
- Availability of land (minimum requirement 0.15 ha per household member)
- Repayment ability of the household per year (30% of the total household income)

On the basis of the above criteria 265 households out of 644 (41%) were selected as beneficiary households. Out of the 644 households 553 had been covered by the survey and socioeconomic data collection.

Only 2 of the 11 target villages, Ban Mor and Ban Nathong, were not chosen for CMI Project activities. In terms of overlap between CMI beneficiary households and CMLIP beneficiary households in the remaining 9 villages no information is available as it was not considered a decisive criterion.

3. Identification of Primary Needs and Activities

Primary needs and activities were identified through PRA and problem analysis exercises. Identified problems were as follows:

- Low incomes of households and lack of cash to buy food, household necessities and sending children to school
- No access to financial resources and insufficient capacity to finance productive activities
- Lack of technical knowledge to improve the output of agricultural production, livestock and income generating activities
- Low diversity of production and no introduction of new techniques or alternative crops
- High death rate of domestic animals due to a poor knowledge of prevention and care, lack of access to vaccines and drugs
- Lack of access to clean drinking water in the villages, which causes bad health among the villagers, especially the women and children

Activities that were suited to counter these identified problems were subsequently agreed with the villagers and the concerned district services.

4. Progress Indicator

In the Final Report for Component A theoretical rice production per household member is put forward as the pertinent progress indicator for the Project. The expressed expectation was that the selected households would have increased their theoretical rice production by 30%. It is not specified whether this should be the average of all households or if all households should at least reach the specified level.

B. Component B

1. Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up

For the implementation phase the project office was moved from Phonsavanh to Kham District. Permanent HI project staff based in Kham has included a project manager, a livestock expert and a rural economist. The HI/ANS staff has been supported by a veterinary and a veterinary assistant as well as a plant production specialist from the District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO). Together these staff formed the project team that carried out the actual implementation at village level. Additional support for training activities was provided by the HI Savannakhet team as well as the District Health Office and the District Lao Women Union

A project car (Toyota Hilux 4WD) was provided by CU / NAFES to cater for the transportation needs of the project.

2. Coordination, Planning and Reporting

A province and a district coordinator have been responsible for liaison and coordination between the project and the local authorities. Quarterly meetings with the participation of the CU, the authorities and HI representatives has been held while planning and reporting beyond that has been according to the needs of the authorities. Occasional progress reporting and presentations by the Project Manager at official meetings have thus occurred with 2-3 months intervals.

3. Activities and Produced Outputs

The activities that finally were selected with participation of the villagers through the PRA and village planning exercises is resumed in the table below along with the produced outputs

Table 5: CMLIP Activities in Kham District

Project Activity	Output
Setting-up village development funds (VDF)	11 VDFs (all target villages) have been set up and VDF committee members trained on accounting and management twice (in total 67 participants)
Training of Village Veterinary Workers (VWV) setting up of vaccination funds	22 VWV trained, 4 vaccination funds installed (one at district level) and vaccination campaigns carried out (81% of poultry, 79% of pigs, 39% of buffaloes and 21% of cattle)
Setting up of village production groups and training of interested villagers	7 production groups for pig raising, poultry raising, dry season crops cultivation, mushroom cultivation, frog raising and rice cultivation set up
Training of Village Health Volunteers (VHV) and provision of medical kits	22 VHV trained and medical kits provided for 11 villages (initial funds provided).
Construction of gravity water systems	3 gravity water systems constructed in 3 villages
Training on fish production in wet rice fields	11 villagers trained

a. Village Development Funds

Village development funds were first set up in November 2003 to give the prioritised and poor households access to credit for starting income generating and livelihood improving activities. Initially 417 households were given short-terms loans up to one years duration. When the loans for various types of activities were prayed back other non-prioritized households were allowed to become members and take loans from the fund. The table below shows the development of the funds.

Table 6: Village Development Funds in Kham Target Villages

No of Families Given Loans				Loan Capital - USD		
Nov. 2003	% of fam.	Nov. 2004	% of fam.	Nov.2003	Nov. 2004	Increase
417	52	602	76	18,360	32,220	13,860

Through interests and membership fees the village funds increased by 43% over one year from November 3003 to November 2004 while the number of families participating in the credit schemes increased by 185. The loans supported by November 2004 787 activities divided on 223 livestock raising, 250 dry season cropping and 214 other income generating activities.

C. Assessment of Implementation and Achievements

1. Identification of Activities and Beneficiaries

It appears that within the given framework HI carried out Component A of the Project with adequate and sufficient logistical arrangements and inputs of resources. Extensive use was made of experienced staff from their Savannakhet project which managed to carry out a thorough participatory planning process both with regard to the target population as well as to their province and district counterparts. During interviews with district and province staff appreciation was expressed for the training on PRA participatory planning approaches.

As regards identification of beneficiaries the method and criteria used are consistent with already well tested wealth ranking techniques used by a number of NGOs and projects. It may thus be assumed that the most needy households and families indeed were identified and targeted by the Project.

2. Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities

The Implementation arrangements for Component A are deemed to be appropriate and sufficient to enable a relatively smooth and timely activity implementation. The decision to locate the project office to Kham District contributed to this and has probably been crucial for creating the good and close working relationship between the HI staff and their district counterparts.

The size of the project team consisting of 2 HI and 3 district staff has been sufficient to maintain a frequent presence in target villages creating a feeling of being followed up among the target population.

The interviews conducted with the provincial district authorities confirm that there has been close cooperation and coordination between the Project and the government counterpart offices and services. At provincial level both the coordinator for the project and the head of the PAFO were found to be keenly interested in and well informed about activities and achievements. At district level the same was found to be the case with regard to both the political leadership (the Deputy District Governor) and the head of DAFO. The district project coordinator has for instance been a relatively frequent visitor to the target villages to monitor activities. It may thus be concluded that the project has been solidly anchored and enjoyed the support and backing of the province and district authorities.

3. Monitoring and Follow-up

External monitoring has been provided by the province coordinator the CU and the HI representative based in Vientiane. However, it appears that the suggested indicator, theoretical rice sufficiency, has not been followed up in terms of sampling of selected households.

4. Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs

There is good correspondence between the identified problems and the activities selected to improve quality of life and livelihoods for villagers. A focus on income generation activities, establishment of village development funds coupled with appropriate training is a strategy well adapted for meeting the basic needs which were identified to be lack of technical know-how and lack of access to financial resources. It should also be noted that the district authorities regard the CMLIP project as one of the most successful in their district, producing more rapid results than a number of other projects that have been implemented or are being implemented in the district.

5. Village Visit Findings

Altogether 6 of the 11 target villages were visited during the evaluation fieldtrip. The following observations and assessments are based on discussions with village authorities, production group leaders and village volunteers as well as on interviews conducted with selected beneficiaries. In terms of economic status and livelihood the visited villages ranged from generally poor villages where a large majority of the households had been designated as beneficiaries, to relatively rich villages where only few households had been targeted by the CMLIP project.

Rising of small livestock, in particular pigs and to a less degree chickens, was found to be the most prominent and important activity in terms of popularity and scale. One important reason given for this was the relatively short production cycle which enables cash income to be generated relatively quickly. Complementary and supportive activities that were emphasized by the villagers were training on cultivation of animal feed like maize and access to vaccination services through the village veterinary volunteer and the vaccination fund. In all visited villages it was expressed that vaccination had greatly reduced livestock mortality rates since it was introduced and facilitated by the project.

Other important farming based activities were dry and wet season cash crop production, such as garlic, vegetables, pumpkins and soybeans which for a number of households had developed into valuable cash income sources.

Although being a complete novelty to the beneficiaries, mushroom cultivation had been promoted and taken up by a limited number of households. However, there were now signs that this production activity was gaining in popularity and was being adopted by new growers through a process of household to household transfer of technology.

In terms of non-farm based income generating activities weaving was found to be the most important and successful. Like rising of small livestock it has the potential to bring cash income relatively quickly. It is, however, labour demanding and mostly practiced during the dry season when women are less busy with rice and other crop cultivation. It was also noted by some of the beneficiaries that there are problems with marketing and market access for their products.

In the three target villages where gravity water systems had been or were being constructed villagers emphasized this as one of the most important benefits the CMLIP project had brought. It was invariably rated as the most important benefit by women, as it had greatly reduced their and their children's labour burden. When women in one of the target villages were asked what they now were doing with the time they saved, the answer was that they could divert it to other important productive activities and households chores.

During village meetings and discussions village authorities and leaders frequently mentioned improved knowledge on improved production technologies for crops and livestock as one of the most important project benefits. This included also the capacity for administering and managing their own village development fund that had opened up new possibilities for villagers to engage in different kinds of productive and income generating activities. It was clear that these new capacities among key members of the community were seen as an important resource which could be shared with other community members in the future.

The village development funds that CMLIP has set up in the target villages received perhaps the most enthusiastic comments from the village leaders. It was apparent that the village development fund was perceived by the villagers as their own activity and it was unanimously expressed that they now considered themselves to have the capacity and knowledge to sustain it for the benefit of the their community also in the future. In none of the visited villages had there been any notable problems with defaults and the regulations seemed to be practiced with some flexibility for those who needed to additional time for repayment. Due to interest rates and member fees funds had grown considerably since they were installed (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

6. Village Self Assessment

As a part of the discussions in the villages the leadership was asked, on a general level and according to their subjective assessment, to estimate the number poor households with sufficient rice production or cash income to buy rice before and after the CMLIP interventions. The table below gives the figures and the calculated decrease.

Table 7: Poor Households Before and After CMLIP Interventions

Village	Pre-project	Present situation	Decrease
Konglung	31	7-8	74-77%
Ko-ngiou	13-15	7-8	
Thadlouang	-	6	-
Tadnoi	10	1	90%
Xang	36	5-6	83-86%
Xiengkiao	15	2-3	80-87%

The results of this type of assessment can naturally not be taken as hard facts and an accurate reflection of the real situation but at least they can be seen as an indication that positive changes have taken place in the village. In this respect the figures indicates a trend of changing and improving livelihoods in the village which at least for a considerable part can be ascribed to the effect of CMLIP interventions.

7. Baseline Survey

The purpose of carrying out the baseline survey was to establish benchmark indicators with which project impacts on individual household levels could be traced. A final survey of a sample of 58 beneficiary households was carried out in May-June 2005. The table below summarises the average changes per household for a selection some of the pertinent indicators (parameters) recorded in the survey.

Table 8: Change in Impact Indicators for CMLIP Kham

Indicator / Parameter	Change
Lowland irrigated paddy fields	0.12 ha
Lowland rainfed paddy fields	-0.01 ha
Upland fields (shifting cultivation)	0.03 ha
Upland fields (permanently cultivated)	0.04 ha
Fishpond area	50 m ²
Cattle/cow	0.61 heads
Buffalo	0.01 heads
Goat	-0.03 heads
Pig	3.13 heads
Poultry	30.41 heads
Rice produced	553 kg
Rice purchased for self consumption	-206 kg
Surplus rice sold	60 kg
Income from agricultural/livestock production	1,089,158 Kip (102 USD)
Income from seasonal employment	396,482 Kip (37 USD)

The indicators show that there has been a considerable increase in the area of irrigated paddy while there has been a slight increase in upland fields, both permanently cultivated and shifted. As the Kham sub-project did not have any activities to expand irrigated paddy land the increase can be interpreted as a part to a general trend caused by other factors or projects rather than the CMLIP interventions. Project interventions and training do not appear to have had any effect in terms of reducing shifting cultivation.

