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TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

AD/RAS/H84 Regional Collaboration on Community-based
Alternative Development to Eliminate Opium Production in
Southeast Asia

Alternative Development and Supply Reduction

Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam

by the evaluator

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AD	Alternative Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
CBDAC	Community-Based Drug Abuse Control
CCDAC	Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (Myanmar)
DDR	Drug Demand Reduction
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HAMP	Thailand/United Nations Highland Agricultural Marketing and Production Project
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KOWI	Kokang and Wa Initiative
LCDC	Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NaTaLa	Myanmar acronym for Progress of Border Areas and National Races, government agency responsible for development work in border areas.
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
ONCB	Office of Narcotics Control Board (Thailand)
PPER	Project Performance Evaluation Report
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forest Training Center (Bangkok)
SODC	Standing Office for Drug Control (Vietnam)
TPR	Tripartite Review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDCP	United Nations International Drug Control Programme
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary table of findings, supporting evidence and recommendations

<i>Findings: identified problems/issues</i>	<i>Supporting evidence/examples</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
1. Although mostly well prepared, the Project Document's objectives are largely unattainable as written.	H84 Project Document.	Pay careful attention to designing projects that can be successfully completed using project resources.
2. A budget shortfall seriously compromised the ability to complete the activities.	H84 annual and semi-annual reports and other documents.	Revise fund-raising approaches, such as through suggestions below.
3. The Project staff did not complete all the activities, even when the budget shortfall was not the reason.	H84 annual and semi-annual reports and other documents.	Complete the work, which will still be useful, under other projects.
4. Based on the experiences of H84, in order to implement AD activities so as to reduce poverty and sustain poppy elimination, a revised AD approach is appropriate and should take a joint Regional Centre-Country approach.	General project documentation as well as other UNODC materials.	Revise Regional Programme for Countering Human Security Threats and Promoting Good Governance in East Asia and the Pacific (2008-2010) and carry out planning with Country Offices.
5. To facilitate this, UNODC needs to do more AD advocacy regarding the need of growers and ex-growers, should consider expanding its marketing initiatives, as well as publicizing UNODC accomplishments,	UNODC literature, reports from UNODC Myanmar and Lao PDR.	Start by completing the relevant activities in H84 that were not implemented.

This report evaluates the project entitled: Regional Collaboration on Community-Based Alternative Development to Eliminate Opium Production in Southeast Asia (AD/RAS/H84). The evaluation took place from 30 June to 5 September 2008 in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Kunming, and Vientiane. Prior to the formal start of the evaluation, interviews of relevant individuals were conducted at the UNODC office in Vientiane. More information was collected by meetings at ONCB and other offices in Bangkok and then again in Vientiane. Follow-up email queries and telephone interviews with UNODC focal points and contact persons in the government drug control agencies provided additional data. More information was collected from discussions with participants in H84 activities.

However, it should be noted that the Regional Centre was unable to locate, even by phone or email, the Project Coordinator for the first two years of the Project. This made it impossible to review many significant issues that arose regarding Project implementation. Furthermore, the files in the Regional Centre were not complete, with much relevant email correspondence no longer available.

This Project began in July 2004 to follow up, in many ways, the subregional project (AD/RAS/98/C96, Alternative Development Cooperation in East Asia) that ran from 2002-2003—but the two were not officially linked. The Project was originally to be three years in duration but, through a project revision in March 2008, was extended by five months without budgetary implications until August 2008. The total approved budget was \$712,100 but there was a funding shortfall of \$260,600. The amount actually received from the main donor, AusAID, was \$451,500. To this China added \$10,000 for a total funding of \$461,500.

Partly because of the shortfall, staffing costs were high, and little was left for implementation. Activities were limited to regional workshops on topics of relevance to AD, such as marketing NTFPs, integrating AD into national poverty reduction planning, and marketing of AD products. However, several activities, such as regarding advocacy, posting information on UNODC or ACCORD websites, and creating a dialogue with donors were not carried out even though some could have been done economically.

Lessons learned included the following:

1. Regional AD Projects are Difficult to Implement,
2. However, Regional AD Projects are Useful and Relevant Work Should Continue.

The major constraints were:

- The serious budget shortfall,
- The belief by donors that, since opium poppy is being reduced around the MOU region, AD is superfluous (which was part of the reason why H84 remained underfunded),
- General difficulties in implementing regional projects, which for H84 compounded problems caused by the funding shortfall, and
- The inability, unwillingness, or a lack of initiative by the Project Coordinator to carry out activities in the Project Document even when they required little funding support.

Although the H84 Project is now completed and did not accomplish all of its objectives leaving a low impact and few outcomes to show for it, the UNODC Regional Centre can productively make use of the lessons learned from the Project and the constraints it faced. This will enable the Regional Centre to adapt its AD programme more

appropriately to the changing situation in the MOU Region. In this regard, the following recommendations are made:

- Design Regional AD Projects with Strong Links to National Projects as Part of the Regional AD Strategy Now under Revision,

As a part of this programme, the Regional Centre AD strategy should be reoriented to respond to the fact that opium poppy growing is an indicator of poverty. Thus when growers stop cultivating the poppy they do not, as a whole, lose income. Instead, as shown by UNODC AD projects in the Lao PDR and Myanmar, the users overcome their addiction by drug treatment and rehabilitation resulting in a more vibrant village, a diversified economy, higher income generation, and enhanced food production. Marketing AD products would provide a good match between needs in country programs and the ability of the Regional Centre to provide value added assistance.

