

# PROGRAMME UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## LAO PDR

4 December 2002

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

*Appeal No. 01.34/2002*

*Appeal Target CHF 524,988*

*Programme Update No. 2*

*Period covered: 01 April - 30 September 2002;*

*(last Programme Update (no 1) issued on 16 April 2002)*

### "At a Glance"

*Appeal coverage: 52.2%*

*Related Appeals: South East Asia regional programmes (01.30/2002)*

*Outstanding needs: CHF 251,082*

*Update: Organisational development and capacity building remain the focus of the Federation's work in Lao PDR, particularly at Lao Red Cross (RC) headquarters, The emphasis is on assisting the National Society to develop a realistic and sustainable human resource and resource development policy and plan. A community-based disaster preparedness programme with Lao RC volunteers is also in progress. The cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed by Lao RC and key partners. HIV/AIDS has recently been in the spotlight, with Lao RC and its partners participating in several events. Finding a long-term solution to the future of the Lao RC blood programme remains a challenge.*

### **Operational Developments**

Heavy rains in southern China and northern Laos, tropical storms over the South China sea and the effects of "El Nino" all combined, brought heavy flooding to countries in the lower Mekong Basin, including Lao PDR. At its peak in late August, the Mekong river which runs through Vientiane city centre, threatened to swamp the Lao capital for the first time since the devastating floods of 1966. At the same time, flash floods hit Pongsali and Luang Nam Tha in the northern provinces and flood levels in Luang Prabang also reached record heights. Floodwaters around the country have now receded, including those affecting the most flood prone central and southern regions. Damage to areas surrounding Vientiane is still being estimated, with some 120 hectares of rice and gardens in Vientiane municipality submerged during heavy rains. As part of its relief operations, the Lao RC provided basic

aid worth CHF1,100 to victims in Donekeutg village, Hadsaifong district and Vientiane municipality. Donations of rice, instant noodles, tinned fish, pure water and oral rehydration salts were also provided to villagers made temporarily homeless by the floods. To complement relief efforts, Lao RC primary health care workers ran programmes on the treatment of dehydration and diarrhoea.

Official figures reveal the population of Lao PDR growing at an unprecedented rate of 2.8 percent per annum. One reason attributed to the increase - couples starting families at an earlier age, with many women bearing children well-before the age of 20. Should this trend continue, the country's population can expect to double to over 10 million people in the space of one generation and place considerable pressure on already limited resources.

According to the first national survey on STD prevalence, Lao's HIV/AIDS infection rate is small but volatile, with the highest risk group in the 20-39 year old range. Reports from the Lao Centre for Malariology, Entomology and Parasitology indicate a reduction in the national malaria mortality to 12.07 percent, down from 26.85 percent in 2000.

### ***Disaster Response/Preparedness***

During seasonal heavy rains, Lao RC and the Federation closely monitored the flood situation on the basis of regular situation reports from RC branches, and information sharing with government agencies, UN and NGO partners. Comprehensive needs and damage assessments were conducted during this period.

Focus in the disaster preparedness programme was on finalising the community-based development programme (CBDP) training module. Other significant activities included a stocktaking exercise for Lao RC headquarters / regional DP warehouses, and training in warehouse management and computerised stock inventory control.

***Objective 1*** *To create a disaster response capability in every branch of the Lao Red Cross.*

#### ***Activities & Achievements***

Flood relief operations carried out by Lao RC helped 500 of the worst affected families in the districts of Hadxayfong (450 families) and Sangthong (25 families), Vientiane municipality. From existing stocks, the NS distributed relief items including family kits (comprising rice, canned and dry goods), mosquito nets, sleeping mats, cooking utensils, blankets, used clothing and drinking water. Health teams from Lao RC assessed health and water / sanitation priorities and coordinated action with the ministry of health, WHO and Unicef.

Together with the Federation, Lao RC conducted a warehouse management training course as well as a stocktaking exercise for headquarters and three regional warehouses. Similar exercises are planned for future management training courses.

The Lao RC disaster management (DM) programme prepared its annual workplan for 2003. The first draft of the CBDP training module was also completed and is currently under review and field testing by all RC branches. Staff from the division participated in various regional meetings and events including a SPHERE workshop in Hanoi, and the SEA regional DM meeting in Thailand.

#### ***Constraints***

Finalising content for the DP training module has been slow. Training will be rolled out in the final quarter of 2002, once the module is completed.

***Objective 2*** *To build a national disaster preparedness system with effective links with the state system and with the regional Red Cross societies.*

**Activities & Achievements**

An assessment of relief stock levels, conducted by Lao RC, has provided the basis for further development of guidelines and training needs on warehouse management (to be made available in the Lao language).

