



Media personnel turn cameras on themselves during a visit to the Nam Ngum Hydropower I Station Expansion Project in Vientiane province.

Media get firsthand view of Japan's development projects in Laos

Times Reporters

Reporters last week visited four development projects run by the Japanese government in Vientiane and Vientiane province to learn more about the projects' goals and opportunities and deepen their understanding of Japan's development cooperation in Laos.

The programme took two place over two days.

On the itinerary were the Japanese Volunteer Programme at Toulakhom district Hospital and the Nam Ngum Hydropower I Station Expansion Project in Vientiane province.

The second day involved the Wattay International Airport Terminal Expansion Project and the Project to Enhance the Capacity of the Vientiane Bus Enterprise.

The visits were organised by the Embassy of Japan to Laos and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Laos office.

The Volunteer Programme at Toulakhom District Hospital is run by the JICA Volunteer Programme and involves Japanese citizens supporting socio-economic development in Japan's partner countries.

The programme was established in 1965.

During the visit, reporters talked to Lao staff at the hospital and a JICA volunteer midwife, Ms Haruka Miyabayashi, who began working at the hospital in November 2016. She has been working closely with her Lao counterparts and has helped to improve the health of local mothers and children, as well as advising hospital staff on new approaches and treatment methods.

The visit to the Nam Ngum Hydropower I Station Expansion Project included a briefing on the background and development of the project since 1960 and the importance of enlarging the hydropower plant so that it can produce enough electricity to supply provinces in Laos and Thailand.

The hydropower station's huge reservoir is 7 billion cubic metres in size, and has a stable inflow of water throughout the year, so it is expected to help alleviate power deficits in Vientiane even in the dry season.

At the Vientiane International Airport Terminal Expansion Project,

reporters learned about the reasons for expanding Wattay International Airport. This is primarily because the number of domestic and international passengers using the airport has increased hugely in recent years.

The project has been designed to meet the growing demand for air transport as well as increasing efficiency and improving safety in airport operations by expanding the international terminal and constructing a new domestic terminal.

Finally, when being briefed about the Project to Enhance the Capacity of the Vientiane Bus Enterprise, the media gained an insight into the public bus system, the problems caused by traffic congestion, and why people prefer to use their own vehicles.

To add to their understanding of the scheme, reporters tried out the new bus service from Wattay International Airport to the Talat Sao Market.

At each of the projects visited, media representatives were able to put questions to officials in charge and get more information.