- Publicize AD and Advocate Support for Ex-Opium Poppy Growers

Together with this reorientation, the Regional Centre should prepare media to inform government agencies, other interested agencies should as INGOs and indigenous peoples groups, as well as the general public that UNODC has been one of the pioneers of participatory development among indigenous peoples in the hills of the Greater Mekong Region. This media should show that UNODC's AD work addresses the poverty and poor health that comes with opium poppy cultivation and that UNODC does this productively and cost-effectively.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context

1. This report evaluates the Project entitled: Regional Collaboration on Community-Based Alternative Development to Eliminate Opium Production in Southeast Asia (AD/RAS/H84). The evaluation took place from 30 June to 25 August 2008 in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Kunming. Prior to the formal start of the evaluation interviews of relevant individuals were conducted at the UNODC office in Vientiane. Other information was collected by meetings at ONCB and other offices in Bangkok as well as by email and telephone interviews with UNODC focal points and contact persons in the government drug control agencies. More information was collected from discussions with participants in H84 activities. However, and importantly, the Regional Centre was unable to locate, even by phone or email, the Project Coordinator making it impossible to review significant issues regarding H84 implementation. The Project files were reviewed but these were restricted almost entirely to administrative preparations for workshops (and not to discussions, for example, on how the workshop themes were selected). The files held almost no copies of emails that would have likely yielded information on decisions regarding the course of the Project, particularly where (as shall be discussed below) activities seem not to have been carried out.

2. This Project began in July 2004 to follow up in many ways the subregional project (AD/RAS/98/C96, Alternative Development Cooperation in East Asia) that ran from 2002-2003—but the two were not officially linked. The Project was originally to be three years in duration but, through a project revision in March 2008, was extended by five months without budgetary implications until August 2008. The total approved budget was \$712,100 but there was a funding shortfall of \$260,600 and the amount actually received from the main donor, AusAID, was \$451,500, with another \$10,000 from China for a total of \$461,500.

1.2. Purpose and Objective of the Evaluation

3. The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the mandate, strategies, objectives, relevance, effectiveness, results, impact, sustainability and added value of UNODC's actions. In addition, this evaluation evaluates how regional cooperation in alternative development can further develop drug control efforts in the MOU countries and also their neighbors.

1.3. Executing Modality / Management Arrangements

4. This Project was based in the UNODC Regional Centre at the UN Building in Bangkok. The Project was initially run by a Project Coordinator together with an assistant and with support from other staff as appropriate and was feasible. When the Project Coordinator resigned in April 2007, a short term consultant was hired to manage operations until the end of the year when his contract was terminated due to delays “in implementing activities” according to the terms of reference in his contract (inter-office memo 16 January, Wang Qianrong to Akira Fujino). Since then, the Senior Law Enforcement Adviser has been in direct charge of operations. The participating governments identified officials to serve as focal points to help in planning and implementing the activities.

1.4. Scope of the Evaluation

5. This evaluation reviewed the appropriateness of the project design and assessed whether the work of the Project met the objectives in the Project Document. The evaluation assessed the sustainability of the interventions and whether the outcomes are suitable and (insofar as is possible at this time) as expected. Furthermore, as noted above, it assessed the effectiveness and suitability of plans made by UNODC to continue regional alternative development work.

1.5. Evaluation Methodology

6. The evaluation was carried out by one international evaluator, Ronald D. Renard, with help from the staff of the UNODC Regional Centre. Due to a shortage in funding, the evaluation was designed by the Regional Centre to be limited to Thailand. However, because the evaluator had, prior to his recruitment, made arrangements to visit Kunming on an assignment for a Thai university, he was able to meet with NNCC officials in Kunming. The evaluator reviewed Project related documentation mainly at the Regional Centre. Besides meetings with the UNODC staff at the Regional Centre, he met with government officials and members of royally-sponsored projects and NGOs in Thailand. Prior to the start of the evaluation, but after his recruitment, he met with officials from the government and the UNODC Lao Country Office in Vientiane regarding H84. For the remaining countries in the region, he used reports, Internet correspondence, and phone conversations to collect relevant data. The report was finalized in Vientiane and in Bangkok after further consultations with key stakeholders.

2. ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

2.1. Overall performance assessment (Appropriateness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency)

Background

7. This Project is part of efforts to bring the commercial cultivation of opium poppy in the Greater Mekong Region to an end. Although Afghanistan has now become by far the largest producer of opium, when this Project was designed in 2003, opium poppy was cultivated on 74,275 hectares in the region with a total production of 932 tons, an amount that could supply over 90 tons of heroin. The main producers were Myanmar (62,200 hectares) and the Lao PDR (12,000 hectares). By 2007, production in Myanmar had declined to 27,700 hectares and in Laos to 1,500 hectares.

8. One of the key elements of drug control policy in this part of the world has been alternative development. This began in 1971, with a project supported by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC)—a forerunner of UNODC—to identify crops that could be cultivated in order to replace the opium poppy. Through projects in this region, mainly in Thailand but in its neighbors as well, techniques were developed and practices honed for working with opium poppy growers. The UN projects, along with bilateral projects such as run by GTZ and USAID, were at the forefront of rural development work in the 1970s and 1980s and contributed significantly to community-based drug abuse control and ways to conduct development activities with ethnic minorities participatorily and collaboratively.

9. Not only did this work shape the scope and approach of working with poppy growers, but it contributed directly to the development of alternative development as an integral part of UNODC work. The UNGASS on the World Drug Problem in 1998 defined alternative development “a process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs [through]...rural development.” AD is now recognized as one of the pillars of drug control, along with law enforcement and demand reduction. UNODC’s Operational Priorities: Guidelines for the Medium Term which place drug issues in the context of sustainable development and support international best practices to make an impact greater than the resources invested in it.

10. More than contributing to the elimination of poppy production, alternative development is of considerable importance in sustaining its elimination by helping ex-growers find viable livelihoods so that they have a satisfactory food supply and enough cash to buy other essentials. This has been the approach of the UNODC Wa Project in Myanmar where the local Wa Authority was responsible for banning opium and enforcing the ban. UNODC's efforts were aimed at helping Wa farmers increase rice and other food crop production as well as to provide other basic inputs. Alternative development also, in conjunction with law enforcement and demand reduction, helped bring poppy cultivation to an end in Thailand and in Vietnam and has contributed to the long-term economic development of the former growing areas.

11. This Project under evaluation (H84) builds on a previous regional alternative development initiative. That project (AD/RAS/00/C96), entitled Alternative Development Cooperation in East Asia (referred to in this evaluation as C96) was part of the UNODC Subregional Action Plan of the Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control that began in 1995 at a meeting in Beijing.

12. The immediate objective of C96 was “to improve the skills and capabilities of policy makers and practitioners in national projects and agencies relevant to the countries’ alternative development efforts through training of key persons...sharing of lessons learned...and provision of joint socio-economic studies”.