Representatives from Lao RC and the Federation provided assistance at a national community-based disaster management course in April. Federation and Lao RC DM staff also participated in various workshops, study visits and meetings.

**Constraints**

Limited English language skills within the Lao RC disaster management division is a drawback for the programme. To address this issue, the Federation and PNS have made available English language training courses for all staff.

**Health and Care**

Both the Japanese RC and Federation have supported the Lao RC national blood programme since 1995. This programme has increasingly focused on developing an effective national blood donor recruitment system. Besides regular administrative support and financial reporting services provided by the delegation to the blood programme, the Federation's main activities during the reporting period were linked to a regional water-sanitation workshop, and the Lao RC health and community-based first-aid (CBFA) review.

With the increasing spotlight on HIV/AIDS, Lao RC and its partners are also working together to build more awareness messages into programmes "across the board".

***Objective 1** To strengthen the capacities of the national voluntary blood donor recruitment system by complementing the work of, and providing administrative support to, the Lao RC/Japanese RC programme in cooperation with the Regional Health Unit.*

**Activities & Achievements**

As part of World Red Cross Day, the Lao RC Blood Centre organised a blood recruitment campaign. A blood donor recruitment planning meeting was also conducted with the business sector, army and police. Certainly a cause for concern are figures indicating that while the number of voluntary non-remunerated blood donors continues to increase, the quantity of blood collected remains unchanged.

The blood centre has, in collaboration with the Centre of Laboratory and Epidemiology, expanded access to safe blood in Vientiane province, Xiugkhouang, Phongsaly, Houaphan, LuanNamtha and the Xaysomboun special zone.

The Federation continues to provide administrative support and financial reporting services to the programme.

***Objective 2** To strengthen capacity of Lao RC health division in the planning, management and coordination of the CBFA and Watsan programmes.*

**Activities & Achievements**

In June, the Lao delegation and regional health unit, together with the Luang Prabang RC branch, organised a water sanitation training programme in Laos. The RC branch played a key role arranging practical field exercises for sessions in managing effective water and sanitation programmes.

***Objective 3** To complement the ongoing work of the Lao RC/Australian RC HIV/AIDS peer group education programme through enhanced regional cooperation and networking.*

### ***Activities & Achievements***

Lao RC, together with the Federation and PNS, celebrated Red Cross day with an event that focused on the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV/AIDS. Using the Federation slogan “The Truth about AIDS, Pass it On”, Lao RC ran a successful Q&A session with youth volunteers that was well reported by the local media.

Lao RC, Australian RC and the Federation are developing new approaches to include HIV/AIDS messages in other programme areas.

### ***Organisational Development***

The focus of the Federation's work in Lao RC continues to be on organisational development (OD) and capacity building. At the headquarters level, emphasis has centred on the development of a sustainable human and financial resources policy and plan. Together with its partners, Lao RC is committed to building strong alliances around an inclusive Co-operation Agreement Strategy (CAS) using the Lao RC five-year development plan and annual work plan as a foundation. An integral part of the OD and capacity building process, the CAS was formally endorsed by Lao RC and several key partners in September 2002.

Steady progress has been made in with most aspects of OD and capacity building. Less success has been seen in governance, re-launching the youth programme at headquarters, and certain aspects of communications. Main achievements of the programme during the reporting period include:

- Training needs assessment from which clear priorities were identified for Lao RC management and staff. Recommendations included training and skills development in the following areas: English language, report and proposal writing, administration and financial management, computer skills, warehouse management and computerised inventory stock control (for both headquarters and regional warehouse staff). Staff at four unsponsored branches also completed training in basic project management. A training evaluation is planned for early 2003.
- Approval of the Lao RC fundraising policy, and development of a practical human resource development/fundraising plan of action linked to the Lao RC communications strategy.
- Support for a range of development activities in four unsponsored branches.
- Introduction of an OD focal person and a planning and monitoring unit at Lao RC headquarters.
- Establishment of a governance working group to address issues such as revision of the statutes, creation of a governing board and committee, revision of policies and procedure for enlisting members, recruitment and management of volunteers, and the establishment of women's and fundraising committees.
- Participation by Federation and Lao RC staff in several regional OD initiatives including a study tour of the Cambodian RC, workshop in Thailand, and meetings in Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.
- Co-ordinating Lao RC communications workshop with support of the regional information unit, Thai RC, and resource persons from the Lao media and business community. From this workshop a basic communications plan for the NS is being developed.
- Organising three regional (provincial) planning / OD meetings, in co-operation with PNS's and the ICRC, as part of ICRC-run dissemination workshops.
- Production of a fundraising ‘Fact’ file by the delegation and Lao RC, to be included in a Southeast Asia file. The document draws together information on fundraising activities, policies, plans, case studies, and resource persons.