There are considerable increases in number of pigs and chicken per household reflecting the focus the project put on providing credit for raising of small livestock.

Rice production has increased among the sampled households as well as amounts of sold rice. Income from livestock and other agricultural production has increased.

It can be concluded that the project has had significant effects when it comes to small livestock raising and income derived from agricultural production.

8. Institution and Capacity Building

The village visits gave the impression that the project had devoted a lot of effort in creating viable and sustainable village structures, most notably in terms of the village development committees and village development funds. Village development fund committee members and accountants had received training twice. Other committees such as those in charge of gravity water maintenance also seemed well established and motivated. The various village production groups appeared to be well defined and with able leadership.

Apart from the training on participatory planning it appears that government staff has benefited little in the way of technical or managerial training. However, the DAFO staff seconded to the project expressed the opinion that they had acquired new knowledge and community development skills from working on the project team together with experienced NGO workers.

9. Gender Considerations

While setting up the village development committees care was taken to include the Lao Women Union representative as a mandatory member. Women were also prominent in relation to village development fund management as women in general both headed the committee and had the responsibility for accounting and bookkeeping. The female representation on the established village committees will make it more likely that women benefit from the continued lending and development activities in the target villages.

In the three target villages where gravity water systems had been built women were clearly appreciative as it had lessened their workload considerably at the same time as improving the general health situation in the village.

10. Sustainability Assessment

The institution and capacity building activities undertaken by the CMLIP in Kham were intended to create a basis for a self-driven and self-directed development in the target villages. On the background of observations made and information collected during the village visits and it appears that training and study trips at the start of the project, coupled with the training on improved production techniques, managed to create an enthusiasm and a momentum for change that will be carried forward into the future. However, this momentum will only be conducive for continued development and improvement of livelihoods if it is combined with a mobilisation of resources in the village. By means of the village development funds a crucial financial resource base open to all villagers has been put in place. As noted above this appears to be one of the most appreciated interventions, and the village leadership and fund management committees invariably mentioned the development funds as the vehicle for continued development.

It is reasonable to assume that this financial basis and the new managerial and technical skills embedded in the target villages through the CMLIP indeed will perpetuate the positive development trends observed among the beneficiary population. Likewise, it is reasonable to assume that the villages will manage to sustain and direct their own development without too much external assistance, although, as noted earlier, further assistance will be greatly appreciated.

It is also promising that the district has established a committee to follow up the CMLIP target villages after the closure of the project although the district's resource situation may prove a limitation for this planned activity.

D. Summary Conclusions

On the whole the CMLIP in Kham can be judged to be a project that has made a positive difference for the targeted population. It has adequately identified beneficiaries and activities in a participatory manner and it is established, with a reasonable degree of certainty, that project interventions have been effective in addressing the basic needs of the most needy section of the population in the target villages. With a focus on income generation activities that rapidly brings tangible results the project has chosen an effective strategy for livelihood improvement.

The agricultural interventions have brought about a change in production cycle as dry season cultivation of crops is on the increase in many of the target villages. New, and easily marketable crops such as soybeans (wet season) and watermelon (dry season) have also been introduced successfully.

Due to successful institution building at village level the probability of sustainability is high although continued external monitoring will be necessary to keep the momentum for change that has been created. The relatively limited size and accessibility of the project area as well as the fact that the district and province authorities have taken a keen interest in the project, increases the probability that continued monitoring and support in terms of technical advice will continue. In fact, the district authorities expressed that the CMLIP villages would be used as model villages in terms of poverty reduction efforts in the future.

IV. SOB BAO SUBPROJECT

A. Preparation Phase – Component A

1. Start-up and Logistics

Preparations for start up of the CMLIP in Sob Bao started in May 2003 by the Rural Development Training Centre (RDTC) which is a locally registered non/profit organisation that preciously formed part of QSL. Today Quaker Service Lao (QSL) is using the services of RDTC for training and planning activities in the context of their own projects. To facilitate project operations an office was opened in Sob Bao while most of the project team were based in Vientiane making frequent field/trips and missions to the project area. The team was composed of a community development officer, a training specialist, an irrigation specialist, a social data analyst and 2 coordinators/administrators. During the preparation and planning phase 5 field trips were made to the project area and the target villages in order to collect data, raise awareness and undertake training

While there were security concerns in connected with transport and travel during the phase, these did not halt the PRA and data collection work.

2. Gender Training

One of the focuses during Component A was gender relations and the situation for women in the 8 target villages. One field trip was devoted to raising gender awareness through a series gender training events for district staff and the Lao Women Union representatives in each of the target villages.

3. Beneficiary Identification

Initially PRA was carried out in the target villages to acquire a basis for identifying primary needs and complementary activities in a participatory manner. A baseline survey utilizing the format provided by the CU was also done for a selected 50 families in the target villages This represents around 14% of the total number of households. The PRA carried out in the villages identified the number of households (HH) with rice deficits. The following table details the classification and number of poor and rice deficient households.

Table 9: Rice Deficit in CMLIP Villages in Sob Bao.

Village	Number of HH	HH with rice deficit	%
Bong	25	13	52
Danhang	51	1	2
Khangkad	36	18	50
Nakhoun	43	35	81
Namay	52	19	37
Phonhang	70	32	46
Tad	24	22	92

It is unclear if a closer identification of beneficiaries were not carried out during Component B and whether a particular wealth ranking carried out as PRA summaries makes no mention of this. During the information collection there also appears to have been a focus on identifying families without buffaloes.

4. Identification of Primary Needs and Activities

The PRA resulted in a long list of activities suggested and favoured by the villagers in order to solve problems and bringing development to the village. Women in general mentioned the following activities

- improved animal raising techniques
- sericulture
- improved access to clean water gravity (water supply)
- improved quality of weaving
- improved access to funds
- improved market access
- improved access to education
- increased rice production

It is, however, unclear to which degree the PRA formed the basis for participatory planning process that resulted in identification of livelihood improving interventions later to be implemented during Component B.

B. Implementation Phase – Component B

1. Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up

In the Final Report for Component A it was foreseen that the RDTC team most likely would be retained for implementation of Component B. However, responsibility for implementation of the project was shifted from RDTC to the community department of QSL with only the community development officer from the Component A team being retained as a project manager stationed in Sob Bao. Additional QSL staff in Sob Bao was restricted to a driver and a locally hired community facilitator which worked only for a limited number of months. Logistical and procurement support continued to be extended from the QSL office in Vientiane. Other training and technical assistance was provided by external staff on a needs basis.

The project team that was set up consisted mainly of district staff with the district coordinator, a livestock and a crop production officer coming from DAFO, a representative from the district Lao Women Union, one officer from the district health office and one staff from the district communication office (DCTPC). These were joined by the QSL project manager which had a more broad community development background. To meet transport needs the project had been provided a 4WD pickup and two motorcycles. A provincial coordinator nominated by PAFSO provided supervision, liaison and coordination with the provincial level. Implementation of the project activities has mainly been sector-wise with the district services staff going to the villages separately.

2. Additional funds from QSL

At the start-up of Component B QSL decided to commit its own funds for CMLIP project activities. According to the QSL country director this had its background in the consideration that the CMLIP funds offered were too limited when divided among the eight target villages. Another reason for the complementary funding appear to have been the availability of funds earmarked for purchase and supply of large livestock. Consequently, the contract between NAFES and the QSL specifies that 65 buffaloes and 10 cows to a value of totally 21,500 USD would be provided by QSL. In addition QSL would cover their own administration and office cost stipulated to a total value of 19,745 USD in the original budget.

3. Coordination, Planning and Reporting

The project team has held monthly review and planning meetings as well as weekly meetings for more detailed operational planning and division of tasks. As a member of the team the QSL project manager took part in these meetings in the capacity of being responsible for material supplies and logistics as well as being the community development specialist on the team. According to needs the team would often meet more than once per week.

Quarterly review meetings with participation of the province coordinator, CU/NAFES, the district authorities and the QSL program coordinator have been held on a regular basis in spite of security concerns related to air and road travel.

Project progress reports were produced jointly by the team and submitted to the heads of the concerned district offices and the deputy governor of Sob Bao. The PAFO and the provincial coordinator would also receive copies of the monthly report. As regards the reporting to NAFES/CU the QSL programme coordinator in Vientiane would compile and submit quarterly reports based on the field reporting.

4. Activities and Produced Outputs

The project activities that finally were selected for implementation are summarised in the table below.

Table 10: CMLIP Activities in Sob Bao District

Project Activity	Output
Construction of gravity water systems	Six gravity water systems constructed in 5 villages
Construction of small scale family irrigation systems	7 systems for 4 villages and 48 families constructed
Construction of fords	Fords across 2 streams constructed
Construction of latrines for schools and households	24 latrines constructed (4 schools)
Provision of funds for buffaloes	66 households in all 8 target villages provided with one buffalo each
Provision of funds for cattle	11 households in 2 villages provided with one cow
Provision of funds for pigs	64 families provided with 2 pigs each
Training on animal raising	288 people (32 women) trained in 8 villages
Installation of rice banks	Rice banks started in 3 villages
Provision of funds for weaving	55 households in 7 villages provided with funds
Provision of funds for basketry/handicrafts	5 households in one village (Tad) provided with funds (1 million KIP)
Promotion of fruit tree planting	55 households in 8 villages provided with 3020 seedlings and 13 ha planted to various fruit trees
Promotion of mulberry tree and silk worm raising	60 people (3 women) trained on cultivation techniques 33 households in 6 villages provided with 16500 seedlings planted to 2.4 ha
Provision of improved rice seeds	16 people took part in a study tour on mulberry cultivation 30 households in 5 villages provided with seeds planted to 1.9 ha
Promotion of cash crops cultivation	330 of various seeds provided to 174 households in 4 villages
Promoting of dry season cropping	188 people (34) women in 8 villages were trained on improved cultivation techniques 234 people (87 female) trained and provided with seeds
Training of village veterinaries and provision of vaccination funds and equipment	16 village veterinaries (1 women) trained in all 8 target villages and vaccination funds installed
Village health volunteer training and provision of	Refrigerator for keeping vaccines provided and 9 different types of vaccine for the DAFSO 25 VHVs (11 women) trained in all 8 target

medical kits (medicine and equipment)	villages
	Medical kits provided for all 8 target villages
Training on medicine fund management	21 people (6 women) in all 8 target villages trained
Training on organic fertilizer (compost) making	262 people (79women) trained in all 8 target villages
Training on traditional dying techniques	63 people (62 women) trained in 7 villages
Training on project management	39 village committee members (11 women) trained on management of development activities
Gender training	32 people (16 women) trained in all 8 target villages
Training on project management for district staff	19 (6 women) district staff trained
Training on mother and child health care	50 women trained in all 8 target villages
Women's saving group training and provision f start funds	80 people trained in all 8 target villages
	2 million KIP in start funds provided
Training on accounting for women's saving group	32 people trained
Water user training	16 people trained
Study tour on marketing	24 (8 women) participants

C. Assessment of Implementation and Achievements

1. Identification of Beneficiaries and Activities

Judging from the background information of reports and interviews, it appears that identification of beneficiaries was not fully done during Component B. It is also uncertain as to what degree wealth ranking that would enable identification of beneficiaries at a later stage was an integral part of PRA. It is therefore reasonable to believe that, at least to some degree, selection of beneficiaries was done in conjunction with the preparations for implementing of the various activities.