13. The terminal evaluation found that while the C96 Project design was sound, funding limitations, the absence of a project-funded coordinator and the inadequate recognition of the diverse and over-stretched absorptive capacity of national agencies impeded the delivery of outputs. Nevertheless, the evaluation report concluded that C96 provided “good value for money” and then went on to make suggestions for the “extended phase” of the project (but, paradoxically, without giving any significant amount of information on the thinking or planning for the detailed aspects of the extended phase).

14. The H84 Project Document, however, does state that this “extended” project was “essential” to retain the momentum developed during the implementation of C96 and to maintain the “commitments to ensure opium elimination targets indicated in the UNGASS Action Plan, the ACCORD Plan of Action, and the respective national drug control plans”. Although not officially linked these projects were linked in matter of fact.

15. One suggestion in the C96 terminal evaluation was that this “extended phase” (which was to take the form of H84) include “specific mechanisms and strategies” to link the regional with national AD projects. Furthermore, project activities should be designed in consideration of the absorptive potential of the line agencies, and that a dedicated full time Project Coordinator be engaged. The evaluation also suggested that Cambodia, despite opium poppy not being cultivated there, be included in project activities because of its cannabis cultivation and for the chance the project would give Cambodian personnel to benefit from exposure to good AD practices.

16. The H84 Project Document was designed with more of a regional focus. According to the Document, H84 addressed “the regional aspects of alternative development and opium elimination that could not be tackled in isolation by national efforts”. The Project aimed “to strengthen regional cooperation by providing platforms and links for national agencies as well as alternative development programmes and projects to collaborate and share their expertise and resources in order to achieve the common target of opium elimination in the region”. Regional aspects of alternative development were to be addressed, including cross border trade and the marketing of AD products, networking and sharing good practices, training and capacity building on management of external assistance and technical cooperation as well as on other common needs.

17. The design of this Project, while logically flowing from the earlier project (C96), had two flaws. First, too much emphasis was placed on the role of Alternative Development in reducing opium poppy cultivation. Second, the design gave no evidence that poppy cultivation is an indicator of poverty.

18. While Alternative Development is an essential part of drug control policy in the MOU Region, it almost never has been by itself able to reduce poppy cultivation significantly. It takes so long to develop food security and economic alternatives to opium poppy growing through alternative development that few if any administrators or officials have the patience for AD to take its course. Everywhere in the five opium producing countries where poppy cultivation was reduced, law enforcement was always the key.

19. AD can and does provide moral support to law enforcement and help authorities gain the confidence to proceed with enforcement. However, except in certain local

areas, AD has never been the immediate cause of farmers stopping poppy cultivation. This can be seen clearly in the Wa Region of Myanmar where the local authority went ahead with its opium ban of 2005 seven years after UNODC's Wa Project started. During these years, Wa leaders grew confident that they would have international support for income generating alternatives to opium (this also included rubber cultivation sponsored by Chinese entrepreneurs). Only then did the Wa formally announce the opium ban and enforce it.

20. The other misunderstanding found in the Project Document was failing to note that poppy cultivation is a poverty indicator. However, the planners of H84 cannot be faulted for this because this was not confirmed until the 2005 Opium Survey in Laos which found that poppy growers there had an annual cash income of \$139 while non-growing households earned \$231. UNODC survey work in Myanmar yielded similar results.

21. Because the link between poppy cultivation and poverty was not recognized at the start of H84, poverty alleviation was not sufficiently integrated into project design. Many donors are convinced that poppy growers were well-off. Others seem to lose interest in AD once opium poppy is eliminated. So it was that only one donor (AusAID) was found for H84 and the Project was not completely funded. However, the proven link between poverty and opium poppy cultivation has been used effectively in both Laos and Myanmar in 2007 and 2008 to obtain AD funding. Nonetheless, this resulted in a large amount of funding for Project personnel with relatively little left for implementation.

2.2. Attainment of Objectives

22. The Project Document explains well the basics of opium poppy cultivation in the MOU countries as well as efforts by the UN and other agencies to bring it under control in a sustainable way. Two objectives were identified with activities and indicators to show how they were to be met.

23. However, the Drug Control Objective of the Project, "annual poppy cultivation and opium production in the region reduced by 50% by the end of the project" is almost completely outside the scope of the Project. There is almost nothing that the Project staff could have done to achieve this objective.

24. The Immediate Objective was to strengthen alternative development efforts among the MOU signatory countries through “increasing collaboration and cross border cooperation on alternative development and improving national capacities and information sharing of alternative development agencies and projects.” The two indicators for this were realistic: 1) all opium producing countries have national alternative development strategies as well as annual opium reduction targets in place by 2006, and 2) the senior policy makers of the participating countries meet at least once a year to review collaborative strategies and plans.”

25. In fact, all the participating countries had AD strategies and opium reduction targets before the start of the Project. The senior policy makers were already meeting annually in other for, such as ACCORD, MOU, and related meetings.

26. The two outputs for the immediate objective were:

1. Collaborative, cross border and national AD programmes and projects increased to support illicit opium eradication in the region.

2. National capacity building and lessons sharing programmes designed and conducted to strengthen knowledge and skills of policy makers, project managers and practitioners and to promote sharing of information and good practices for alternative development.

27. The outputs indicators were:

1. A 50 per cent increase in the number of AD projects in the region (beyond capacity of Project to achieve).

2. At least 10 capacity building and training programmes designed and implemented during 2004-2007 (not achieved).

3. At least 200 policy makers, project managers, AD specialists and field practitioners would have attended capacity building and sharing good practices initiatives by 2007 (almost achieved).

2.3. Achievement of Programme/Project Results and outputs

28. Output 1: Collaborative, cross border and national AD programmes and projects increased to support illicit drug crop eradication in the region.

Activities under this output were 1) to create an AD collaborative forum/platform for policy makers of the MOU countries, development agencies and financial institutions to discuss actions and collaboration, 2) design advocacy strategies and action, 3) produce AD information and advocacy materials, and 4) conduct briefing, orientation and field studies for development and funding agencies.

