

PHONGSALY PROVINCE

CHANPHENG CHANDAVONG

The 2017 Nam Ou River Basin Profile, supported by **Australia's Greater Mekong Water Resources Program**, was carried out by the Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), to document the physical, biological, and socio-economic characteristics of the basin in support of more informed and sustainable planning and development.



Mrs Chanpheng Chandavong, 29, from Samphan District, Phongsaly Province.

Mrs Chanpheng has been working as a Technical Officer at the Samphan District Office for Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) for nine years. She is one of the many Lao government officials working at the national and subnational levels who have learnt new skills and knowledge by participating in the Nam Ou River Basin Profile.

Mrs Chanpheng participated in household interviews in 20 villages across four districts in Phongsaly Province, providing her with an insight into people's livelihoods and the importance of the Nam Ou in her own and in

neighbouring districts in the most northern province of Lao PDR. "I was delighted to be involved in developing the Nam Ou River Basin Profile. I have learnt how important the Nam Ou River is for the livelihood of so many people. The profile has given me a lot of information about the characteristics of the river basin". To become a team member she needed to pass a test and participate in a workshop. Mrs Chanpheng highlighted that two important parts of this experience have been learning from other team members and sharing knowledge with them. It also allowed her to immediately put into practice new skills learnt.

District authorities have an important role to play for the management of water resources. This is why Mrs Chanpheng emphasises the importance of sharing information and knowledge gained with colleagues and superiors. "I have applied some of the relevant information from the profile into my current work. I also think that further dissemination of the profile through workshops, posters, and other visual tools, would help share this important information with a larger group of interested stakeholders".

"THE PROFILE HAS GIVEN ME IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION OF LIVELIHOODS IN THE RIVER BASIN, AND I WAS ABLE TO LEARN AND APPLY NEW INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES".



Nam Ou team members conduct interviews at the village level. Photo by IFC.

VIENTIANE CAPITAL

INTHANONGXAY HEUANGBUNDHIT

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Mr Inthanongxay Heuangbundhit, 29, from Vientiane Capital.

Mr Inthanongxay has been working as a Technical Officer at the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) since 2013. He is one of the many Lao government officials working on water resources management at national and subnational levels who have learnt new skills and knowledge by participating in the Nam Ou River Basin Profile.

Mr Inthanongxay was a team member for developing the Nam Ou Profile, responsible for mapping, zoning and management of both the survey and case study teams. As part of the Profile core management team, he conducted

surveys in ten villages and participated in eight case studies. He was proud to be part of the project as he was able to gain new knowledge. He noted “the project allowed me to learn new coordination skills which I was able to use when implementing many other projects afterwards”. He commented that “during the project implementation, I learnt how to design survey questions and improved my interviewing skills. These are very useful skills that can be adjusted and replicated for other river basins surveys. In addition, I was able to put my geographic information system expertise into practice throughout the development of the Profile”.

Although Mr Inthanongxay had previously conducted village interviews, he still learnt a lot from developing the Nam Ou Profile, especially as the case studies included more qualitative aspects. “I learnt a lot by developing the Nam Ou Profile case study as I was involved in the process from start to finish, and as a result became more confident in my own abilities while learning a lot from working with professional experts”.

“I LEARNT HOW TO COLLECT AND SCREEN RAW DATA BEFORE SENDING THEM TO BE ANALYSED AND PUBLISHED IN THE PROFILE, A SKILL I CAN APPLY TO OTHER PARTS OF MY WORK IN THE FUTURE”.



Community members discuss the existing fish species in the village. Photo by IFC.

LUANG PRABANG PROVINCE

SOULIYAN PHOMADITH

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Mr Souliyan Phomadith, 38, from Nambak District, Luang Prabang Province.

Mr Souliyan is the Head of the Inspection Unit for Natural Resources and Environment, Nambak District Office for Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE), where he has been working since 2008. He is one of the many Lao government officials working at the national and subnational levels who have learnt new skills and knowledge by participating in the Nam Ou River Basin Profile. Mr Souliyan was part of the interview and data collection team. He conducted interviews – the first of his career – in seven villages in Ngoy and Nambak districts.

Mr Souliyan learnt about effective interview techniques which he sees as useful for the future. He noted “I already applied the technique for an Environmental Impact Assessment of a rubber plantation. This helped me to analyse the positive and negative implications of the plantation. I also re-designed the survey questions for a study on electricity transmission lines and for an analysis to create a protected area”.

Mr Souliyan was also involved in the planning phase of the Profile which he said provided him with a good understanding of the broader picture. He further emphasised that the “district level is very important for effective water resource management as we are the practitioners and implementers.”

“THE PROFILE IS A GOOD SOURCE OF DATA. FROM THE SURVEY FORM, I LEARNT ABOUT WHAT WOULD BE IMPACTED AND WHAT WOULD STILL BE SUSTAINED DEPENDING ON WHAT DEVELOPMENT TAKES PLACE. I ALSO LEARNT ABOUT THE LIVELIHOODS OF THE PEOPLE, THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND NEEDS OF THE VILLAGERS IN THE AREA PROFILED”.



Nam Ou Team members collect samples. Photo by IFC.