

Govt partners in study on use of electric motorbikes



Representatives of the British Embassy and GGGI sign the agreement in Vientiane on Wednesday.

Times Reporters

The government is partnering with the British Embassy in Vientiane and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to conduct a pre-feasibility study on a battery swapping system for electric motorbikes.

The study will contribute to the fulfilment of the government's target of 30 percent electric vehicle use by 2030.

The study is being funded under a grant agreement that was signed in Vientiane on Wednesday between the British Embassy and GGGI in Laos, witnessed by Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Mrs Phonevanh Outhavong, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Mr Phouong Luangxaysana, and the British Ambassador to Laos, Mr John Pearson.

The study will examine

the financial viability and environmental sustainability of implementing a battery swapping system model for electric two-wheelers in Vientiane.

Deputy Director General of the Planning Department, Mr Oula Somchammavong, said the collaboration will significantly contribute to the implementation of the 9th National Socio-economic Development Plan, the National Green Growth Strategy and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

It will also support the realisation of the National Agenda on Economic and Financial Affairs by reducing reliance on fossil fuel imports and thereby improving economic stabilisation. Ambassador John Pearson said that electrification of the transport sector makes perfect sense in the Lao context, as the country

would be able to benefit from untapped, low-cost domestic renewable energy resources, while at present it has to import all petroleum fuel.

Deputy Country Representative of GGGI Laos, Mr Christophe Assicot, said "Led by global market leaders such as Gogoro, we are observing a rapid development of battery swapping systems as the adequate solution to accelerate the transition to e-mobility in the 2-wheelers segment, which is the primary mode of transport in Laos."

The results of the pre-feasibility study will be consolidated into a final report and the findings will be presented to key stakeholders by the end of March. Prime Minister Phankham Viphavanh recently approved a new policy on the use of electric vehicles to minimise fuel imports and reduce harmful gas emissions.

Laos is promoting the use of clean energy in the transport sector as part of measures to translate the government's policy into an action plan until 2025, a strategy for 2030, and a vision for 2050.

The policy is part of efforts to fulfil the national agenda on addressing the country's economic and financial difficulties, mainly through austerity measures aimed at reducing the import of fuel-inefficient vehicles and promoting the use of electricity.

Agriculture ministry beefs up vigilance against livestock diseases

Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will continue to work with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) to strengthen the skills of agricultural experts on ways to combat African swine fever and emerging livestock diseases.

This was the message from the Deputy Director of the ministry's Department of Livestock and Fisheries, Dr Phanthavong Vongsamphanh, when he addressed a workshop to launch a new project titled Strengthen Capacity to Control African Swine Fever and other Transboundary Animal Diseases in Laos.

The aim of the project is to further mitigate the potential risk for the additional introduction and spread, as well as the impacts of African swine fever and other high impact transboundary animal diseases. The project aims to develop and implement strategies and strengthen capacities to detect, control and prevent African swine fever at the national, provincial and district levels, and strengthen the national laboratory capacity to detect the disease.

The FAO is supporting the Lao government to strengthen capacity in the animal health sector to respond and control African swine fever in the pig population. FAO Representative to Laos, Mr Nasar Hayat, expressed his concerns about African swine fever in the Lao pig population.

As there is no vaccination



Dr Phanthavong Vongsamphanh (right).

available against the disease and there is no cure once animals are infected, prevention through increased biosecurity measures are vital, he said. "Together, FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will ensure we further build skills on how to combat African swine fever and emerging livestock diseases," he added.

FAO values the long-standing support from Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea in this important work, Mr Hayat said. He also stressed the importance of the early detection of animal and human health threats, especially in the current Covid-19 pandemic environment.

African swine fever is a fatal haemorrhagic disease in domestic and wild pigs.

Since the first report of the disease in Asia in August 2018, a total of 16 countries in Asia and the Pacific have reported outbreaks.

These have occurred in China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea,

Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, India, Bhutan, Malaysia and Thailand.

The disease is highly contagious and has caused millions of pigs to perish in the region. Consequently, farmers have occurred severe financial losses and hardship.

The shortage of pork in many countries has led to a dramatic increase in pork prices and dissatisfied consumers. Supply chains, including imports and exports, of live pigs and pork have been disrupted, increasing the vulnerability of food supplies. When African swine fever was reported in neighbouring countries and with the imminent threat of its arrival in Laos, FAO assisted the Department of Livestock and Fisheries to develop guidelines to respond to an outbreak.

The department first reported an outbreak of African swine fever in 2019 in all provinces, resulting in 20,000 pig deaths, while 6,000 pigs were culled in response to the outbreak.

Houses for families displaced by railway are nearly complete

Times Reporters

The construction of 159 houses for people who lost their homes when the Laos-China Railway was built in Luang Namtha province is almost complete.

By the end of January, 159 houses had been built, all internal roads had been finished, and a village office, health centre, and kindergarten and primary schools had been built. Electricity and water connections were also completed.

In addition, 90 percent of perimeter roads have been built and the whole project is now 96 percent complete.

A progress report on the new settlement was delivered when Major General Dr Vongsack Phanthavong, a National Assembly member for Luang Namtha province, together with local authorities in Luang Namtha province visited the village recently. Major General Dr Vongsack praised the construction project and said it had been a success, with the facilities



The houses constructed for families in Luang Namtha province who were displaced when the Laos-China Railway was built.

now almost 100 percent complete.

As for the problems that had been encountered, he urged all those concerned to work together to achieve the set goals. He advised that relevant proposals be submitted to the provincial and central governments and consultations be undertaken with higher authorities to find solutions so that the

project was completed successfully.

The Laos-China Railway is now in use and seating capacity on all trains is full every day. The railway is safe, environmentally friendly, efficient, and fast, and has become the top choice of transport, replacing bus travel in many northern areas.

According to the Laos-

China Railway Company, in the first month of operation, 670,000 people travelled on the railway and 170,000 tonnes of freight were shipped.

The surge in passenger and freight transport has been a boon for both the economy and tourism, while the Laos-China rail link has strengthened the China-Asean freight corridor.

Laos undergoes ... FROM PAGE 1

Elsewhere, in Xaysomboun province, Mr Phoykham Houngbounyuan, who was previously the province's Deputy Party Secretary, becomes the Party Secretary and Governor of the province, replacing Major General Khamlieng Outhakaysone.

Mr Khamlieng now assumes a new post at the Ministry of National Defence after serving as the governor of Xaysomboun province for the past three years.

One of the most significant achievements of Mr Khamlieng's leadership was that provincial authorities were able to maintain security and social order, contributing significantly to socio-economic development and poverty reduction efforts in Xaysomboun.

The province's new leadership has been instructed to strengthen solidarity among the ethnic Lao people and reinforce political building at the grass-root levels in association with work to maintain security as well as boost socio-economic development and poverty reduction efforts.

Vientiane Times on CD-ROM

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