29. As with the Drug Control Indicator, Output Indicator 1 is unrealistic. The logic implicit in this indicator apparently is that through the collaborative forum that was to be established, government agencies, development organizations, and donors would be moved to increase support for AD. However, the three-year time frame for the Project and the resources available to it were insufficient to facilitate such a significant advance in Project formulation, especially at a time when AD funding in such countries as Laos and Myanmar already were in decline.

30. Compounding the difficulties in achieving Output 1, the needs assessment that was carried out was limited in scope and the information in the report was sometimes outdated. Although the report listed government agencies doing AD work and sketched the beginnings of a training strategy and identified resources in each country, there is insufficient data in it for Project workplan. Furthermore, there is no information in this assessment on financial institutions or donors.

31 Output 2: National capacity building and lessons sharing programmes designed and conducted to strengthen knowledge and skills of policy makers, project managers and practitioners and to promote sharing of information and good practices for alternative development.

Activities under this output included 1) plan and conduct appropriate seminars, meetings and field study visits to share good practices and lessons learned and build new knowledge on innovative approaches, 2) design and conduct training programmes to strengthen skills and capabilities on emerging areas, 3) conduct research and studies on strategic topics to compile and share good practices for AD, and 4) expand AD electronic platform as part of UNODC website and ACCORD database.

32. The indicator for Output 2 of ten capacity building and training programmes was both appropriate and realistic. So was the second indicator for Output 2 that 200 individuals participate in Project initiatives. However, they were not accomplished.

33. Mostly due to the funding shortage, only six capacity and training programmes were conducted. Although an exact count is not possible, over 100 individuals seem to have participated. Given the budget shortfall, this level of implementation can be seen as satisfactory.

34. As a part of the Regional Centre MOU Action Plan, the Project was meant for all six MOU countries (only Yunnan in China), including Cambodia even though no opium is grown there. One recommendation of the C96 Evaluation was that Cambodia be included. However, the emphasis of the Project was on Laos on Myanmar, the two countries where there was considerable poppy cultivation. Although this might be a logical approach to dealing with budget shortfalls, the virtual exclusion of Cambodia, China, and Vietnam impeded efforts at building mutual understanding in the region as well as related rural development activities in those countries.

2.4. Implementation (Operational Plan, Monitoring and Backstopping)

35. Activity 1.1: Create AD collaborative forum/platform for policy makers of the MOU countries, development agencies and financial institutions to discuss actions and collaboration.

36. The Evaluator could find little evidence in Project records that the steps to do this as laid out in the Project Document (i.e. identify potential donors, review regional and bilateral policies of identified agencies, etc.) were taken. While there were workshops that constituted a platform (however disconnected) that gave policy makers the chance to discuss issues, financial institutions were not represented resulting in the intention of the Project Document being frustrated. Not all relevant individuals were consulted—the manager of a major AD project in Myanmar was never contacted by the H84 Project Coordinator during his first year on the job. The needs assessment contributed to identifying workshop topics and other competencies to be developed. However, there is no record of this activity being carried out. The inability to get in touch with the Project Coordinator impeded obtaining an explanation of what seems like a serious lapse.

37. Activity 1.2: Design Advocacy Strategies and Action

38. The Evaluator could find no evidence of these strategies ever having been designed or actions to be taken identified. Nevertheless, reading between the lines of the workshop reports, an overall strategy for alternative development including the marketing of agro-produce and NTFPs as a part of mainstreaming activities into national sustainable development planning was devised. The report of the meeting held in April 2007 regarding mainstreaming included action plans for the Lao PDR and Myanmar (and there is evidence that the former is being implemented) shows this.

39. Activity 1.3: Produce AD Information and Advocacy Material

40. One report was produced in booklet form: *Coping with Change: The Poppy Growers of Myanmar and Lao PDR*. However, as with Activity 1.1, almost none of the detailed suggestions for carrying this out were actually implemented (such as producing articles and posting AD information on websites).

41. Activity 1.4: Conduct briefing, orientation and field studies for development and funding agencies.

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42. The AD Marketing Tour of December 2007, including such briefings. But there is little evidence the Evaluator could find for any such activities in the first two years plus of the Project. However, in the course of the workshops, and also meetings held with the Thai Royal Project, the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, and related agencies some related work was carried out.

43. Activity 2.1: Plan and conduct appropriate seminars, meetings and field study visits to share good practices and lessons learned and build new knowledge on innovative approaches to AD, e.g. rural sustainable development, local governance, grass-roots development, micro planning and entrepreneurship, financial management and marketing.

44. During the life of the Project, seminars were organized on

- 1) Inception Workshop, Bangkok, October 2005;
- 2) Illicit Crop Monitoring, Chiang Mai, April 2006;

- 3) Study Tour on Non-Timber Forest Products, Ubon Ratchathani, September 2006;
- 4) Integrating Alternative Development into National Sustainable Development Planning (Mainstreaming), Bangkok, April 2007;
- 5) Study Tour to Oudomxay, Lao PDR, on Marketing AD Products, December 2007; and
- 6) Regional Seminar on Marketing of Alternative Development Products, Bangkok, March 2008.

These were the Project's most important accomplishments (although crop monitoring is not quite AD). The topics were fitting and participation adequate despite the absence of persons from Cambodia in most of them. The reports prepared were satisfactory. The emphasis on marketing in the last half year was appropriate and should be followed up.

45. Activity 2.2: Design and conduct training programmes to strengthen skills and capabilities on emerging areas, e.g. policy development, micro planning and managerial skills, participatory AD approaches.

46: Although no training programmes were conducted per se, training in project proposal writing was included in the agenda of the study tour in Laos in December 2007. Additionally, all the workshops involved some training on the topics covered but this could not properly be considered a programme.

47. Activity 2.3: Conduct research and studies on strategic topics to compile and share good practices for AD.

48. Primarily due to the financial shortfall, this activity was not carried out. However, future AD projects should consider research on regional value added inputs to the marketing of AD products.

49. Activity 2.4: Expand AD electronic platform as part of UNODC website and ACCORD database.

50. This activity was not carried out. Although the financial shortfall was partly to blame, some materials could have been posted on the UNODC website at little or no cost.

