

Summary Report

**Implementation of Nam Xong Clean Up Day and Awareness Activities, on
20th May, 2011, Vangvieng District, Vientiane Province, Lao PDR**



**Prepared by: Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat,
Water Resources and Environment Administration**

Vientiane Province, 1 June 2011



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Water Resources and Environment Administration

Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat

Vientiane Province, 1 June 2011

Summary Report

**Implementation of Nam Xong Clean Up Day and Awareness Activities, on
20th May, 2011, Vangvieng District, Vientiane Province**

I. Overview and Background

Nam Xong Sub-River Basin (NXSRB) is one of the 18 sub-basins of Nam Ngum River Basin (NNRB) which covers an area of 180,434 ha and is the third largest sub-basin. Located in the central part of northern Lao PDR, the Nam Xong basin is 83 km north of Vientiane and 14 km south of Kasi District. Vientiane province makes up 97.3% of the area and 100% of the population. The central and largest city in the basin is Vangvieng, which is well known for its beauty and tourist attractions.

The NXSRB abuts the Nam Lik sub-basin to the west and southern boundary, the Nam Ting to the North, the Nam Meuy and Nam Pat sub-basin are to the east. The basin altitude ranges from 2,889 m (in Phou Khoun district, Luangprabang province) to 185 m above sea level- at the Nam Xong and Nam Lik confluence.

The NXSRB is broken up both geologically and by the Nam Xong Diversion Dam. Above the dam there are three major tributaries, made up to three main valleys. The three valley meet below Vangvieng and the Nam Xong flow on to the diversion dam were - depending on the year - much of the flow can be diverted to the Nam Ngum reservoir. South of the dam the Nam Xong continues for 27 km to the confluence on the Nam Xong and Nam Lik, 3 km upstream from Hin Heup village. Major tributaries in this section of the river flow from the east and include: Nam Phat, Nam Ken and Nam Phouset.

Geologically, the watershed consists of a mixture of limestone and sandstone. In the northern mountains area the geology is dominated by limestone. To the south and east of Vangvieng the geology is comprises mostly of sandstone. The northern region of the basin is defined by extreme topography with slopes exceeding more than 30% in some areas. The north is limited to rice crops due to the narrow valley floors; nevertheless, shifting cultivation on the mountainsides is opening the region to greater levels of agriculture. The southern sandstone region south of Vangvieng and toward the Nam Lik are rolling hills that support agriculture, rice production and plantations.

The Nam Xong and its tributaries are vital for income generation, particularly fisheries, tourism and agriculture. The natural resources such as forests, limestone, gold, iron and zinc are used to supply a growing cement production and mining industry.

Tourism, Fisheries, and Fruit plantations make up the majority of the incomes to the NXSRB include- fisheries making up 56.6% of the total income in the basin. Fisheries also make up large proportion of the protein and nutrients and other dietary requirements for the people living in the NXSRB. The NXSRB (excluding mining and industry) contributes a total of 0.022% of Lao GDP with fisheries making up the majority of this.

Like the rest of Lao PDR Nam Xong basin is developing rapidly. The rapid development in the Nam Xong basin is the development in population, agro-forestry, tourism, hydropower, mining and fisheries. It is the lack of monitoring, information and understanding of this development that means that the NXSRB will not be able to continue these developments into the future without having adverse effects on the communities, economy and environment.

The Nam Xong River is considered as the valuable river for tourism, which is an income source for the province and districts. Vientiane Province has promoted Nam Xong to be the tourist spot of the province, especially Vang Vieng and Kasi districts. In the recent years, many development activities have been implemented in the NXSRB for instance tourism, mining, factories, hydropower, agro-forestry, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen and raise public awareness in all levels as well as make a common understanding in association with enhancing knowledge and skills for local people/communities in managing and protecting the Nam Xong river basin to secure the sustainable development of the province and districts and ensure the sustainable water resources and environment management. In this regard, Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat (NNRBCS), Water Resources and Environment Administration (WREA) in cooperation with Vangvieng District Water Resources and Environment Office (WREO) and concerned authorities and all parties have organized the Activities for Nam Xong River Clean Up Day and Public Awareness for once a year basis which based on the direction of high ranking officials of province, district and requirement of local communities with their expectation to see the cleaner/healthier river.

