Final Report
On Expansion and institutionalization of Commune Base Poverty Monitoring System in Lao PDR

I. Overview

Capacity on assessment and monitoring poverty is extremely needed for Lao PDR, especially the monitoring skill of poverty in local level. Through the previous implementing phase of CBMS, government staffs from Sepone districts, Toomlane district and in 24 villages were trained with the techniques, and real practice on the data collection. Moreover, data from the last project is very helpful in village planning in their locality. Because high poverty level still exist in the country. The poverty rate of Lao PDR is 33.5 in year 2002, however due to unavailability of data source on poverty there is no later figure of poverty using in the planning process.

In response to the degree of the Prime Minister, number 09/PM and 13/PM launched in 2007 and 2008 on the building of the developing village group, the project provided socio-economic development data for the local government where they can use it to evaluate their launched planning. The result of the project is very useful for their later year planning and budgeting process. In terms of evaluate the progress in achieving the millennium development goals or MDGs, this project has also provided the data that could be used to assess the poverty level of their own local area.

In 2009, under supporting from IDRC, the Lao Department of Statistic has been continued to conducted the data collection by expanding the number of villages from 24 villages to be 31 villages in Toolan and Sepone which include foreseeing of the impacts of the global and financial crisis that may affect the Lao economy; especially the social welfare of people in villages or community.

Overall objective

The overall objective of this project is to continue and expand the capacity building of the local government in terms of data collection, summary, use the data and report the data. Another objective is to monitor the impacts of global financial crisis.
and economic crisis on economy, and find out the policy that could prevent and cope with the impacts for both micro and macro economy.

**The specific objectives are**

- To revise tool and adopt new indicators for addressing impacts of financial and economic crisis. CBMS questionnaire will be revised since village book has revised its indicators, and adopting a new set of indicators that use for monitoring the impact of global financial and economic crisis as well as;

- To have a training, workshop and meeting. After the tool was ready the training is required for educating enumerators and makes understanding among project team member. Before beginning the project, consultation meeting will be also organized as to approve the tool and discuss about the project plan;

- To do field work, this activity refers to data collection and also the supervision of the central and provincial staffs, the method of data collection is agreed to use the census method “all household are interviewed”

- To make data entry and data analysis. Data entry needs a package of software (Microsoft Access) therefore the data entry tool from the previous phase will have to be revised again and add the part of monitoring the impacts of financial crisis. Data analysis activity will be done after all data has been transferred into the system.

- To make research writing and report. In order to prove the finding from the field work, economic data from macro will have to be collected. After that the report was written by the central and provincial team with cooperation from district and community.

- To dissemination. This activity will consist of local and national dissemination, for the local level it will be done after all data are tabulated of the first phase, then in the follow up phase first result will be disseminated in the national dissemination workshop.

**II. Research activities**

**A. Expansion of CBMS Implementation**

As per the recommendation from the last phase of the project implementation, it is significantly to expand the coverage area of data collection. The targeted villages were identified base on the need for monitoring and assessing of locality and agreement between the central team, mostly were poor villages. The project implementation was done in according to the project plan. It starts from determining indicators and designing of data collection tool and manual.
- **Indicators system**

The indicator system was identified according to the need of localities for their planning and policy making process. The indicators contain of definition and calculation methodology which provide information to the people to understand clearly on how to calculate indicators and what their definition (ANNEX1: List of Indicators).

- **Design of CBMS process**

  - **Designing of questionnaire and data collection manual**

The questionnaire has been revised during the first three months of the project implementation due to the changing in village book’s questionnaire. Two set of questionnaires were identified, the first questionnaire was designed to support the village book and the second questionnaire was designed to track the impact of global financial and economic crisis on the poverty which based on international indicators guideline from CBMS network group (ANNEX 2: CBMS and GFC questionnaires). However, after the first round of data collection in January 2010, the questionnaire of GFC has been revised in order to make it easier (ANNEX 3: Revised GFC questionnaire).

  - **Technical discussion workshop**

In the first step of project implementation before the field work, the technical discussion meeting was organized at DoS after the questionnaire and manual was drafted. The objective of the meeting is to discuss on next the step of project implementation and discuss and comment on the questionnaire and data collection manual. (ANNEX 4: Report of technical discussion workshop).

  - **Pre-test of questionnaires**

The pre-test of the questionnaires was carried out on December 12, 2009. The main testing is to focus on GFC questionnaire. The objective of the pre-test is to test the consistency, validation, and possibility of the question before using in the actual data collection. The implementation of pilot took one day for data collection at the Vernthat village by with the interview of 24 households. The target households for data collection were households those have an experience of working in abroad (ANNEX 5: Report on pre-test of questionnaires).