2.5. Institutional and Management Arrangements

51. The overall institutional and management arrangements were appropriate for a project that was fully funded. However, since the financial shortfall in the Project, resulted in high overhead costs, there was little left for implementation or for the provision of adequate supervision, especially in a regional project covering several countries. Thus there were insufficient funds for him to organize missions and other activities by which the Coordinator could have become familiar with government officials in the region, something very important in this part of the world and which was accomplished during C96.

52. Regional projects are difficult to manage because the key persons are located in diverse places. Regional projects dealing with AD projects are even more difficult because the study areas and target populations are far from the capitals where the UNODC offices are located which thus puts a heavy burden on (the usually already very lean) project staff to coordinate activities. In the case of an underfunded project such as H84, it is impossible for the Project Coordinator to maintain contact with all the partners and relevant activities (although C96 which was similarly underfunded could somehow manage). In response, and unlike C96, the H84 Project Coordinator apparently decided to remain based in Bangkok without making field visits except when there were workshops. This shortsighted outlook is shown in the observation in his handover note that a secretary (and not an international consultant) could handle the work until the end of the Project.

53. This contributed to the feeling among the key individuals in the participating countries that the Project was not accomplishing anything and had too few activities.

54. Besides visiting the UNODC AD projects to familiarize himself with work in the field (and those working in the field with the H84 Project), there were cost-effective activities that the Project Coordinator could have taken to spread information, promote advocacy for highlanders, and cooperation between the different AD projects in the region (as shall be discussed further) as well as showing a more positive attitude to his job.

3. OUTCOMES, IMPACTS and SUSTAINABILITY

55. Despite the flawed objectives and the funding shortfall, the Project was able to further the discussion and promotion of AD as a drug control tool in the MOU Region.

3.1. Outcomes

56. As shall be discussed below, H84 contributed (although it should have done more) to the continued recognition of AD as a useful tool in opium replacement.

57. With so few activities, only one publication, and no postings on Internet websites, no other outcomes could be observed or predicted.

3.2. Impact

58. Similarly, it is difficult to see what impact the Project made on AD work in the MOU Region or on anything else. Some small scale impacts were made, nonetheless, from the experiences enjoyed by participants in the workshops that could very likely lead to related work and activities in their individual countries.

3.3. Sustainability

59. Despite the absence of significant outcomes or impacts, it may seem paradoxical to say this but H84 did contribute to sustained AD work in the Region. Representatives of five of the drug control agencies participated in several workshops (and those from Cambodia in one) on AD that were organized by the Project. This kept Alternative Development on the table and in the policies of all the region's drug control agencies.

60. This Project has overlapped with a new global initiative: GLO/I44 Global Partnership on Alternative Development, running for three years from August 2007 onwards. The Drug Control Objective of I44 is to "contribute in a sustainable reduction and/or prevention of the expansion of illicit crop cultivation through the integration of development oriented counter narcotics objectives into broader development policies, plans and programmes. Activities in I44 will be carried out in the Lao PDR and in Myanmar (and also in Columbia). This is one indication of the fact that H84 contributed to the sustainability of AD work. In particular, the marketing of AD products is something in the MOU Region that could be advantageously implemented.

4. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

4.1. Lessons Learned

- 61 Regional Projects are Difficult to Implement

After over a decade of implementing regional projects in different spheres, it is clear that regional project objectives can only be achieved with difficulty. Reasons include their often being underfunded, their reliance on focal point personnel who are usually already engaged in other work, and the fact that these projects are carried out over a widely dispersed areas that are often hard to access. Furthermore, rivalries between Country Offices and the Regional Centre over the raising of funds impede the success of regional work. Country Offices often feel that supporting the regional projects drains resources and time from their own projects already limited by various constraints.

- 62. However, Regional Projects are Useful

The many regional projects, even including H84, with its disappointing record, do in fact confirm that there is much to be gained from cooperation within the MOU Region. This may most easily be seen regarding law enforcement but also is true for AD and DDR projects. When H84 did conduct activities, it is evident from the reports, such as of workshops, that the participants found the chance to meet others who were working in the same field as useful. They readily exchanged experiences, shared best practices, and looked for ways to improve their own projects.

4.2. Best Practices

63. Despite the problems with the execution of the Project and the budget shortfalls, the overall regional experience from C96, insofar as it contributed to H84, and including the terminal evaluation, reveals several best practices.

- 64. The Regional Approach: For the same reasons why the Regional Centre and its Action Plan were established, the experiences of this Project showed that a regional approach is productive in building links between countries that had a history of conflict and in creating a consensus in how to deal with problematic issues such as drug control. Even though they are difficult to implement and inter-agency rivalries do arise, the regional approach has many benefits.

- 65. AD Techniques Can Reduce Poverty

New initiatives, such as the marketing of NTFPs are being promoted through AD projects to increase cash income while. H84 recognized this and held a seminar on this topic both to increase awareness of this approach among government officials and to introduce some specific produce to the participants.

- 66. Linking AD with Poverty Reduction Sustains the Elimination of Poppy Growing

Since law enforcement is the main reason in the MOU Region why opium poppy cultivation has been eliminated, the impact of AD has barely been felt, a fact that threatens the sustainability of opium elimination. However, through the recognition of poppy growing as a poverty indicator, AD contributes significantly to sustaining the elimination of opium. There is no agency better equipped to conduct such work than UNODC.

4.3. Constraints

- 67. The serious budget shortfall,
- 68. The belief by donors that since opium poppy is being reduced around the MOU region contributes to the idea that AD is superfluous (which was part of the reason why H84 remained underfunded).
- 69. Difficulties in implementing regional projects, which compounded problems caused by the funding shortfall.
- 70. Inability, unwillingness, or a lack of initiative by the Project Coordinator to carry out activities in the Project Document even when they required little funding support.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

71. Establish a Joint Regional-National AD Programme

To enhance the synergies that exist between regional and national AD projects, serious consideration should be given to establishing a reworked regional approach with closer links to the country programmes. This will build on advantages UNODC has built up over several decades in the MOU region based on 1) actual accomplishments in the field including implemented projects and data collected, 2) the trust of governments in the region, and 3) awareness of critical factors such as the fact that poppy cultivation is linked with poverty along with conventional indicators such as food insecurity.