If this is the case it represents a less than optimal solution for the targeting of the most needy and poor households. One therefore risks letting the already decided type and scope of activity guide the selection of beneficiaries. In this way one may not reach some of the neediest households which for some reasons is unable or reluctant to join the offered activity. The PRA has undoubtedly formed a good basis for the selection of the types of activities but again, it is not entirely clear how strong the link is between the PRA and the final outcome in terms of selection of project activities. It seems, for instance, that the decision to provide villagers with large livestock, cattle and buffaloes, was more guided by the availability of funding than by considerations of what type of activity most effectively and quickly would provide livelihood improvements for the neediest households. It should, however, be mentioned that provision of buffaloes were among the potential activities identified by the PRA. Thus, in terms of the mix of activities the CMLIP project in Sob Bao ended up implementing, some questions may be raised about the predominance of the large livestock component

2. Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities

The fact that the responsibility for implementation was shifted from RDTCC to QSL's community development department represented a discontinuity that may have affected the project negatively. A shift like this poses a challenge in terms of the transfer of acquired experience and knowledge about local conditions, etc. Working relationships with local authorities have to be re-established and developed by the new staff that has taken over responsibility for implementation. However, it should be noted that the project manager that was posted to Sob Bao also was part of the Component A team thus representing some continuity in terms of staffing. Some of the district staff that was nominated for to work on the

Component B project team was also involved during the first phase, such as the Lao Women Union district representative.

Implementation arrangements largely seem to have been adequate and sufficient to get the work done in a relatively timely manner. The dedicating of the district staff and their willingness to work has been crucial for this accomplishment. It should also be noted that QSL's project manager and team member must have performed his duties well in spite of the obviously large work burden as the sole QSL project officer, having both managerial and technical tasks. It is not entirely clear how much senior project staff support has been extended from QSL Vientiane apart from the quarterly visits of the program manager. It may be argued that QSL took a risk by not posting more project staff to Sob Bao, and that it was their good fortune to find and work with competent district staff who could effectively coordinate and implement activities.

As far as could be observed the project has been well recognized and anchored at the political and administrative level of the district. Authorities expressed an opinion that out of a number of other projects regarded the CMLIP project as a model. The active backing and support by the district authorities was undoubtedly a factor that explains why the project has been able to perform so well in spite of the constraints it faced. Liaison and coordination at the province level seem to have been less thorough.

3. Monitoring and Follow-up

Monitoring of field implementation has largely been done by the project team themselves. It is not known how closely the province coordinator has been able to follow the project but one can assume that the lack of transport has been a limiting factor. It seems that the most regular external monitoring has taken place in connection with quarterly meetings during which field visits has been arranged.

In terms of follow-up by senior QSL staff that has been able to give directions and encouragements as well as maintaining a close liaison with the district authorities, there appears to have been some shortcomings. In spite of it being a relatively large project in the QSL portfolio in terms of funds it appears that it was not given special priority. The programme manager that was assigned the responsibility for the project had a number of other projects to follow and seemed only to have been able to visit the project in connection with quarterly meetings.

Procurement was handled from the QSL Vientiane office through mail and fax and did not entail many visits by administrative staff that could have assisted in the Sob Bao Office.

In general it appears that the CMLIP in Sob Bao has been given too little attention and focus in terms of follow up by the QSL Vientiane leadership and senior programme staff. One possible explanation for this may be the safety and security concerns in connection with air and road travel.

4. Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs

The project has had a relatively large focus on construction activities such as gravity water and small-scale irrigation systems. In addition, considerable effort has been devoted to the provision of large livestock, most notably buffaloes. Even if it does not bring any increased incomes to the poorest families in the village construction of gravity water is a well justified intervention as it enhances life quality for all and relieves women of a heavy work burden. The reliance on large livestock as a vehicle for improving livelihoods is more questionable. It does not have any immediate effect on income levels of household although it may relieve labour shortages and indirectly save expenses for hiring a buffalo.

Another mechanism, through which it can work positively and relieve rice deficits for poor families, is that households can be awarded a larger area for wet rice cultivation of the communally owned and managed land. In this respect the local culture and traditions in terms of sharing village resources is conducive to achieve a beneficial effect of providing buffaloes. However, interviews in the villages also revealed that some households previously without buffaloes could manage by borrowing a buffalo from relatives. For instance, one specific household in Tad had received a buffalo but their rice deficit situation remained

unchanged because they had not been given more of the quite limited paddy land that belonged to the village. Income also remained unchanged because no additional funds or support for handicraft or small livestock raising had been received.

The efficiency of construction of small-scale irrigation in producing livelihood benefits for the most needy households is also questionable as there is not necessarily any correspondence between the rice deficient poor households and the land that will be covered by the irrigation structures. However, in a situation where a large percentage of the households lack rice, as was the case in the majority of the Sob Bao target villages, poor families are bound to benefit anyway. Still, it must be concluded that development of small-scale irrigation is not an activity that is well easily lends itself targeting of the most needy and poorest households.

5. Village Visit Findings

During the field trip 6 of the 8 villages were visited, including the 2 villages, Bong and Khangkad, that were destroyed by fire at the beginning of May 2005. Village meetings as well as household interviews were conducted in Tad, Nakhoun, Namay and Phonhang.

Women in general mentioned gravity water systems and weaving as the activities that were most appreciated and beneficial for them. Judging from interviews the 55 households that originally had been involved in weaving activities supplemented and augmented their household incomes. One woman interviewed in Namay that had received funds from the project to buy a loom and material, had since the start of the project been able to sell products for around 1 million Kip (around 95 US\$). Training on mother and child health care had been well received and appreciated by women.

Men more often mentioned provision of buffaloes, improved rice cultivation and small-scale irrigation as the most beneficial activities. It was obvious that the work done by the project in promoting dry season rice cultivation and in general improving rice cultivation was well appreciated. For instance, the poorest village, Tad had been cultivating wet rice for a number of years but had never before been able to harvest 2 rice crops per year. Through training and supply of improved seeds the project had introduced dry season rice cultivation and thus enabled a substantial increase in the village's yearly rice yields.

Pig raising was found to be a considerably large activity with the participation of 64 households but appears not to have been supported and coupled with training on cultivation of crops like maize and cassava for animal feed.

Poultry (chicken and ducks) raising is normally an activity that is efficient in bringing quick income improvements as long as vaccination and improved husbandry techniques are applied. For some reason the CMLIP Sob Bao had not included this among the activities offered to poor and rice deficient households.

Sericulture, or more correctly, planting of mulberry trees to prepare for raising of silk worms, had been initiated in 6 villages but had yet to yield any results in terms of income.

Finally, promotion of cash crops like soybeans and other crops like vegetables for sale and home consumption has been promoted and supported in terms of training and seeds

6. Village Self Assessment

During the village meetings people were asked to assess the situation in terms of families with a rice deficit before and after the project interventions. The table below shows the results.

Table 11: Poor Households Before and After CMLIP Interventions

Village	Pre-project	Present situation	Decrease
Nakhoun	22	16	17%
Namay	24	5	80%
Phonhang	32	9	72%
Tad	19	10	48%

As noted earlier, such assessments cannot claim to fully reflect the real situation. In relation to the figures on households with rice deficits from the PRA (III.A.2) the numbers given now are in general lower. There is reason to believe that out of goodwill for the project

and the project staff, the effect of the project may have been overstated during village meetings. Nevertheless, it may be argued that the figures show a trend in improving livelihoods that can at least in part be attributed to the project.

7. Baseline Survey

As a part of the contract obligations QSL carried out the same baseline survey as all the other service providers for the CMLIP sub-projects. However, as noted earlier (A.3) the survey only covered 50 households representing around 14% of the target population, and furthermore, the survey has not been repeated towards the end of the project. It is therefore not possible, at this stage, to use any of the household and asset parameters to trace project impacts.

As no other alternative indicators, neither qualitative nor quantitative were established and followed-up during project implementation, there are today no data that can serve as indicators for project impacts.

8. Institution and Capacity Building

CMLIP in Sob Bao has carried out number of study tours and training events in the target villages. Most of these have been technical training on subjects such as livestock raising, crop production and accounting. One of the training events was devoted to building and strengthening village institutional structures with members of village development committees in the target villages being trained in project management. Another institutional strengthening training was for the women's saving's group for which 80 persons were trained. The study trips and technical training have undoubtedly created new competence among the beneficiary population which has gained knowledge on improved livestock and crop production technologies. The range of training subjects also seem to be largely consistent with the villagers' preferences as recorded in the PRA reports for each village. This new competence will remain in the villages after the closing of the project with the potential that it will be adopted by an increasing number of villagers that did not receive training.

It is also likely that the village development management and saving group training has contributed to strengthening the village institutional structures. Still, follow up and continued external monitoring and encouragement are necessary as a safeguard that village committees shall remain active. Without prolonged follow-up there is a considerable danger that development efforts will at least slow down if not stagnate in the target villages.

9. Gender Considerations

Gender issues received attention from the start of the project in 2003. During Component A gender training events were arranged targeting both Lao Women Union village representatives as well as district staff. This represented one of QSL's basic principles on how development processes should be approached and was well received among the beneficiaries. Observations and information collected during the village visits shows that this was a well justified attempt to create understanding for including women in committees, as it was found that some villages lacked female representation on their gravity water maintenance committees.

Village development committees were formed at the start of the project with regulations that secure at least one female member on the committee through fixed membership of the Lao Women Union village representative.

In terms of project activities that have benefited women most, gravity water systems were almost without exception ranked as number one by the women themselves. In this respect the project contribution to reducing women's work burden is substantial since gravity water systems have been constructed in 6 of the target villages. The 2 other target villages had received support for gravity water from another project. The weaving activities introduced by the project have contributed positively to the income generation of initially 55 households.

The fact that the district coordinator is a woman is probably a factor that facilitated the process of engaging women in project activities and thus strengthening their position in the villages.

10. Sustainability Assessment

Sustainability can only be assessed in a subjective manner with the basis in observations and discussions with villagers. As noted earlier some sustainability in terms of enhanced production technology will undoubtedly remain in the villages and the gains in improved livelihood for benefiting households will undoubtedly be sustainable. The village funds that has been created also stand a good chance of continuing to bring benefits but the question of village committees managing this on their own without further training or close follow up by external monitoring or support needs to be posed. When the project closes this responsibility will be left with the district services and no matter the extent of their good will and interest, their resource situation may prevent them from following-up with a sufficient frequency required to keep the revolving funds going. The continued activity and perhaps the existence of the various institutional structures created by the project will remain uncertain.