1.1. Objectives of the event

The objectives of the event are to clean up, collect the waste along Nam Xong river side in order to dispose and reduce the pollution to water and surrounding environment, and to raise the public awareness and better common understanding on importance of water, environment of Nam Xong for local people' livelihoods, tourism industry and income generation.

1.2. Participants

The total participants are over 400 people who represented from the different agencies, associations and communities (Figure 2 & 3):

- Leaders and Organizing Committee (40 members);
- Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat (15 Officials);
- 7 villages (100 people);

- Tubing Association (100 people);
- Kayaking and Motor Boat Associations (80 people); and
- Guesthouse, resort, hotel and restaurant association (80 people)
- Some voluntary local residents, students and tourists.

II. Implemented Activities

The Nam Xong Clean Up Day and Public Awareness Activities for 2011 has been divided into two sections:

2.1. Preparation Period:

- The organizing committee has been mobilized and officially nominated by Vangvieng district governor in early May 2011;
- Prior coordinated and cooperated with the local and central line authorities, the national and international organizations in Lao PDR, NGOs, relevant development partners as well as the private sectors in Nam Ngum River Basin and communities in Vangvieng District for their contribution, fund raising and their ownership to represent their villages to attend this important event;
- Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat (NNRBCS) in coordination with Vangvieng District Water Resources and Environment Administration (WREO) prepared the side exhibition including the related documents - Nam Ngum, Nam Xong and Nam Kho river basin profiles, final draft Nam Xong plan of action, IWRM training manual, etc; posters; brochures; printing of conducted activities photos in Nam Ngum, Nam Xong and Nam Kho (Xiengkhouang Province) sub-river basins to display and distribute during the morning session at the Vangvieng District Meeting Hall;

2.2. One-day Clean Up Activities:

- Public awareness and official opening session was organized in the early morning session commenced at 7:00 AM, at the district meeting hall. This session included:
 - Side event exhibition of the role and responsibilities of the NNRBCS, proposed Nam Xong sub-river basin committee secretariat, some implemented activities and data collection, photos with short scripts exhibition regarding water resources management in Nam Ngum River Basin and also in two pilot sub-river basin such as Nam Xong and Nam Kho (Annex 1 - Figure 4 & 5); In addition, the Video of Nam Ngum River Basin Management and Success has also been launched which produced under the Nam Ngum River Basin Development Sector Project supported by Asian Development Bank.
 - Organized the “Questions and Answers” quiz game related to general knowledge of Nam Ngum RB and Nam Xong in particular. This was to enhance the all participants’ knowledge, skills and better understanding

on water environment and integrated river basin management, especially local residents and played the competed game on the topic of “I LOVE NAM XONG” leaded by NNRBCS team (Figure 6-8);

- The event was officially remarked and given opening speech at 9:30 AM by H.E Mr. Phonekeo Khounphon, Vangvieng District Vice Governor and co-chaired by Mr. Chanthanet Boualapha, Director General of NNRBCS (Figure 1). The important remarks were to support and have strongly encouraged all parties, stakeholders in the nearby societies and all local people of Vangvieng to protect, preserve Nam Xong River in the cleaner and sustainable manner for our generations to come, etc.
- After the official opening, the organizing committee grouped the participants and all invited guests into 6 main clean up teams with providing the waste collecting containers and necessary equipments namely big plastic bags, 100 tubs, 30 kayaks, 10 motor boats and a garbage transport truck including the 3 security polices and 2 field medical aid team from district hospital. The 6 groups were assigned to collect the garbage in and along the Nam Xong River based on the selected areas starting from northern of Nam Xong (Viengsamai Village) to Nam Xong downstream at Chang Cave area with total about 20 kilometer length (Figure 9-14), as the following details:
 - Group 1: from Viengsamai Village - Durian Garden;
 - Group 2: from Durian Garden - Lom Cave;
 - Group 3: from Lom Cave - Sichaleunkham Guesthouse;
 - Group 4: from Sichaleunkham Guesthouse - Don Khang (District Rocket Festival Area);
 - Group 5: from Don Khang (District Rocket Festival Area) - Nam Xong Resort;
 - Group 6: from Nam Xong Risort - Chang Cave Resort.
- Gathered the collected waste/garbage about 1.1 tons and transported to the district landfill for further disposal by district urban planning and development office.