Establishing a new regional approach may also help reduce rivalries over fund-raising within UNODC offices. And they all should be linked to global initiatives such as I44.

72. Promote AD as a Means for Reducing the Poverty of Growers in Other Parts of the World Where Illicit Narcotic Crops are Grown

The role that AD plays in drug control and poverty alleviation is not well known even in UNODC projects outside the Mekong Region. Although social settings and the role of drug cartels in South Asia and Latin America differ from the situation in Southeast Asia, aspects of AD's strengths in winning the confidence of growers and finding economic and social alternatives to poppy cultivation can be used to encourage national leaders to control drug use more effectively. Working with the new AD Global Initiative (I44) will not only benefit farmers elsewhere in the world but also promote the AD work in the MOU Region as a best practice, the awareness of which should be better promoted.

73. Identify UNODC as the First Agency for AD Work in Illicit Crop Cultivating Areas

UNODC has in areas, such as the Wa Region of Myanmar and certain places in Laos, won the trust of governments and local groups in particular as an effective agency of first intervention in growing areas. In the MOU Region, no other international agency has performed so effectively as UNODC to reduce poverty and increase local participation all the while supporting the reduction of poppy cultivation and opiate use. Then, when other agencies enter, there is an orderly transfer to taking over the development role of UNODC. This is a model (known in Myanmar as the KOWI Approach) that should be replicated elsewhere.

74. Support for Marketing AD Products

Although such activities have been carried out in Thailand since the UNFDAC HAMP Project based in Chiang Mai (1980-1984), and recently in work with the Mae Fah Luang Project in Chiang Rai, it has not done so on a regional basis. UNODC is in a position to offer tangible and rapid assistance to AD programs and partner agencies in neighboring countries, especially Laos and Myanmar where internal controls impede exports (in fact ONCB in the last month has been carrying out talks with NaTaLa in Myanmar in this regard). The Regional Centre could provide added value by helping ease border restrictions, matching markets to products, and identifying marketing experts.

75. Increase the Appreciation of the Usefulness of Drug Control

To increase the knowledge of the public about the benefits of drug control, in particular AD, to alleviating poverty, UNODC, ACCORD and relevant partner agencies need better public relations through a combination of technical reports, academic studies in internationally refereed journals (such as the *International Journal of Drug Policy*), and reports in mainstream an serve to alleviate the negative attitudes about drug control that often divert attention from UNODC staff and contribute to negative attitudes by donors.

76. The UNODC Regional Centre needs to pick up its efforts to promote effective AD from C96 as well as the parts of H84 that were carried out productively to show that this work in the MOU region is a “best practice” that should be replicated elsewhere in UNODC work and in conjunction with UN development agencies who can gain from the experience and track record UNODC has shown in making AD as effective as it is.

5.1. Issues resolved during evaluation

77. None.

5.2. Actions/decisions recommended

78. Design Regional AD Projects with Strong Links to National Projects as Part of a Regional AD Strategy that is Now Being Revised

This is consistent with the Regional Centre Programme for Countering Human Security Threats (2008-2010) now under formulation. Under this Programme, \$1,900,000 is earmarked for alternative development to cover four areas: 1) improving national line agency capacity, 2) building a technical and information resource base, 3) working with the international development community to incorporate AD into development frameworks, and 4) designing short to medium term interventions to promote local economic growth.¹ However, to avoid country-regional overlap, joint planning must to be carried out. This, as consistent with the new One UN initiative, should involve other United Nations agencies, such as by facilitating their entry into AD project areas after UNODC has completed objectives to sustain poppy elimination and treat drug users.

79. Publicize AD and Advocate Support for Ex-Opium Poppy Growers

¹ It should be noted that the stated objective of replacing the “lost income” from having stopped growing poppy should be revised to reflect the most recent UNODC survey findings. It would be better to focus on sustaining the elimination of opium such as is the case in UNODC projects in the Lao PDR and Myanmar.

UNODC needs to publicize its achievements in AD widely and effectively. Too often UNODC is portrayed in media as forcing governments to ban opium before it is time for the indigenous farmers to adapt and thus create too serious problems for them. Although many community-based techniques such as PRA and drug treatment were pioneered in UNODC projects in the MOU Region, this is not widely known (even within UNODC due to a lack of institutional memory). In this light, the failure of H84 to complete information sharing work mandated in the Project Document (with only a very low budgetary requirement) all the more disappointing. Nevertheless, it is not too late to rectify the situation and to present UNODC's AD work properly and in ways which will mobilize resources to support its continued activities.

6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

80. AD/RAS/H84 followed a previous regional alternative development project (C96) that accomplished most of its objectives and was well-evaluated. The terminal evaluation of that project stated: "In conclusion the project offered a highly innovative...approach [which]...must not be halted here; rather it must be taken further...to strengthen a wider multi-sectoral collaboration involving demand reduction, law enforcement, as well as social development agencies as well as cavity society organizations...the most vulnerable East Asia region demands an integrated approach to transform the communities' economic and social relationship to drug crops to sustainable alternative sources of income."

81. The ensuing Project that was devised (H84) emphasized regional cooperation and institutional linkages "to share innovative approaches and best practices on participatory alternative development."

82. The major constraints were:

1. A significant budget shortfall, not just for H84 but for all AD programmes in the MOU Region.
2. Lack of backstopping capacity in the UNODC Regional Centre.
3. A lack of initiative by the Project Coordinator to advocate AD work done by UNODC, to visit field sites and better acquaint himself with the pertinent UNODC staff and government officials. The result was that certain activities, some of which could have been carried out within the existing budget, were left undone.

83. Nevertheless, the Project did accomplish some of its objectives and (along with country projects, bilateral and national AD activities) kept alternative development on the table as one of the principal activities of UNODC in drug control.

84. UNODC's AD work during the life of H84 has shown that UNODC can play a vital and particularly effective role as the agency of first intervention to carry out development work in poppy-growing areas and ex-growing areas. After this initial stage, then, as with KOWI in the Wa Region of Myanmar, other agencies—UN, bilateral, and NGO, can take over the work and thus free UNODC to move to areas where illicit crop cultivation continues. UNODC is the agency best-equipped to handle issues such as drug treatment, rehabilitation, and the chance of drug-related criminal activity occurring in such areas.