D. Summary Conclusions

It should first be noted that CMIP in Sob Bao has indeed provided considerable benefits to the target population. A relatively large number of people have had their livelihoods improved and more will most likely become beneficiaries when the more term project interventions like cattle and buffalo revolving funds take effect. Village sanitation has on the whole been significantly improved and work burdens of women improved by the gravity water systems. A relatively large number of households have had their rice supply situation improved and others have been helped to increase their cash income.

On the critical side it may be remarked that the project could have been better handled by the service provider. QSL took chances in assigning only one staff member with community development experience to the project on a permanent basis and also relied on him to act as project manager.

PRA was adequately carried out but it is unclear as to how it managed to identify the poorest and neediest households which later could be prioritised as participants in livelihood enhancing project activities. The impression is that this was done more in an ad-hoc manner when the project was ready to implement the various activities. However, this does not necessarily mean that the project failed to reach the poorest households, but it leaves some doubt about the accuracy of the targeting. For instance, offering a menu of project activities first and then going in search of interested participants in a village can easily lead to a situation where the already resourceful households capture some part of the assistance offered at the exclusion of the poorest.

Due to the meagre QSL staffing in Sob Bao the transfer of skills to government staff, especially in the field of community development, has probably been less than desirable. However, it should be acknowledged that the project manager has performed his duties well and that some skills transfer in terms of community development approaches must have taken place.

V. KASI DISTRICT SUB-PROJECT

A. Preparation Phase – Component A

1. Start-up and Logistics

The service provider for Component A of CMLIP Kasi was World Vision Lao. Project activities started in November 2002 with a kick-off meeting and the opening of a project office in Kasi. A community facilitator posted to the Kasi office was hired at the beginning of December. A project manager and an assistant project manager were based in Vientiane and went on a field mission to Kasi for carrying out training and planning activities. After an agreement with the district governor, counterparts for DAFO and other sector services were assigned to the project.

In all 12 districts, staff was trained in conducting households surveys in December 2002, and the actual surveys were carried out in January 2003. The household survey covered all households in the target villages. A benchmark survey according to the specifications of the CU was also completed. All the target villages were visited in order to introduce the project and its objectives, and village development committees were formed.

Training in project implementation was conducted in February 2003 involving 12 district counterparts, including four people from the District Agriculture Office, two from the District Education Department, four from District Health office and two from the Lao Women's Union. The participants were trained in activity planning, field implementation, monitoring and reporting

As a preparation and motivational measure a study tour was arranged for 20 villagers (5 women) in February 2003.

2. Beneficiary Identification

The baseline household survey formed the basis for identification of poor households and potential beneficiaries. The following selection criteria were used:

- Land holding size (for rice cultivation)
- Access to/availability of capital
- Possession of livestock
- Food insecurity
- Family health
- Housing quality
- Appearance, clothing and asset possession
- Literacy, adult & child
- Aptitude for and interest in different sectors of livelihood improvement

After analysis and discussion with the village development committees a beneficiary list comprising 60-70% of the poorest and 30-40% of not so poor households were drawn up. This was done to include progressive and more development minded households in the different livelihood development groups. The rationale was to avoid creating antagonism within the village and also to have role models for the most resource poor households. A total of 712 families from the target villages were thus identified as eligible beneficiaries of the project. However, due to resource constraints only around 300 households would primarily be targeted by livelihood improving activities planned for Component B.

At the end of the implementation of Component A, two more villages were identified in the project area, namely Naxaithong and Phonesavath, with over 60 households in each village. Although the baseline survey did not cover these two villages, a number of households were included as beneficiaries.

3. Identification of Primary Needs and Activities

Identification of project activities took place in February and March 2004 after the completion of the base line survey. Each village was visited by the project team and the district counterparts. Detailed discussions were held with the villagers and the village development committee members about the appropriate livelihood improvement activities for the village. Information collected in each village was then discussed with the district counterparts. The following groups of activities were thus identified:

- Construction and rehabilitation of gravity water systems
- Village sanitation and health improvement through village health volunteer training, health education provision of village medical kits
- Improvement of rice production and construction of small scale irrigation schemes
- Reclamation of wet rice / paddy land
- Promotion of sericulture through planting of mulberry trees
- Support of weaving activities
- Provision of / funds for cows and buffaloes
- Promotion and support to fish raising / aquaculture
- Promotion of chilly production

B. Implementation Phase – Component B

1. Implementation Arrangements – Project Set-up

Due to various reasons, not to be further explored here, World Vision Lao did not continue as Service Provider for Component B. Instead, the CU/NAFES took direct responsibility for the implementation and set up a project team consisting of four staff from DAFSO including the district coordinator, the head of the district Lao Women Union and one staff from the district health office. To run the office in Kasi one administrator had been hired. The administrator was supported by one administrative assistant and one reporting and documentation assistant. All the three administration personnel are all interns living in Kasi. The supervision responsibility for the 14 target villages consisting of three clusters were divided between the team members.

Implementation would usually be done sector-wise with the different technical specialist making separate visits to the target villages. The team would occasionally go as a group to visit villages.

2. Coordination, Planning and Reporting

Weekly operational planning meetings were held to divide tasks and decide which activities should be carried out. Quarterly review, and planning meetings were held with representatives from Vientiane Province and from the CU/NAFES. PAFO nominated a provincial coordinator who has followed up the project and provided a vital link to the province level. As the CU was acting as service provider it necessitated frequent monitoring and coordination visits.

The district coordinator reported on a monthly basis to the district administration and the district deputy governor as well as heads of DAFO and other concerned sector services. The reports were copied to PAFO.

3. Activities and Produced Outputs

The table below summarises the activities and the outputs of Component B until April 2005

Table 12: CMLIP Activities in Kasi District

Project Activity	Output
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Project Activity	Output
Construction of gravity water systems and training on maintenance	Six gravity water systems for 9 villages (58 persons trained on maintenance)
Construction of shallow wells	3 shallow wells completed in one village
Small scale irrigation structures	Reinforcement and improvement three weirs (one weir serving 3 villages) and construction of a new weir for one village. Total irrigated area 131 ha costing the project about 55 USD per irrigated hectare.
Latrine construction	Extension of irrigation canal system for one village 4 schools quipped with latrines
Reclamation of new paddy land	69 households were provided with rice for food to be able to work on reclaiming paddy land.
Wet season rice production	4 households supported with seeds.
Promotion of vegetable growing	Seeds supplied to 49 households
Promotion of cash crop production	Funds provided to 105 households for the purchase of seeds (chilli, jobs tears, banana and sesame)
Introduction of improved rice varieties	300 kg of rice seeds provided to selected farmers for demonstration purposes
Support to opening of new paddy land	Funds provided to 70 households
Promotion of private nurseries	Equipment and tree seedlings provided to 3 households in 3 different villages
Support to DAFSO nursery	Equipment and seedlings provided
Support to planting of fruit trees at schools	4 schools provided with seedlings
Provision of buffaloes (Buffalo bank)	11 buffaloes provided to 10 households
Provision of cows (cattle bank)	18 cows provided for 18 households
Provision of pigs (revolving fund))	278 pigs provided to 140 households in 13 villages
Provision of chicken (chicken revolving fund)	1385 chicken provided to 61 households in 12 villages
Promotion of fish raising and training on fish raising and hatching techniques	Fingerlings provided to 13 households in 3 villages (communal ponds, 42 people trained)
Training of village veterinarians and provision of vaccination funds	20 village veterinary workers trained for 10 villages and vaccination funds provided
Training of village health workers and provision of village medical kits	18 village health workers trained for 9 villages and medical kits provided
Training of villagers in improved plant production techniques	A large number of villagers trained on improved production technologies for vegetable cultivation, rice production and fruit tree growing
Training on mushroom production and provision of funds	24 people trained and 8 households given loans for equipment and seeds
Training on livestock raising	Villagers trained on chicken, pig, goat, cow and buffalo raising (98 people trained)
Training on gravity water system management and maintenance	Village gravity water and maintenance committees trained in all villages with installed systems
Training on silk weaving and natural dying and support in terms o start-up funds	40 households in 5 villages supported (27 people trained)
Training on small scale irrigation management	80 people from 7 villages trained
Setting up of village development funds and training of management committees	Training of fund committees for all 14 target villages
Support of funds to various income generation activities	Mat making and broom making support to 13 households in 2 villages
	Sweets making support to seven households in one village

Project Activity	Output
	Bamboo weaving support to 10 households in one village
	Blacksmithing support to 11 households in one village
Training and support for crab paste making	Training and support given to 7 families in one village
Leadership training and capacity strengthening for village authorities	Village authorities from all 14 target villages trained (128 persons)
Gender training	205 persons from 14 villages trained
Training for DAFO and district staff	Social data collection (6 persons); project management (9 persons); use of personal computers (15 persons); extension techniques (11 persons).
Study tours on different subjects	Fruit tree planting (5 HH); vegetable growing (8); mat making (5HH); natural dying of silk (5HH); bamboo weaving (16HH) ; village saving groups (33 HH); DAFO study tour to Kham sub-project

a. Revolving Funds / Saving and Credit Schemes

Revolving funds are earmarked for the for the poorest households and managed by the village development committee who also decides on new allocations. Borrowers are required to pay interests and a monthly fee which secures a certain growth of the revolving funds. As in Khamkeut the project has also facilitated the establishment of saving and credit schemes in the target villages. No initial start-up capital was provided. By march 2005 the saving and credit schemes had in all 889 members representing 33% of the total number of families. Total savings were around 35,2 mill. KIP (3,350 USD¹)

C. Assessment of Implementation and Achievements

1. Identification of Activities and Beneficiaries

Component A activities appear to have been appropriate in terms of training of district staff and preparations for surveys and consultation with the target villages. After completion of a comprehensive household survey the number of beneficiaries was appropriately narrowed down from around 700 eligible households to 300 through discussions with the village development committees. Among these were 30-40 less poor and more resourceful households. This is a valid measure as it is conducive to preventing conflict within the village when only the absolutely poorest are targeted. It may, however, be questionable if as much as 30-40 of the better off households are needed for each sector user group. The sector user groups and activities for each village seem to have been selected in a participatory and appropriate manner following the selection of beneficiaries.

2. Implementation Arrangements /Cooperation with District Authorities

As it became clear that World Vision would not continue as service provider for Component B it was decided that in order to save time the Coordination Unit would directly take on the responsibility for the implementation. This represented a discontinuity that appear to have been tackled well due to the fact that district staff were already nominated and had participated in the planning of the project. The CU was already familiar with the project through negotiations, monitoring and follow up. However, there may have been other effects of the disappearance of the NGO service provider such as considerably increased workload

¹ 1 USD = 10,500 KIP

for the CU and lost opportunities for skills transfer to the district staff through on-the-job training.

In spite of the fact that the CMLIP Kasi were implemented almost exclusively with district staff the district administration and the political leadership appeared to be less oriented about the outcomes of the project and in general less engaged in it.