  - **Training for supervisor and enumerators**

    - **First round of training on December 2009**

In cooperation with planning division of Savanakhet and Saravan province, the training for supervisors and enumerators for the first round of data collection was conducted from 23 to 29 December 2009 in Toomlan, there were 19 participants from statistic office at province, district and villages and the training in Sepon was conducted from 5 to 9 January 2010, and there were 31 participants from statistic office province, district and villages. At the same time, the training on data collection
for monitoring the impact of global financial and economic crisis was conducted from 10 to 14 January 2010 which was participated by 9 participants from three villages of Sepone district, Savanakhet province. The main objective of the training is to enhance the capacity of staffs in village and district level on data collection, data compiling, and data recoding into the questionnaires in accordance with the content and the purpose of the project (ANNEX 6: Report on data collection).

- Second round of training on August 2011

To ensure the quality of data collection, the refresher training for supervisors and enumerators were conducted in Toomlan and Sepon district. The training firstly organized in Sepone district from 15 to 17 August 2011 with 31 participants from Central, provincial, district and villages which include the training on data collection for GFC. The second training was organized in Toomlan district from 20 to 22 August 2011 with 20 participants from central, provincial, district and villages (ANNEX 7: report on refresher training for supervisors and enumerators).

- Data collection and fieldwork

- First round of data collection on December 2009

The first round of data collection for CBMS was started from 30, 2009 to January 5, 2010 in Sepon and 16 to 21 January 2010 in Toomlan. The data collection on impact monitoring of global financial and economic crisis at the three villages in Sepon was started from 22 to 27 January, 2010. The supervisors from the two provincial statistical offices have closely followed and supervised and did spot check during data collection (ANNEX 8: Report on first round data collection).

- Second round of data collection on August 2011

After the refresher training completed, the second round of data collection were started firstly in Sepone from 19 to 26 August 2011 and 24 to 30 August 2011 in Toomlan district. The target villages for data collection still focused in the same villages as the first round of data collection in order to make a comparison and observe the differences particularly of the poverty situation at the locality (ANNEX 9: Report on Second round data collection).

- Data checking

The data checking firstly was done by enumerators with household manually, then recheck by authorizes at district level for validation, consistency of data, and then sent to the provincial planning and investment department. The data checking took about one month. During this time the CBMS team at DoS provided advice in case they have any unclear related to the answer in questionnaires. Now, the data checking at provincial level completed. However, the data validation still needs to do after finish data entry.
• Data entry

For the first round of data collection, the data entry for CBMS was done in Saravanh province from 13-19/03/2010 by the provincial staffs after completed data collection and questionnaires checking. The data entry of GFC was done by the CBMS team at center level since it is new additional questionnaires and more complicated than CBMS. Anyway, before filling data into the system the questionnaires were rechecked again to make sure every appropriated data is valid and not missing and the second round was done from 18 to 28 October.

• Consultation meeting was organized on 22 to 25 June 2010 to discuss on data requirement for local planning.

The data requirement for local planning was discussed throughout the workshop organized from 22 to 25 June 2010 during the first round of data collection. The objectives of the meeting are to 1). Identify the need and improving coordination system at provincial level especially in Saravanh and Savanakhet provinces; 2). Discussion on what indicators should be produced from CBMS; 3). How to use village’s data for planning and policy making process at community level and how to store these data. The results from this workshop were used as a reference for data analysis (ANNEX 10: Meeting report).

• Data validation and editing was undertaken from March to October 2010

The data validation and editing were done by central CBMS team at DoS after completed the data entry. It was started from March to October 2010. The process is to run across the variables in order to see if any data is missing or not appropriate and not consistency. The first result from the database was shared among the central and provincial team to consider and explain with some strange or bias results. Making sure all issues have been clear before the miss data is edited or revised. After the data validation was approved, the team then comes up with the output data set which is ready for the data analysis. (ANNEX 11: Report on data validation and editing).

In July 2010, the team has been presented the primary finding with local people to discuss about summary results. This consultation workshop was participated by local planning and investment offices and district officers. The results confirm a good quality of data collection in terms of consistence. (ANNEX 11: Report of the workshop).

• Data analysis and report

The data analysis was done by central CBMS team according to the local requirement. There are two types of reports. The first report is the result of data collection in 31 villages in Toomlan and Sepon districts and the second report is a research paper on impact of global financial and economic crisis on poverty in three villages of Sepon district (ANNEX 12: Result from the first round of CBMS data
collection and research paper on GFC). However, the data analysis and report for the second round of data collection still in the process of finalizing.

B. Uses/Application of CBMS

1. Use as the tool for supporting local statistics system village book;
2. Provide village’s database in order to track the socio-economic development at their own village administration;
3. Support the village development plan of village group, which is one of important strategy of the local governor;
4. Provide platform for data collection system in the village level;
5. Use as reference information for the project and program in village group;
6. CBMS site has been selected for module of statistical strategy’s implementation in Lao statistic system. However, in parallel with improving local statistics in Lao and capacity at the lower level this process has progressed in some stage and it will be gradually strengthened.