***Objective 1*** *To ensure that all Lao RC senior managers are equipped with the basic management skills needed to run the Society.*

### ***Activities & Achievements***

During this period, a human resources/fundraising policy and plan was formulated, linked to a management training programme (based on recommendations of the training needs assessment). The

2002 staff training plan was developed targeting specific skills such as English language, computers, financial management, editing, report and proposal writing, and warehouse management.

Lao RC staff also participated in various regional workshops and meetings including DP meetings in Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, and a communications workshop in Macau.

***Objective 2*** *To ensure that the Society has functioning systems and clear procedures for monitoring finance and relief goods, and for management processes and decisions.*

***Activities & Achievements***

The delegation continues to assist Lao RC establish a standard, professional and transparent financial management and reporting system around the CAS process. The Federation supports the Lao RC OD and monitoring focal persons, both of whom are responsible for day to day monitoring of the Lao RC annual work plan.

In May / June 2002 the Lao RC and Federation conducted a joint stocktaking exercise of all relief items stocked at headquarters and in the three regional disaster preparedness warehouses.

Regional OD meetings were held to monitor the progress of southern and central Lao RC branches. The meetings were combined with a one-day ICRC dissemination workshop.

***Objective 3*** *To significantly strengthen the management and programming of the four most recently established branches which currently receive no external assistance.*

***Activities & Achievements***

The Federation provides financial and technical support to unsponsored branches through the OD programme and funds their participation at various planning and review meetings. It also co-operates with ICRC on information/dissemination activities.

Priority areas for future support (still at the development stage) include skills training in office and financial management, communications, fundraising, and youth and branch development. Various activities have already begun in Vientiane province and municipality, Sayabouri, and Luang Nan Tha branches.

In September 2002, the French RC initiated a programme for branches in Vientiane province and Sayabouri that includes organisational development, water and sanitation, and community-based first aid. The two remaining unsponsored branches will continue to receive assistance from the Federation.

***Objective 4*** *To assist Lao RC with addressing outstanding management/governance issues highlighted at the OD workshop in November 2000.*

***Activities & Achievements***

Progress with governance issues remains slow due to the prevailing political system in Lao PDR and the role of Lao RC within this system. Regional planning meetings have provided an opportunity for the NS and the Federation to start to address some of the fundamental governance issues with branches, at the grassroots level.

Lao RC has set up a working group to revise prime ministerial decree 36 and the Lao RC statutes. It is also reviewing operating procedures and guidelines for organisation of committees, enrolment of members, and the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers.

***Objective 5*** *To lay the foundation for a strong and well developed communications capacity.*

***Activities & Achievements***

There is growing awareness within Lao RC of the need for an effective communications strategy to boost its image in Lao society. With support of the Federation's regional information delegate, a communications plan of action for 2002 has been prepared. Crucial to the plan is strengthening of the Lao RC information / fundraising division.

The first Lao communications workshop was held in August 2002, in co-operation with PNS's and the regional information unit. As a result, the Lao RC communications strategy for 2003 has been reviewed and a work plan developed. This groundwork will hopefully enable a small humanitarian values programme to be developed and included in the Federation's 2003 annual appeal.

### ***Coordination and Management***

The Federation's main task is to help Lao RC adjust to the 'change process', as the delegation phases-out from the traditional type of office to a model based on a flexible CAS. A realistic strategy for implementing this change has been developed by the Federation, in consultation with Lao RC and its CAS partners (the Federation, ICRC and PNS based in Laos).

*Objective 1 To establish a fully inclusive country assistance strategy (CAS) which supports the Lao Red Cross national plan and strategy and is accepted by all the partners.*

#### ***Activities & Achievements***

The CAS MoU, signed in September by Lao RC and its key partners, is now being implemented. It serves both as a flexible framework for enhanced coordination and programme management as well as a useful marketing tool. Establishment of a transparent internal financial management system remains a priority.

*Objective 2 To develop and implement the in-country management approaches needed to ensure the CAS is correctly implemented.*

#### ***Activities & Achievements***

The delegation's main priority is to further strengthen the cooperation and coordination that exists between Lao RC, the Federation, PNS and the ICRC. Central to this is the involvement of all players in the Lao RC annual planning and monitoring process, now underway. Coordination meetings are held quarterly, between the Federation, PNS and ICRC and complement ongoing informal meetings.

### ***Outstanding needs***

There are no immediate outstanding needs.

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are*

<b>Laos</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 01.34/2002</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>				03.12.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>524'988</b>		<b>52.2%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD				178'565		
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		7'498	AUD	6'450	21.01.2002	HIV PHASE 4
JAPANESE - RC		19'300	USD	28'931	22.08.2002	DELEGATION CORE COSTS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				213'946	CHF	40.8%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			59'960		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				59'960	CHF	11.4%

*committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.*

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