The staffing and composition of the project team have largely been adequate in relation to the type and scope of activities. It should be noted though, that the project team must have had a busy time trying to implement all identified activities in a timely manner given the late start of the project. However, in spite of this the project staff has managed to maintain a frequent presence in the target villages and thus created the necessary momentum and motivation for successful activity implementation.

3. Monitoring and Follow-up

The CU has monitored the field implementation by relatively frequent visits to Kasi and the target villages. Field monitoring has been carried out by the team project team members on their relatively frequent visits to the target villages, in fact, in the dry season staff has visited target villages as often as 2 times per week.

4. Adequacy of Interventions to Meet Primary Needs

The project has had a relatively heavy focus on construction activities including gravity water systems and small scale irrigation structures and weirs. In all nine villages have been provided with tap water by construction of new (three) and refurbishment (three) of gravity water systems. Shallow wells were constructed in one village. In addition to this four irrigation weirs have been renovated and improved serving six target villages while a new weir is being constructed in one target village. Latrines have also been built in four different schools in the target villages.

There is no doubt that gravity systems improve livelihood and life quality for all villagers and especially the women and children who collect and carry water. It is, however, not an intervention that puts money in people's pockets, as income generation activities do. The danger is that a heavy focus on construction activities may claim too big a part of a limited project budget and thus present a constraint on income generation and revolving fund activities that can easily be targeted to the poorest families. In this case, this does not seem to have happened as project spending on construction activities in Kasi has claimed a smaller percentage of the budget than in other sub-projects (see VI.C).

The same arguments and reasoning may be applied to construction of irrigation structures. Improved irrigation and more reliable water flows will help to increase food production and bring benefits to people but may be a poor tool for targeting the poorest without access sufficient paddy land.

However, this has not hindered CMLIP Kasi in engaging in the promotion of other crops than rice, crops that can both be sold as well as supplementing and diversifying the diet of people. In all around 90 households have been engaged in some kind of cash crop production with more than 60 of them cultivating chillies. Performance in terms of small livestock raising has also been good as 220 have received funds to start or expand production. Pig raising is the by far most popular activity with 140 participants in the village production groups while chicken raising comes second with around 60. Other types of income generation activities comprises round 100 households with weaving being the most popular with 40 participating households.

It thus appears that in spite of the prominence of construction activities, the mix of interventions and scope of activities in terms of addressing primary needs of the target population has been adequate and effective.

5. Village Visit Findings

During the evaluation field trip 8 of the 12 target villages were visited: Namonmai, Nongbouathong, Namee, Naxaythong, Naxaykhao, Napho, Namone and Phonthieng.

Improvement and construction of small-scale irrigation structures were predominantly the project intervention men, and to some degree women, focused on first when they were asked about the benefits of the project. However, the construction activities were still ongoing and results in terms of increased rice crops cannot be expected until next season (2006). This was, for example, the case in Nongbouathong where 11 households have been supported in their efforts to build a 2-km irrigation channel which will enable them to reclaim 10 ha of paddy land.

The women were more focused on the income generation activities they were engaged in such as pig and chicken raising, weaving and mat making. They also mentioned gravity water as one of the interventions they appreciated and benefited most from. Women were also, for the most part, taking responsibility for the village savings and development funds. Normally, the fund management committees were headed by the Lao Women Union representative in the village and in some cases the whole committee would consist of women. There seemed to be few cases of default, and the total capital would most of the time be lent out to the members. It needs to be noted that the savings fund activity did not receive any start-up injection of money from the project but has relied solely on the saving of members.

In connection income generation activities, villagers in Nongbouathong commented that funds provided were too small, particularly in relation to pig raising, and that many more households were in need of funds. Chicken raising, it was said, had a good potential to generate cash income but people in general lacked money to start and improve the husbandry techniques.

Interviews also revealed that some households had started only a few months ago with project supported income generation activities. Consequently, they had not yet been able to increase their cash income in a substantial manner. The late start was explained by the fact that many households were given access to funds only after a budget revision in 2004 or in connection with the second round of revolving funds allocations.

In terms of social impacts it was mentioned in some villages that the project had improved solidarity and ability to act together as well as helped to solve conflicts about the use of water resources.

For households that experience rice deficiency and do not have adequate income from other crops it was found that the most common coping mechanism was the collection of NTFPs and casual labour, normally within the village.

6. Village Self Assessment

In general all villages claimed that the project had substantially reduced the number of families that experienced rice shortages or had reduced the time period for those that were deficient. It was also explained that poor families in some cases had moved into the village after the start of the project and thus contributed to the fact that results were not better.

7. Baseline Survey

The standard baseline household survey for tracking project impacts had, as noted above, been carried out during the early stage of Component A. However, at the time of the evaluation a follow up survey still had to be carried out. Comparison of benchmark indicators was therefore not possible.

8. Institution and Capacity Building

A number of technical training events as well as study trips for villagers and beneficiaries have been conducted. A large number of people have been trained in new production techniques as well as in management and village development. Apparently, many villagers have made use of their new knowledge and know-how and intensified and improved their farm-based production as well as their handicraft production. It seems clear that in each of the target villages the project has improved the human resource base and capacities of key people that can act as innovators and continue to share their new skills and knowledge.

Village development committees, which were nonexistent or not active earlier, have been set up and trained by the project. These represent village institutions that have the potential of

continuing to manage development activities and mobilise community resources after the end of the project.

The training of district staff has also been given due attention. During Component A, district staff received training in household surveys and data collection. During Component B they received computer training, extension methodology and project management. They have, however, been on their own during Component B and missed the possibility of acquiring skills as community and development workers by working together with an experienced NGO. This capacity building mechanism was one of the foreseen advantages of hiring of NGOs as a service provider. However, project staff has taken part in a number of study tours to extension centres, nurseries, the Kham District CMLIP sub-project and model villages for village funds and handicraft activities. It must be assumed that these training efforts have at least introduced them to community development thinking and approaches.

9. Gender Considerations

CMLIP Kasi has carried out gender training with altogether 205 participants from the target villages. Even though these training events normally do not lead to any rapid and immediately noticeable changes in role and status they at least have the potential to make people reflect on the roles of men and women. The presence of the project and the insistence that women should be included in meetings and discussions may also potentially have an effect on their participation in dealings and decision making at the village level. This effect was observed in Namone, where women commented that before the project they had not participated much in village meetings.

The female representation in the village development committees (Lao Women Union) also contributes to promoting the interest of women. In addition, women normally also headed the village saving fund committees and were responsible for accounting. This fact also increases the influence of women on village development and awarding of loans.

10. Sustainability Assessment

Considering the number and scope of training activities conducted by CMLIP Kasi it is probable that this has created resource persons with improved knowledge of production technologies. These persons will remain as a nucleus of available knowledge that can continue to expand through a process of adoption and farmer to farmer technology transfer. For instance, in connection with the fish breeding and hatching training in Nongbouathong the persons trained were confident that they would be able to replicate the techniques in the future provided they had the right inputs. The bottleneck for sustainability is therefore more a question of whether there are sufficient funds available for poor households to start or expand their production in the future. It appears that saving funds management committees have, and will receive (two training events arranged and one planned before the end of the project), adequate training that will enable them to carry on in the future.

It is, however, probably necessary that external monitoring and support continues beyond the project. The various revolving funds presently support around 521 single activities and a similar number of households. In addition, there are those who have joined the saving funds but have not yet received any direct support from the project apart from training, study tour and technical assistance. The number of members was 889 in April 2005 and accumulated savings were around 3,500 USD.

D. Summary Conclusions

On the whole it needs to be acknowledged that CMLIP Kasi has managed to produce, or prepared the ground for, results that translate into improved livelihoods for its target population. In terms of coverage the project has exceeded the original number of beneficiaries that were identified as participants in project activities after during Component A. Around 520 households have been involved and benefited from the project while around 300 households were originally identified.

Questions may be raised in connection with targeting and the fact that the project has involved itself so heavily in construction of small-scale irrigation structures, thus potentially

diverting attention and personnel resources away from activities that could have improved livelihoods more rapidly. In addition, it may be argued that the CMLIP project has taken on tasks that the CMI project originally was supposed to cover. On the other hand, the focus on weir construction has been in full accordance with the wishes of a majority of villagers, and furthermore, increased rice production that is able to provide needy families with rice sufficiency, takes away much of the risks of relying solely on the market for livelihood improvement. In conclusion, targeting of some of the poorest and neediest households may have suffered but given the marginal differences between households in terms of living standards (700 households were identified as eligible) focusing on small scale irrigation seem justifiable. In other respects targeting seem to have been appropriate as the distribution of funds and activities have clearly prioritized the poorest villages with a large number of needy households.

Due to the type and mix of activities chosen for the project the impacts in terms of rice sufficiency and increased incomes are yet to take effect to their full extent. This is linked to the fact that irrigation structures are still under construction and that reclamation of paddy land is still ongoing. Another factor is that many households received funds for income generation late in the project phase so that one production cycle is not yet completed.

Still, it should be noted that the project has contributed to substantial income increases in a number of households in the target villages. The activities that perhaps have been most instrumental in this are pig and chicken raising as well as weaving.

In terms of mobilisation and participation the CMLIP Kasi appears to have done a good job. Both for the gravity water schemes and irrigation structure construction activities people have been willing to contribute labour and local material that has kept construction costs down.

In general CMLIP Kasi must be characterised as a successful project that has produced and most likely will continue to produce livelihood improving results for the target population. This achievement has come in spite of the challenges in terms of implementation discontinuity, accessibility and security it has faced.

VI. OVERALL PROJECT ASSESSMENT

A. Staffing Resources

The various sub-projects have chosen different approaches to staffing. The table below compares the number of both NGO staff and government staff in relation to target villages and originally identified poor households.

Table 13: Field Team Staffing

Sub-project	Field Team Staffing			Target villages	Staff / Village	Poor HH	Poor HH / staff
	NGO	Gov.	Total				
Khamkeut	3	4	7	3	2.3	106	15.1
Kham	3	3	6	11	0,55	265	44.2
Sob Bao	1	5	6	8	0,75	141	23.5
Kasi	0	6	6	14	0.43	812	135.3

CMLIP Kasi have had cope with the by far largest population of poor households and target villages in relation to available number of field staff. CMLIP Khamkeut is the sub-project that has been best equipped in terms of staffing.

B. Village Development Funds / Saving and Credit Schemes

As described under the previous chapters dealing with each individual sub-project forms and modalities of village development funds and credit schemes differ among the sub-projects. In Khamkheut, Kasi and Sob-Bao a two pronged approach to credit extension were chosen. Initially the projects funded and established revolving funds reserved for the identified poor households. These funds are supposed to remain earmarked for the poorest households as long as there is a need for special targeting in the village. In addition to this type of credit extension, saving and credit schemes, open for all villagers, were established in Khamkheut and Kasi thought training and organizational support but without provision of any start up capital. In Sob-Bao no saving and credit schemes were established while a number of villagers have received training on fund establishment and management.

In Kham a different approach was chosen as only one comprehensive village development fund was established in the target villages. Fund management committees were trained and credit given to prioritized beneficiaries for a number of purposes including raising of small livestock, cash crop cultivation and weaving. Membership fees and interests are paid to cover management costs and secure a certain growth of the village fund. After the initial earmarking of the funds for identified beneficiaries other households have been allowed to become members and take loans, and it is the responsibility of the fund management committee to see to that the poorest and neediest households are given some priority.