85. Some of the activities of H84 that were not carried out (such as involving the donors) still remain priorities for UNODC's AD work. In this regard, the Myanmar Prime Minister told an official delegation from Thailand visiting Naypyitaw, that UNODC's work lacked comprehensiveness and was left incomplete². A similar situation exists in the Lao PDR where the government wants UNODC to do more AD work. Even in Vietnam, where the government that some problems would vanish once opium was eliminated, are now said to be reconsidering the role of AD.

86 No agency is in a better position to meet these needs than UNODC. Since AD work in the MOU region can be more effective if a truly regional approach is taken, the Regional Centre needs to find a way to cooperate at different levels with Country Offices and national agencies. Just as the opium survey now is the "Golden Triangle" survey, incorporating Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand, so too should its AD work be regional. Although this will be difficult given the dynamics of the situation and the overlapping mandates of different UNODC offices, this will be a productive way to make use of what H84 did accomplish in a time of changing priorities.

² However, Thai officials have privately told this evaluator that they could not hope for budgetary support of more than about \$500,000 which is far less than what is needed to do the job.



PROJECT EVALUATION

Project Title: Regional Collaboration on Community-based Alternative Development to Eliminate Opium Production in Southeast Asia

Project Number: TDRASH84

BACKGROUND

1. The project, signed by UNODC in March 2004, was implemented in March 2005, and is to be finished by August 2008. The project aims to contribute to opium eradication in Southeast Asia. The Immediate Objective of the project is to strengthen alternative development efforts among the MOU signatory countries through increasing collaboration and cross border cooperation on alternative development and improving national capacities and information sharing of alternative development agencies and projects. The project intends to strengthen regional cooperation and establish institutional linkages to share innovative approaches and best practices on participatory alternative development and illicit crop elimination. The expected result of the project is to have more concerted efforts on opium reduction in the region and improved institutional and human resource capacities to plan and manage participatory community-based alternative development efforts. The project directly supports the UNODC Operational Priorities under the key themes on sustainable development and best practices.

2. The project was carried out and monitored by a Project Coordinator in the UNODC Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific until his separation in April 2007. Due to budget shortfalls, a short term of replacement by a short term Consultant, with lower expenses, was made. The project workplan was revised accordingly to accommodate shortfall amount and since January 2008 the project has been managed by the Senior Technical Advisor of UNODC Regional Centre to finish the remaining activities. The remaining activities were scaled down and combined in order to optimize cost and enhance the outcomes.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

3. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the progress made towards achievement of the immediate objective. More specifically, the evaluation will review and evaluate a) project concept and design b) project implementation and c) project outputs and any immediate impact. The evaluation should also provide recommendations and lessons learnt for future initiatives. Details are shown below:

Project concept and design

4. The evaluator shall review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy and evaluate the relevance and the appropriateness of the project objective, outputs, activities and resources. More specifically the evaluator will assess:

- whether the needs of relevant MOU Government counterpart agencies at the time of project formulation were properly reflected in the project document

- whether project activities and resources were allocated adequately
- whether the sub-regional approach has been appropriate

Implementation

5. The evaluator shall assess the overall management and implementation of the project activities. The project management and coordination mechanisms should be reviewed to assess the strengths and weaknesses as well as effectiveness of the mechanisms. The evaluator shall consider how the project coordinated its activities with:

- the six national counterpart agencies in the sub-region
- ongoing alternative development projects in the countries of the sub-region
- UNODC alternative development initiatives (at HQ or elsewhere)
- relevant development agencies, research institutions, universities, etc.

Project outputs, outcomes and impact

6. The evaluator shall assess the outputs, outcomes and any immediate impact achieved or expected to be achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results, when applicable. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objective (increased knowledge, skills and capabilities of practitioners and policy makers in national agencies) and the contribution to attaining the drug control objective and any unexpected results.

The evaluator shall assess whether the publications produced by the project have contributed to achieving the project immediate objective (in terms of appropriateness of content, language, distribution etc.). Finally, the evaluator should explore whether the project contributed to other areas such as:

- increasing UNODC knowledge and capacities in the field of alternative development
- increased mainstreaming alternative development into national development plans and development assistance

Recommendations

7. The evaluation will include recommendations for any future action as appropriate. Recommendations may also be made in respect of issues related to the implementation or management of the project.

Lessons learned

8. Lessons learned from the project which are valid beyond the project itself should be recorded in the evaluation report.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

9. The evaluation will be based mainly on the review and study of existing documents and reports. This may be followed by interviews with selected beneficiaries and stakeholders if further information is needed to evaluate any specific components of the evaluation. The evaluator may also interview some of the PAC members (including AusAID the funding agency) who have participated in the annual review of progress and future work plan of the project. Project documents, work plans, progress reports, PAC reports and other publications resulted from the project implementation will be reviewed.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVALUATION

10. The project is considered a relatively small subregional project with a total funding of US\$ 451,500 (approved budget 712,100, with 260,600 shortfall). The evaluation of the project does not require a wide range of expertise and, therefore, will be carried out by one evaluator.

11. The evaluator should have solid experience in project evaluation and is well versed with technical cooperation project planning and management in the field of rural/alternative development. The evaluator should have ample working experience in the MOU sub-region. He/she should have a minimum of graduate degree in social science, rural development, evaluation or other related fields. Excellent command of English language is required. The evaluator should not have been directly involved in the design, appraisal or implementation of the project and should be able to use his/her independent judgment for the evaluation.

BRIEFINGS, CONSULTATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

12. Prior to conducting evaluation, the evaluator will be briefed by the Representative on the overall policies and management of the Regional Centre. The details and status of the project will be briefed by the project coordinator. The project documents as indicated in Annex 1 will be provided to the evaluator as part of the input for the evaluation. The Regional Centre will be responsible for providing substantive and administrative support to the evaluator.

EVALUATION REPORT AND FOLLOW-UP

13. At the end of the evaluation mission, a debriefing meeting will be held at the UNODC Regional Centre to present a summary of the evaluator's findings and recommendations. Any observations and comments received from UNODC and the national counterparts during the mission may be taken into account by the evaluator.