III. Lessons Learned and Conclusion

Nam Xong Clean Up Day and Public Awareness for the year 2011 is a remarkable event that joint organized by the Vangvieng district authorities, particularly Water Resources and Environment Office and all others concerned stakeholders in the basin in collaboration with the NNRBCS. This event made up the very clear role and responsibilities of the local authorities and local people in contributing to preserve the Nam Xong River and its water environment at the very local participation level.

Through the organization of this annual activity in Nam Xong area, all participants, inviting guests and tourists could obviously recognize the importance of water

resources and environment management and protection. All people showed their ownership and fully support and contributions based on their capacities in the joint organizing this event efficiently and effectively. The participants have been mobilized their technical knowledge and managerial skills of water and river basin through various types of questions quiz and they precisely addressed the issues, some situation analysis for instance water quality and flow degradation by their own perception and on-site observation, garbage litter prohibition based on the district regulation and its impact on natural environment, upstream forest and biodiversity (aquatic and terrestrial resources) conservation, Nam Xong and its tributaries information (length, origin, name and number of tributaries, perspective on water quality degradation, how they can address the issues and cope with the remedial situation and preservation of natural resources for their generation...) in which they daily use water for their basic livelihood, etc. Furthermore, the Nam Ngum video presentation was very attractive all participants and has increased more knowledge via visualization of successful project implementation, some effective management approaches that involved all the relevant stakeholders in the basin/sub-river basin including grass root level.

These event activities provided cleaner river which reduced waste/garbage in the river and provided the more clean areas for tourism activities along Nam Xong. This envisaged the fully contribution and active participation of all stakeholder levels in the area and has promoted the participation and ownership of local communities as well as tourists in sharing their resources and contribution to preserve their mother river healthier for the generation to come. Significantly, this activity is very useful which will also be replicated and applied in other sub-basins of Nam Ngum as well as other river basins in Lao PDR as a whole in the future.

Difficulties and Challenges:

In consistent with the successful event implemented, some difficulties and disadvantage condition have been faced during the activities. Some of the obstacles were weather condition at Vangvieng - raining during the beginning of the day. Therefore, it was hard situation to do the activities outside the hall that expected to involve more and more people come to join the event. Some of the local authorities and people are not much more recognised on the importance of this activity. This brought about the partial participation during the field. The activity involved the limited participants, there should be wide spread this event dissemination and advertisement to more target groups in the rural areas of the basin and other districts to learn and practice from these activities in order to regular organise in their home areas.

IV. Acknowledgements

The Nam Xong Clean Up Day and Public Awareness Activities of the year 2011 was principally supported and approved by Vientiane Provincial Authority and Vangvieng District Governor. On behalf of organizing committee, we sincerely thank to

Vangvieng District Governor, H.E. Mr. Ounseng Keodavanh, for his kindly guidance, direction and encouragement in carrying out this activity in Nam Xong area. We would also like to acknowledge to all contributions and support in term of fund and materials such as Nam Ngum 2 Hydropower Company, Phubia Mining Company, IUCN-Mekong Water Dialogue Project, MRC-Basin Development Programme, AusAID (Mr. John Dore), Mekong Future Project (CSIRO Australia), some valuable contributions from local business operators such as resorts, hotels, guesthouses and restaurants as well as private companies throughout Vangvieng district. The Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat would also like to convey the special thanks to the preparation and management team, in particular Mr. Mixay Thantavong, head of Vangvieng WREO and his staff and all NNRBCS official members that have given their time to actively organize this vital event effectively and successfully.

Photos in the report were taken by Data and Information Unit Team of Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secretariat.

Authorized by:

Chanthanet Boualapha

Director General of NNRBCS, WREA

Reported by:

Phousavanh Fongkhamdeng

Xaythong Keomahavong

Annex 1: Photos of Nam Xong Clean Up and Public Awareness Activities



Figure 1: Official Opening Speech by Mr. Phonekeo Khounphon, vice governor of Vangvieng district (right) and co-chaired by Mr. Chanthanet Boualapha, Director General of Nam Ngum River Basin Committee Secetarat (left).

Figure 2 & 3: Participants at the opening ceremony and awareness activities, at district meeting hall.



Figure 4 & 5: Exhibition Session and Publication Distribution at District Meeting Hall.



Figure 6-8: Question Quiz and Game Competition Activities.



Figure 9 -14: Preparation to the field and on-site waste collecting along Nam Xong.