It is too early to draw any firm conclusions as to what type of credit system gives the best results in terms of improving the livelihoods of the poorest households. This would be an interesting aspect to look into in an eventual future evaluation of the CMLIP Project. At this stage it can be stated that both types of approaches apparently have worked well but it would appear that separate revolving funds may allow for better targeting of the poorest and neediest households than comprehensive and multipurpose village development funds.

C. Sub-Project Expenses

As it may indicate differences in efficiency and focus between the sub-projects it is interesting to compare their budgeted expenses categories.

Table 14: Sub-Project Expenses According to Latest Budget Revisions April 2005

Sub-Project / category *	Cost	Khamkeut		Kham		Sob Bao*		Kasi		Total	
		USD	%	USD	%	USD	%	USD	%	USD	%
Personnel Expenses / management	17,750	17	31,984	26	12,742	11	12,895	10	75,371	16	
Service Provider support	14,400	14	15,981	13	2,343	2	18,001	14	50,725	11	
Operation & maintenance / Office Equipment	10,587	10	15,860	13	13,670	12	12,443	10	52,560	11	
Training and study tours (material, travel etc)	20,015	19	17,781	14	25,540	22	20,840	17	84,176	18	
Civil works (water supply, irrigation works, roads)	16,569	16	19,100	15	35,677	31	28,164	23	99,510	21	
Supplies (livestock, village funds, seeds etc)	24,764	24	23,472	19	26,554	23	32,084	26	106,874	23	
Total	104,085	100	124,178	100	116,526	100	124,427	100	469,216	100	

* The budget for Sob Bao only includes the JFPR funds

Percentage wise Kham have had the highest personnel and service provider support expenses making up 26% of their total budget while Sob Bao and Kasi have the lowest personnel costs with 11 and 10 % respectively. Service provider costs constitute 13-14% of total budgets except for Sob Bao where it claims only 2%.

The sub-projects are similar in terms of operational and office equipment costs which ranges between 10 and 13% of total budgets. Sob Bao has the highest spending on training and study tours having allocated 22% of the budget for that purpose. Kham is the lowest spending sub-project in this respect with an allocation of 14%.

Also for civil works such as irrigation schemes, water supply and roads Sob-Bao has spent more than the other sub-projects with 31% of the budget devoted to these activities. Kasi is the second highest spender with 23 %.

There are also differences between the sub-projects when it comes to supplies. in terms of livestock, village funds seeds etc. This expense category ranges from 19 % of total sub-project budgets in the case of Kham to 26% in the case of Kasi.

No firm conclusion on efficiency can be drawn on the background of these figures but keeping in mind the comprehensive infrastructure works undertaken at Kasi they indicate at funds for construction activities must have been used most effectively here. Part of the background for this can be found in the willingness of the target population to contribute labour and material.

Kham have the highest personnel expenses and as well as the highest operational costs while at the same time having the lowest spending on training, civil works and supplies. The running costs are thus the highest among the sub-projects leaving less of the total budget for direct spending at village level.

On the whole the CMLIP had spent 16% on personnel expenses and 11% on service provider support and backstopping. In comparison with other projects it must be said that this represents rather low percentages.

D. Ethnicity

The CMLIP Project has been implemented in an ethnically diverse setting that has posed challenges to the implementers in terms of communication and cultural sensitivities. The majority of the population in the target villages belong to the Lao-Tai ethno-linguistic group. Khmu is the second largest ethnic group while Hmong are found in three of the target villages constituting a majority in only one of them, Thongpae in Khamkeut. The table below shows the ethnic composition of the target villages

Table 15: Ethnic Composition of CMLIP Target Villages

Sub-project / Target Village	Population	Ethnic Group
<i>Khamkeut</i>		
1 Ban Nape	1158	Lao Theng

2	Ban Nahat	456	Lao Theng/Bo/Vila
3	Ban Thongpe	1986	Hmong/Lao Loum
<i>Kham</i>			
1	Ban Mor	265	Lao Loum
2	Ban Xang	412	Lao Loum
3	Ban Tad Noi	288	Lao Loum/Hmong
4	Ban Tad Luang	436	Lao Loum
5	Ban Longkai	300	Lao Loum
6	Ban Kong Nung	258	Lao Loum
7	Ban Ko Ngiou	284	Khmu
8	Ban San	655	Lao Loum
9	Ban Hin	485	Lao Loum
10	Ban Nathong	499	Lao Loum
11	Ban Xiangkiao	543	Thai Dam
<i>Sob Bao</i>			
1	Ban Nakhoun	275	Thai Deng
2	Ban Moun	182	Thai Khao
3	Ban Danhang	302	Lao Loum
4	Ban Khangkad	244	Thai Dam
5	Ban Tad	156	Khmu
6	Ban Namay	326	Thai Deng
7	Ban Phonehang	495	Lao/Khmu
8	Ban Bong	165	Thai Deng
<i>Kasi</i>			
1	Namone	618	Lao Loum
2	Phonethieng	540	Lao Loum/Khmu
3	Sisangvone	207	Lao Loum/Khmu
4	Napho	328	Lao Loum/Khmu
5	Naxaykhao	300	Lao Loum/Khmu
6	Naxaythong	420	Khmu
7	Phouxay	636	Lao Loum/Khmu/Hmong
8	Nakham	231	Lao Loum/Khmu
9	Namee	370	Lao Loum
10	Phonsavat	428	Lao Loum
11	Nongbouathong	393	Lao Loum/Khmu
12	Viengsamay	1128	Khmu
13	Namonmai	393	Lao Loum/Khmu
14	Phoukhamneua	977	Lao Loum/Hmong

Fourteen of the target villages are Lao Loum villages while six have a population belonging to different Tai groups (Tai Dam, Thai Deng, Thai Khao.). Eight villages have a population composed of Lao Loum and Khmu, two have a mixed Lao Loum – Hmong population while one village in Kasi hosts three ethnic groups: Lao Loum, Khmu and Hmong. Finally, four villages have exclusively a Khmu population. Kasi is the sub-project with the highest number of ethnically mixed villages with the seven target villages consisting of Lao Loum and Khmu, one of Lao Loum and Hmong and one village composed of 3 ethnic groups: Lao Loum, Khmu and Hmong.

Ethnic minority groups not belonging to the Lao-Tai linguistic group have varying and in general limited Lao language skills. In general women have less Lao language capabilities than men. On the other hand field team members do often not have minority language skills. Poor communication may thus be a constraint for successful project implementation and broad participation in project activities.

In Khamkeut communication with the predominantly Hmong population in one of the target villages, Thongpae, was facilitated by the fact that the district coordinator was Hmong. In the other field teams there were, as far as known, no members with Khmu or Hmong language skills. Although no specific examples can be mentioned it must be assumed that this was a factor that made it more difficult to communicate with and engage the Khmu and Hmong target population in CMLIP activities. This would especially have been the case in Kasi where a large part of the target population consisted of Khmu.

In addition to the minority language constraints comes the cultural factor. Traditional resource utilization and livelihood as well as customs tend to make some ethnic group more receptive and open to social change and project interventions than others. Thus the Lao-Tai ethnic groups, who traditionally have cultivated wet rice and has a weaving tradition, are in general easier to engage in project activities than the Khmu who practise shifting cultivation and rely more on the forest for livelihood.

Combined these ethnically related factors poses a risk that one ethnic group may capture more of the project assistance that is offered at the expense of another that is less in the mainstream economy and does not belong to the majority culture.

To counter these factors more effort and focus needs to be given to minority groups among the target population. In the case of all the CMLIP sub-projects this seem to have been done to a certain degree as Khmu villages reportedly were given a special attention. However, this assumption cannot be backed up by data and information on use of project resources and time. Neither are there any ethnically segregated data on participation in project activities available that could indicate if specific groups have received an undue large part of project assistance. With so many target villages of mixed Lao loun and Khmu population this is a relevant issue especially for the Kasi sub-project.

In an eventual continuation of the CMLIP project it is important to be aware of this issue during project formulation so that measures and mechanisms that can prevent resource capture are put in place. I the project is evaluated at a later stage it is also suggested that this issue is looked into and analysed more thoroughly.

E. Strategies and Selected Activities

The TA paper for the CMLIP identified broad activity areas within which the project would work. These included:

- Livestock and Extension Services
- Cash Crops and Diversified Farming Systems
- Fish Culture
- Market and Storage facilities
- Potable Water Supply

The sub-projects have in general conformed to the foreseen activity areas but also added types of activities that go beyond these. For instance, all sub-projects have included handicrafts among their income generating activities and in the case of the CMLIP sub-projects in Kasi and Sob Bao small-scale irrigation construction works has been included.

All projects have adopted the approach of forming sector user groups (SUGs) or production groups for the different types of project supported activities.

One of the intervention areas foreseen in the TA paper, market and storage facilities, proved to be not a priority among the villagers and the district authorities. Instead some market facilitation in terms of creating links between the producers in the villages and the traders and as well as study and exposure trips for handicraft producers have been undertaken. Help in developing and improving designs of handicrafts to become more marketable has been provided, most notably in the Kasi Sub-project.

The partitioning of the CMLIP into a planning phase with a subsequent implementation phase has been well received and appreciated by the service providers as it has meant that they could cover their expenses in connection with developing project proposals. It has also enabled service providers to spend enough time on identification of beneficiaries and activities in a participatory manner.

F. Targeting and Beneficiary Identification

All sub-projects have adequately identified the poorest households through adapted surveys and wealth ranking carried out as part of the village PRA. In order to avoid creating conflicts and to secure the participation of progressive and resourceful households that can act as role models, not so poor households have also been included among the beneficiaries. The originally identified beneficiaries are to a large extent also those who have received support from the CMLIP sub-projects but here are indications that some poor households have not been followed closely enough and received the right kind of activity support.

G. Performance Indicator Monitoring

The baseline household survey intended to put in place benchmark indicators have been carried out with varying degree of coverage in the sub-projects. Two of the sub-projects, Kham and Khamkeut, have repeated the surveys for a limited number of households at the end of project periods while it remains to be done for Kasi and Sob Bao.

The household baseline survey is comprehensive and relatively resource demanding to carry out. It collects information on assets such as land and livestock and in annual cash income. Furthermore, it contains a number of parameters and qualitative information such as access to, knowledge and use of improved production technologies. This type of information is important enough but may not provide enough detail in terms of changed practices as the questions posed can simply be answered by yes or no. In addition it is difficult to compile and process this kind of data. Nevertheless, the baseline survey generates important benchmark information that can provide a valuable measure of broader impacts if it is repeated sometime after the closing of the sub-projects. As it normally takes a few years before the impacts of a project takes effect through consolidation and adoption processes in a village, carrying out a survey one and a half to two years after the closing of CMLIP would make sense.

Yet, it needs to be noted that more resources and time could have been devoted to designing and putting in place a performance monitoring system with fewer and more easily updatable indicators. This could have enabled a more continuous check on the performance and impacts of the CMLIP.