14. The evaluator will submit a draft report in English to the UNODC Regional Centre. This draft evaluation report will be discussed with the executing agency and other parties to the project as appropriate. Although the evaluator should take the views expressed by the concerned parties into account, he should use his independent judgement in preparing the final report.

15. It is intended that the evaluator will present the findings and recommendations of the evaluation mission to the final PAC Meeting, which is tentatively scheduled at the end of July 2008. In that case the draft report should be submitted to the UNODC Regional Centre at least 5 days before the Meeting.

16. The evaluator should follow the UNODC standard format and guidelines for the preparation of project evaluation reports. He will provide the final report not exceeding 25 pages excluding annexes to the Regional Centre. The report should be typed in 1 ½ spacing and in A-4 format.

Annex 2: **ORGANIZATIONS AND PLACES VISITED AND PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

(prior to official start of evaluation but after the end of recruitment process)

VIENTIANE

June 2008

Meetings at UNODC Country Office Lao PDR

Leik Boonwaat, Country Representative

Sanong Chinnanon, Project Coordinator, Global Partnership on Alternative Development

Oudone Sisongkham. Senior Programme Officer

1 July 2008 (Tuesday)

Ronald D. Renard goes to Regional Centre to begin the evaluation.

Akira Fujino, Representative

Wang Qian Rong, Senior Law Enforcement Adviser

Ratchadaporn Sommaneevan, Financial Officer

Ajarie Salilasiri, Project Assistant (partially for H84)

Benchaporn Nimsuwan, Project Assistant (for H84 at present)

2-4 July (Wednesday-Friday)

Review project document and related reports.

Collect other materials

Obtain visa to go to Kunming

Sign contract

10 July 2008 (Thursday)

In Kunming, meet NNCC officials

5 July-8 September

Draft the evaluation report

Met Jan Orsini, Consultant for H84 in Bangkok

Discuss evaluation with Sanong Chinnanon, Leik Boonwaat, Elsa Elsa Küntziger, UNODC

Alternative Development Associate Expert, Vientiane, and Oudone Sisongkham. Senior

Programme Officer

Email questions and receive answers from participants in Myanmar in different H84 workshops

Email questions to Myanmar government focal point but received no response.

Phone discussion with Jeremy Milsom, former UNODC Wa Project Manager.

8 September

Submit draft to UNODC Regional Centre

17 September

Meet Wang Qian Rong regarding draft

19 September

Meet Janya Sramancha, ONCB Northern Headquarters (District 5) Director, and staff

21 September

Submit final evaluation report

Annex 3: Relevant Materials Reviewed in Evaluation

H84 Documents

Progress Report on Subregional Action Plan on Drug Control (Report No. 9; May 2005 – Dec 2006).

H84 Semi-Annual Report January-June 2005.

H84 Annual Report 2006.

H84 Final Agreed Workplan December 2007.

H84 correspondence files (it should be noted that these files contained almost entirely correspondence related directly to activities. **Virtually none of the personal correspondence such as would be used in planning activities or discussing wider issues was preserved.** Presumably this was in email correspondence that was lost after the end of the contract of the project coordinator).

Coping with Change: The Poppy growers of Myanmar and Lao PDR. 2006.

Regional Collaboration on Community-Based Alternative Development to Eliminate Opium Production in Southeast Asia AD/RAS/H84. *Project Document.* 2004.

Report of Inception Meeting, October 2005.

Reports on the Regional Seminar on Illicit Crop Monitoring, April 2006.

Report on the H84 Study Tour to Projects on Non-Timber Forest Product Management and Income Generation Activities in Thailand. Including reports by the Lao PDR and Myanmar participants as well as RECOFTC. 2007.

Seminar Report: Integrating Alternative Development into National Sustainable Development Programming. April 2007.

Handover notes by Project Coordinator (Tom Hopkins), April 2007.

Report on the H84 Regional Seminar on Marketing of AD Products”, 27-28 March 2008, Bangkok.

C96 Reports

2001

1. “Alternative Development Policies, Strategies, Key Success Indicators, Risks, and Lessons Learned in Phase I of WADP (Wa Alternative Development Project), Eastern Shan State, Myanmar” by John B Dalton
2. *Opium Reduction in Thailand, 1970-2000: A Thirty-year Journey.* By Ronald D. Renard
3. “Community Participation in Alternative Development Guidelines”.
4. “Community Participation in Alternative Development Training Guide”.
5. “Alternative Development Cooperation in East Asia” (brochure).

Year 2002

1. *Opium Farming and Poverty as Market Failures: Experiences in the Mekong Region on Marketing and Micro-credit for Alternative Development.*

2. *The Private Sector is a Protagonist of the Community Response to the Drug Scourge in the East Asia and Pacific Region.*
3. "Marketing – the Bottleneck of Opium Eradication? Experiences from East Asia in Marketing Alternative Development Products. Paper by Lise Bendiksen

Year 2003

1. A Manual on Monitoring and Evaluation for Alternative Development Projects
2. *Opium Eradication in Vietnam: Achievements and Lessons from Alternative and Integrated Mountain Rural Development Projects* by Do Van Hoa
3. *Social and Economic Impact of Illicit Drugs in Thailand*, by Nualnoi Treerat and Daniel Ray Lewis
4. *Engendering Women in Alternative Development: An Emerging Strategy for Sustainable Practice*. By Suvajee Good
5. Training Manual on Alternative Development Project Design and Management (Lao language)

Other Regional Centre Documents

Programme for countering human security threats and promoting good governance in East Asia and the Pacific (2008-2010). Draft 22 May 2008.

Other UNODC Documents

"2nd Draft Report of the Evaluation Team" Drug Control Capacity Building in Lao PDR AD/LAO/98/94 May 2001.

Independent Evaluation Unit. 2005. *Thematic Evaluation of UNODC Alternative Development Initiatives*. Vienna.

Strategic Programme Framework Lao PDR 2006-2009.

The National Programme Strategy for the Post Opium Scenario, 2006-2009.

Lao Government Documents

Lao PDR. *National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES)*.