

Lao-Swiss Development Cooperation Dialogue

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(KPL) The governments of Lao PDR and Switzerland met in Vientiane Capital early this month to review the Lao - Swiss development cooperation strategy in the country and the Mekong Region.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), responsible for coordinating Swiss development programmes in the country, discussed with the Lao government strategic poverty reduction activities as well as inclusive social and economic development in the country.

An annual forecasted budget of 16 million USD is planned for the Lao PDR from 2018-2021.

On this occasion, both governments endorsed the second phase of the Mekong Regional Land Governance (MRLG) project which aims to ensure smallholder farmers have secured and equitable access to, and control over agriculture land and forest in the Mekong Region, which includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

The review was chaired by Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice Minister of Planning and Investment (MPI), and Ms. Franziska Freiburghaus, Head of the SDC East-Asia Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bern.

In attendance were Mr. Tim Enderlin, SDC Mekong Region and Lao PDR Country Director, and representatives of line ministries who are partners in SDC's development activities.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss the overall strategy for inclusive development of the Swiss cooperation programme in the Lao PDR for the period 2018-21, its alignment with the 8th National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEDP), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the current status of the implementation of the supported projects.

SDC engages in activities in the three thematic domains (i) agriculture and food security, (ii) governance and citizen participation, and (iii) skills development and employment.

The Lao-Swiss bilateral programme review was an opportunity for both sides to discuss progress and direction of the overall programme and on selected key projects, and to address specific challenges in the development context.

By KPL