H. Institution and Capacity Building

In general it can be concluded that the sub-projects have made reasonable efforts in terms of institution capacity building at village level. The setting up and training of village development committees has contributed to a noticeable awareness and momentum for change and development in the project villages. Structures in the form of sector user groups (production groups) are also in place, a factor that will be important and conducive for the dissemination and continued adoption of new production technologies at the village level.

Through the training and study tour activities a core of resource persons with improved skills in fund and development management as well as in various production technologies have been created. Less emphasis has been given to capacity building for government staff in technical fields. However, important training on PRA, participatory planning and extension methodology has been carried out.

I. Community Ownership and Sustainability

It appears that all the sub-projects, with some degree of variation, have largely managed to create a sense of ownership in relation to interventions and activities. An indication of this is the willingness among the target population to contribute to construction activities in the

villages in the form of labour, transport and materials, most notably in connection with construction of gravity water systems and irrigation structures in the Kasi sub-project. The sense of ownership is to some degree coupled with increasing self confidence as village development committees and group leaders generally were convinced that they would be able to continue improving livelihoods by keeping to the regulations for the various funds and production groups set up by the sub-projects.

The institutional development that has taken place at village level, most notably in the form of village development committees and various types of funds, will need continued external monitoring and support in order to continue to function according to rules and regulations. The district authorities have expressed their willingness to provide this continued follow-up but it remains to be seen if their motivation and resource situation in terms of transport and allowances will make this possible.

J. Gender Issues and Effects

As previously accounted for under the description of each sub-projects CMLIP has, as a whole, focused on gender issues and had positive effects on the roles and relationships between men and women. A number of gender training sessions have been carried out in the villages and at the district level which has sought to address ingrained attitudes and practices. However, the project operations and interventions have had a more direct effect by involving and engaging women and giving them resources as well as responsibilities which has contributed to strengthen their position and influence. Perhaps the activity that has been most instrumental in this is the setting-up of village and savings and credit funds. Practically without exception women are heading the village fund committees (normally the LWU representative) and accounting is also normally taken care of by a women. Although credit and loans are awarded by village committees where men also participate, the strong female representation increases the likelihood that women will benefit from the funds in terms of start-up capital for their income generation activities and micro businesses. It should be noted that putting women in the lead of the credit activities has been a deliberate strategy by the CMLIP intended to increase the influence and status of women.

In general the targeting of women and their involvement in project activities has given them more self-confidence to make their voices heard at village meetings and probably also increased their influence when it comes to village decision-making.

Finally, having access to relatively clean tap water inside the villages has significantly reduced the work burden for women in addition to having a positive effect on health for their children. Although women in terms of hours are probably still working as much as before, the proportion of physically hard labour has been significantly reduced by the construction of gravity water systems. Out of the 36 CMLIP target villages gravity water systems have been constructed for 21 villages and shallow wells for another 2.

K. Overall Performance and Impact

On the whole the CMLIP can be characterised as a successful project that has made efficient use of available financial resources and time. A large number of activities has been implemented and the combined impact of these has improved the situation and livelihoods for the majority of those households that were originally identified as poor and targeted as beneficiaries. It is not possible at this stage to know exactly how many households have been helped out of a situation where they did not have enough rice to eat for extended periods but the number is considerable. In this respect the approaches and strategies first identified in the TA paper and later largely followed by the Service Providers (NGOs) have proved to be effective and appropriate.

In general the Service Providers along with the CU, in the case of CMLIP Kasi, has handled the project implementation in a satisfactory way, regarding logistics and implementation arrangements. Field implementation has been carried out by competent and motivated project teams largely according to time plans although the overall implementation rate has been slower than foreseen, leading to a prolongation of the project for some months.

It needs to be acknowledged that a number of conditions and prerequisites have been in place in the selected project areas to make the good performance of CMLIP possible. The majority of target villages have, at least in the dry season, a reasonably good road access and thereby access to outside markets. With the exception of some ethnic minority villages the target villages were already to some degree integrated in a wider monetised market economy with traders coming to the villages to buy products. Numeracy and literacy were already present among a core of people in most target villages which made it possible to train fund managers and accountants. In general these factors have been highly conducive to the good results and impacts created by CMLIP.

VII.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

Experiences and Potential Future Improvements

Even though CMLIP as a whole has managed to meet its objectives to a large degree, it does not mean that there is no room for improvements, should the project continue in the same locations or elsewhere. Furthermore, in connection with the implementation of CMLIP some positive experiences have been made that need to be noted as important learning experiences.

One field that CMLIP did not engage in is the sustainable use of non-timber-forest products (NTFPs). Village visits revealed that, especially in the ethnic minority target villages, collection of NTFPs is a coping strategy that is frequently resorted to when households face rice shortages or need cash for some other reasons. The unrestricted and unmanaged collection has led to a situation where several types of NTFPs (e.g. rattan and bamboo shoots) have become or are in danger of becoming scarce in the forest areas surrounding the target areas. In the event that the CMLIP is continued in one or another form, it would be important to look into the possibility of introducing activities that would make the harvesting and collection of NTFPs more sustainable. This could, for instance, include activities like training in management and sustainable harvesting as well as domestication and cultivation of NTFPs.

Part of the purpose of engaging NGOs and national-non-profit-organisations as service providers for CMLIP was to build community development capacities and skills among the implementing government partners. Community development is an approach that takes a more holistic view of development as opposed to the more sector-wise approach normally practised by the government. CMLIP has to some extent succeeded in imparting community development thinking and skills to its government counterpart services but it would be important to focus even more on this aspect in the future. This can be done through initial training on community principles and approaches combined with on-the-job training. However, to have a solid basis for the on-the-job training NGO service providers should be required to assign a minimum of staff with extensive development experience to the projects.

The phasing of the CMLIP with a planning phase (Component A) and a subsequent implementation phase (Component B) has proved to be conducive to mobilisation and participation of the target population. It has also allowed time for proper selection of beneficiaries and activities thus making it more likely that primary needs are addressed and the poorest and most needy households are targeted.

Although CMLIP did not engage much in construction of storage and market facilities it will be important to focus on other sides of market development in the future. Activities that can improve and facilitate marketing of village products and produce include arrangements of village exhibitions and fairs and active mediation and facilitation of contact between traders and village producers. In order to make village handicrafts more marketable and attractive, the development of designs and new products should also be supported.

Another activity area that future projects should consider is food processing. It has been a part of CMLIP Kasi (crab-paste making) but the scale has been limited. Food processing would create added value to village food products and also enable storage so as to avoid market price drops.

Networking between the sub-projects in the form of study tours and exchange visits has been a part of the CMLIP activities. Given the potential for positive effects networking is representing it is recommended that it is even more focused on in the future.

The fact that a national non-profit-organisation has acted as a service providers on the same footing as international NGOs represent something new in the context of project implementation in the country. The experiences are generally positive and it is recommended that also in the future national non-profit-organisations should be challenged to take on project implementation responsibilities. In general it needs to be noted that engaging international NGOs or national non-profit-organizations as service providers and implementers has proved to be a model that works well and can be replicated in connection with future projects.

In general the performances of the government services that have taken part in the CMLIP implementation have been good and adequate. This demonstrates that given the right setting with backing of the political and administrative leadership at the district level, combined with access to transport resources, local government services can perform well and deliver quality services in connection with project implementation.

It has been noted earlier that in some cases the targeting of the most vulnerable and poor households could have been better followed-up. It is therefore recommended that in connection with possible future projects the poorest households as well as villages should be more vigorously targeted and given special attention to make sure that they are brought along in the development process.

Addressing and meeting the needs of the poorest households will also require more attention to activities that can bring results relatively quickly and increase household incomes. Such activities would include supporting handicraft production, cash crops and vegetable growing as well as promotion of small livestock raising. It would be important that focus is kept on such activities in future livelihood improvement projects.

Linguistic and cultural factors often present constraints for participation and communication with the target population. CMLIP has included ethnic minority villages where Lao language skills may have been a limiting factor, especially when it comes to communication with women. Efforts should therefore be made to make sure that future project teams include staff with minority language skills. **WHAT ABOUT CULTURAL AWARENESS?**

As noted above the CMLIP has collected household information through a baseline survey that has the potential to indicate projects impacts if and when the survey is repeated. It is therefore recommended that the survey is repeated within 2 years of the closure of the CMLIP.

In addition to or instead of relatively resource demanding baseline surveys it is recommended to devote more to developing a monitoring system with a few easily updatable progress indicators that will enable a more continuous check on the performance and impacts of future projects.

2. Summary of Recommendations

The following table summarises the recommendations made above.

Table 16: Summary of Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
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Selection identification activities	/	Consider / include domestication and management of NTFPs a project activity
		Stronger focus on income generation activities that give quick results for the poorest households
		Facilitate marketing of village products through exhibitions and fairs and creation of links between traders and producers
		Food processing should be considered a future project activity to add value to village products and avoid periods of market price drops
		Put more emphasis on networking activities between sub/projects as a way of increasing exchange of development experiences and villager to villager technology transfers
Transfer community development skills	of	Make sure that service providers (NGOs and non- profit-organisations) assign sufficient numbers of experienced community development staff to the project teams
Service providers		Continue to utilize national non-profit-organizations and international NGOs as service providers in connection with future projects
Involvement government	of	Continue to utilize government sector services as implementers and part of project teams while at the same time making sure that necessary resources are available for them
Targeting outreach	and	Stronger focus on and targeting of the poorest and most vulnerable households in target villages
		Continue to concentrate project resources on the poorest villages and communities
		Make efforts to ensure that staff with ethnic minority language skills are present on the project teams
		Put in place mechanisms and measures that prevents resource capture by individual ethnic groups at the expense of other less dominant and integrated groups
Monitoring impact indicators	and	Repeat the baseline survey in target villages 1 ½ - 2 years after closing the CMLIP
		Develop a monitoring system with a few easily updatable progress indicators for tracking impacts in connection with future projects

ANNEX A – OVERVIEW OF CMLIP ACTIVITIES

CMLIP Supported Water Supply Systems

Sub-project	No. of benefitting villages	No. of HH	No. of Population
Khamkeut District			
Gravity-fed water system for Ban Nape, Thongpe and Nahat (Khamkeut subpr.)	3	478	3600
Sub-total Khamkeut	3	478	3600
Kham District			
Gravity-fed water system for Ban Ko Ngiou (Kham subproject)	1	40	284
Gravity-fed water system for Ban Kong Nung (Kham subproject)	1	37	258
Gravity-fed water system for Tad Luang (Kham sub-project)	1	59	436
Shallow wells for Tad Noy (Kham sub-project)	3	43	288
Sub-total Kham	6	179	1266
Sob Bao District			
1.1.6 Gravity-fed water system for Ban Tad (Sob Bao subproject)	1	24	156
1.1.7 Gravity-fed water system for Ban Nakhoun (Sob Bao subproject)	1	44	280
1.1.8 Gravity-fed water system for Ban Moun (Sob Bao subproject)	1	17	105
1.1.9 Gravity-fed system for Ban Nasala (Moun II) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	11	80
1.1.10 Gravity-fed water system for Ban Phonhang (Sob Bao subproject)	1	70	495
1.1.11 Gravity-fed system for Ban Namai (Sob Bao subproject)	1	52	340
Sub-total Sob Bao	6	218	1456
Kasi District			
1.1.12 Gravity-fed system for Ban Nongbouathong and Phonsavat (Kasi subproject)	2	135	821
1.1.13 Gravity-fed system for Ban Napho, Naxaykhao and Naxaythong (Kasi)	3	165	1048
1.1.14 Gravity-fed water system for Ban Viengsamay (Kasi subproject)	1	169	1128
1.1.15 Three shallow wells for Ban Nakhom (Kasi subproject)	1	35	231
1.1.16 Gravity-fed system for Namonmai (Kasi subprj)	1	23	115
1.1.17 Gravity-fed water system for Namone (Kasi subprj)	1	108	618
1.1.18 Gravity-fed water system for Phonethiang (kasi subproject)	1	169	1128
Sub-total Kasi	10	804	5089
Grand Total	25	1679	11411