C. Dissemination

The data dissemination workshop was held at local level after the data validation and primary report were completed. The objectives of the workshop are to present the results form data collection to the local authorities as well as policy makers across sectors of the two districts in order to promote the use of data for planning and policy making at local level. The final dissemination workshop for the second round of data collection are preparing and waiting for the fourth and final Payment from the project support.

D. Project results and finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Project activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>List of indicators</td>
<td>List of indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Designing of questionnaire and data collection manual</td>
<td>CBMS &amp; GFC questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Revision of GFC questionnaire</td>
<td>Revised GFC questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Technical discussion meeting</td>
<td>Agree on questionnaires and data collection manual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pre-test of questionnaires</td>
<td>The consistency of questionnaire was check and final questionnaire and data collection were approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Training for supervisors and</td>
<td>The staffs from province, districts and villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enumerators</td>
<td>were trained on data collection, data compiling and report writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Data collection and fieldwork</td>
<td>Primary dataset at household level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Data checking</td>
<td>The primary data was checked by supervisors at provincial and district level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Data entry</td>
<td>All data were entered into database system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Consultation meeting on the need for data requirement for local planning 22-25 June 2010.</td>
<td>The draft of dummy table for data processing and analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Data validation and editing March to October 2010</td>
<td>The primary results from data collection and analysis were verified by local authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Data analysis and report</td>
<td>Report of data collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Dissemination</td>
<td>The results from data collection and analysis were disseminated to local people across sectors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Key lesson learned from the project implementation**

**Skills of enumerators/ data collectors:**

Limitation of skills & qualification of data collector from previous data collection is a major issue, it is however for this expansion phase, project has increased in terms of contents and issues relating to the impacts of global financial and economic crisis. Therefore, staffs from higher administrative level should be more involved in order to avoid bias that might occur due to the level of perception regarding the scope, definition and technique on data collection;

**Duration of the training and training design:**

Length of the training of the enumerators should be appropriately fit to the volume of task and skills of data collectors, contents should include the broad pictures of the project how will the data be used in terms of policy application and planning or budgeting. It is good to keep the practice session for this kind of training where data collectors could test applying knowledge gained from the training to real data collection. The training should also allocate a half day after the practice to discus and resolve the outstanding issues.
III. Project recommendation

In order to improve the quality of data collection through village book the continuously training programme for local authority or enumerators at the village’s level through CBMS project are necessary and needs to be conducted every year. At the same time the permanent enumerators is part of an important. In the near future the statistical law will be approved by the Lao Government that would be an opportunity for DoS in order to improve data collection system at local and central level as well.

In terms of data using, the data on poverty especially the number of poor households is high demanding from both local and central Government. So far, the data from the villages are not widely used at national level except the poverty data compared to local level has more beneficial and direct access to the results of CBMS. Now it was used for they decision making and planning process especially for monitoring of poverty status as well as for project intervention and poverty reduction programme. However, the number of dissemination of the results should be increased in order to promote the use of village’s data at both central and local level. At the same time, the coverage of data collection should be extended to whole country by using the CBMS’s in Sepone and Toomlan as module.

IV. Project administration

According to the main task of each activity, the project has to assign some new member and some new village enumerators into the real activity of work field as name listed below:

Name of CBMS Implementation Working Group,

Project Director:
Dr. Samaychanh Boupha, Director General of DoS

Project manager:
Mrs. Phonesaly Souksavath, Deputy Director Genral of DoS

Research Unit:
Mr. Soulysack Phommasack, research team leader
Mr. Vilaysook Sisoulath, researcher

Financial Unit:
Mrs. Souchalith Norkeo, accountant

Provincial/District: Savannaket Team Members:
Mr. Keokhonsy Thongchankham, researcher
Mr. Bounlam Athit Outhai, researcher

Provincial/District: Saravan Team Members:
Mr. Khamking Keosouphanh, researcher
Mr. Somchit Phathula, researcher
V. Financial report
(See annex 13)

VI. List of annex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex number</th>
<th>Name/topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1:</td>
<td>List of Indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2:</td>
<td>CBMS &amp; GFC questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 3:</td>
<td>Revised GFC questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 4:</td>
<td>Report of technical discussion workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 5:</td>
<td>Report on pre-test questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6:</td>
<td>Report on data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 7:</td>
<td>Report on refresher training for supervisors and enumerators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 8:</td>
<td>Report on first round data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9:</td>
<td>Report on second round data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 10:</td>
<td>Meeting report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 11:</td>
<td>Report on data validation and editing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 12:</td>
<td>Result from the first round of CBMS data collection and research paper on GFC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 13:</td>
<td>Financial report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Director | Project manager | Project Coordinator