CMLIP supported community irrigation systems

Sub-project	No. of benefitting villages	No. of HH	Paddy Area (ha)
Kasi District			
1.2.1 Renovation of weir of Ban Naxaythong, Naxaykhao and Napho (Kasi subproject)	3	22	22
1.2.2 Renovation of weir of Ban Phonethiang (Kasi subproject)	1	38	35
1.2.3 Renovation of weir of Ban Viengsanmay (Kasi subproject)	1	17	22
1.2.4 Extension of irrigation canal system for Ban Nongbouathong (Kasi subproject)	1	11	7
1.2.5 Construction of weir for Ban Namonmai (Kasi subproject) (in process)	3	47	45
Sub-total Kasi	9	135	131
Sob Bao District			
1.2.6 Construction of weir for Ban Phonhang (1) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	18	9
1.2.7 Construction of weir for Ban Phonhang (2) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	8	5
1.2.8 Construction of weir for Ban Phonhang (3) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	47	14
1.2.9 Construction of weir for Ban Tad (Sob Bao subproject)	1	3	0.7
1.2.10 Construction of wier for Ban Moun (Sob Bao subproject)	1	5	3.5
1.2.11 Construction of weir for Ban Nakhoun (1) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	8	3
1.2.12 Construction of weir for Ban Nakhoun (2) (Sob Bao subproject)	1	9	5
Sub-total Sob Bao	7	98	40.2
Grand Total	16	233	171.2

	No. of benefiting villages	No. of HH
Construction of bridge (river crossing)		
1.3.1 Two stretches of submerged bridge (river crossings) (Sob Bao subproject)	2	72
1.3.2 One bridge (Sob Bao subproject)	1	17

	No. of beneficiary entities
Building of latrines	
1.4.1 Building of 24 latrines (Sob Bao subproject)	8 villages
1.4.2 Building of 4 school latrines (Kasi subproject)	4 schools

Fund and in Kind Support

<i>Item</i>	No. of Households Benefitting From Fund Support				Sub-total
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subprj	
Beneficiary support to agriculture production	250	378	392	160	1180
Beneficiary support to livestock production	318	215	45	240	818
Beneficiary support to fish production	5	25		18	48
Beneficiary support for income generation activities	214	28	60	130	432
Sub-total beneficiaries	787	646	497	548	2478
Initial target beneficiary households	265	166	144	312	
Increased coverage by x times	2.97	3.89	3.45	1.76	

<i>Item</i>	No. of Households Benefitting From Fund Support				Sub-total
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subprj	
Rice bank			1		1
Village veterinary equipment and revolving fund	11	3	8	10	32
Village health/drug revolving fund	11		8	9	28
	22	3	17	19	61

<i>Item</i>	No. of Schools Benefitting From Fund Support				Sub-total
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subprj	
School nursery		3			3
School trees plantation		3		4	7

<i>Item</i>	Support to District Agriculture and Forestry Services				Sub-total
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subprj	
Veterinary equipment/vaccines/revolving fund	1 set	1 set	1 set	1 set	4 sets
DAFSO/PAFO nursery			1 set	1 set	2 sets

Training Activities for District Staff

<i>Type of Training</i>	No. of District Staff Participants				Subtotal
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subprj	
Project management			19	9	28
Basic computing				15	15
Extension methodology				11	11
TOT		18			
Agriculture extension techniques		3			
Participatory development planning	15				15
Baseline data collection				6	6
Writing of project proposal				7	7
Total	15	21	19	48	82

Training Activities for Villagers

<i>Type of Training</i>	No. of Participants				Subtotal
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subproj	
Village management					
Capacity strengthening of village leaders				128	128
Village development fund committee	35		39	50	124
Village treasurers	11				11
Total	46	0	39	178	263
Agriculture extension					
Dry season crop			234		234
Bio-organic fertilizer	450	40	255		745
Fruit trees planting	11	76	60	24	171
Cash crop planting		127	188		315
Sloping land agriculture	27				27
Improved rice planting		85		130	215
Animal feed promotion		115			
Rainy season vegetable		25		39	64
Total	488	468	737	193	1771
Livestock raising					
Village veterinary volunteers	18	24	16	55	113
Buffalo and cattle raising	800	35	126	98	1059
Swine raising		48		56	104
Poultry raising	367	93		56	516
Frog raising	12				12
Fish raising	11	29		42	82
Total	1208	229	142	307	1886
Health care					
Village health workers	40		25	16	81
Maternal and child health care			50		50
Village health workers accounting			21		21
Total	40	0	96	16	152
Income generation					
Silkworm raising		6			
Silkweaving			64	125	189
Mushroom growing	44			24	68
Food processing		3			
Use of sewing machine				4	4
Total	44	9	64	153	261
Village Savings and Credit Grups		18	76	377	471
Gender training				205	205

Study Tours for Villagers and District Staff

<i>Type of Study Tour</i>	Number of Participants				Subtotal
	Kham subprj	Khamkeut subprj	Sob Bao subprj	Kasi subproj	
Agricultural study tour			27		27
Mulberry/silkworm raising		8	18		26
Village veterinary workers study tour	18				18
Eye opening study tours in Vientiane	75			18	93
Chicken raising		5			
Fruit tree planting				5	5
Rainy season vegetable planting		6		8	14
Mat production				5	5
Silk natural dyeing				5	5
Bamboo weaving				16	
Village savings group		18		33	51
DAFSO study visit to Kham subproject				15	15
Total	93	37	45	105	259

ANNEX B – PEOPLE MET AND INTERVIEWED

Name	Position	Organisation
Asian Development Bank Lao		
Mr. Keu Moua	Project Implementation Officer	ADB, Lao Resident Mission
Coordination Unit - NAFES		
Mr. Lam Ngeunh Phakaysone	Project Advisor	CU / NAFES, MAF
Mr. Siboun Eua Vathanakhamphan	Director / Coordinator	CU / NAFES, MAF
Khamkeut District Sub-Project / Boulykhamssay Province		
Viengsay Souliadeth	Programme Manager	Lao Community Development Association
Mr. Somphone	Site Manager	Lao Community Development Association
Mr. Phansamay	Livestock Officer	Lao Community Development Association
Mr. Vanxay	Agronomist	Lao Community Development Association
Mr. Thon	Deputy District Governor	Khamkeut District
Ms. Xaymany	Lao Women Union	Khamkeut District
Mr. Chansivang	District Coordinator	DAFO, Khamkeut District
Mr. Houmpheng	Project team member	DAFO, Khamkeut District
Mr. Somchit	Project team member	DAFO, Khamkeut District
Mr. Sisack	Project team member	District Health Office, Khamkeut District
Ms. Vilayvanh	Project team member	Lao Women Union, Khamkeut District
Kham District Sub-Project – Xiengkhouang Province		
Mrs. Ann Rouve -Khiev	Country Director	Handicap International France
Mr. Boualay Chanthalangsy	Project Manager	Handicap International France
Mr. Sompheng Siphonsay	Head of Office	PAFO – Xiengkhouang Province
Mr. Phimpha Sisomboun	Provincial CMLIP Coordinator	PAFO – Xiengkhouang Province
Mr. Khamkeo	Deputy District Governor	Kham District
Mr. Phimpha Phomsavang	Head of Office	DAFO – Kham District
Mr. Sengphet Vannaday	CMILP District Coordinator	DAFO – Kham District
Mr. Phonsavanh Atsaphantavong	Project team member	DAFO – Kham District
Ms Soumin Mahaphankham	Project team member	DAFO – Kham District
Mr. Saikham Phommavongsa	Project team member	DAFO – Kham District
Sob Bao District Sub-Project / Houaphan Province		
Mr. John D. Ferchak	Country Director	AFSC / Quaker Service Laos
Kamkeo Phandanouvong	Senior Programme Coordinator	AFSC / Quaker Service Laos
Mr. Degxiong	Project Manager	AFSC / Quaker Service Laos
Mr. Somchanh Phengphasay	Deputy Head of Office	PAFO - Houaphan Province
Mr. Khamnoy Phonsombat	Provincial CMLIP Coordinator	PAFO - Houaphan Province
Ms. Chanpong Saignavong	District CMLIP Coordinator	DAFO - Sob Bao District
Mr. Phanton Phetsamsompou	Deputy District Governor	Sob Bao District
Ms. Puangvan	Project team member	Lao Women Union - Sob Bao District
Ms Toi	Project team member	DAFO - Sob Bao District
Mr Kamseng	Project team member	DCTPC - Sob Bao District
Mr. Angpong	Project team member	Health Office - Sob Bao District

Name	Position	Organisation
Kazi District Sub-Project / Vientiane Province		
Mr. Somdii	Provincial Coordinator	PAFO, Vientiane Province
Mr. Khamphieu Solattanavong	Deputy District Governor	Kasi Distric
Mr. Bounthay Thavonsouk	Head of Office	DAFO – Kasi District
Mr. Khamsay Namovong	District CMLIP Coordinator	DAFO – Kazi District
Ms. Phommachan	Project team member	Lao Women Union – Kazi District
Mr. Khampao Pampounsi	Project team member	DAFO – Kazi District
Mr. Aloun Souphilung	Project team member	DAFO – Kazi District
Mr. Khamsi Phommavong	Project team member	Health Office – Kazi District
Ms. Bouthi Manivanh	Administrator	Kazi District Sub-Project
Ms. Sahon Soumanhala	Administrator	Kazi District Sub-Project
Ms. Vanoli Inthavong	Data Manager	Kazi District Sub-Project

ANNEX C – VISITED PROJECT VILLAGES

Name of village	District / Sub-project
Nahat	Khamkeut
Napae	Khamkeut
Thongpae	Khamkeut
Ko-ngiou	Kham
Kongnung	Kham
Tadlouang	Kham
Tadnoi	Kham
Xang	Kham
Xiengkiaou	Kham
Bong	Sob Bao
Khankad	Sob Bao
Nakhoun	Sob Bao
Namay	Sob Bao
Phonghanh	Sob Bao
Tad	Sob Bao
Naomai	Kasi
NongBouathong	Kasi
Naxaykhao	Kasi
Napho	Kasi
Namone	Kasi
Phonthieng	Kasi