

Regular Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme

Upskilling of MSME staff in the hospitality sector

In collaboration with Skills for Tourism (Project LAO/029) Swisscontact implemented the Pheun Than Heng A Sip Training Programme from 2017 to 2021.

The regular PTHAS training programme upgraded the hospitality skills amongst 896 (71% female) staff from 312 MSMEs in selected southern and central provinces.

The free use of the PTHAS training units has been officially endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) in July 2021 and a softcopy of all 176 PTHAS training units are available for download on the website of the Institute for Mass Media, Culture and Tourism (IMCT): <https://imct-training.gov.la/>

Additional information on the PTHAS training programme is available on the Swisscontact website at <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/projects/pthas> and LuxDev website at <https://vientiane.luxdev.lu/en/activities/project/LAO/029>

The Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029) is co-financed by the Governments of Lao PDR, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and Switzerland, and is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao PDR and the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev).

Scan for more info:



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SKILLS FOR TOURISM PROJECT • LAO/029



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The Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Upskilling Programme

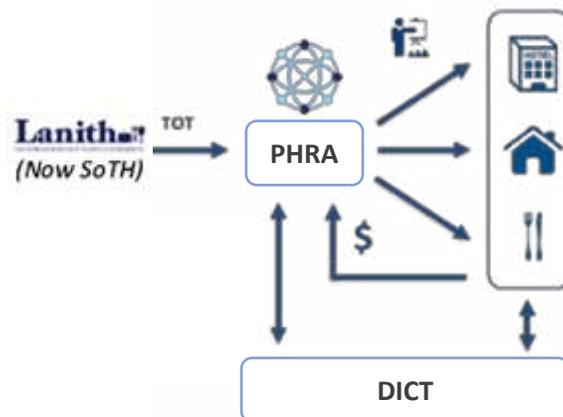
Under the Skills for Tourism Project (LAO/029), the regular PTHAS training programme has been implemented from 2017 until 2021 in nine provinces in the Lao PDR: Champasack, Attapeu, Saravane, Sekong, Khammuane, Savannakhet, Borikhamxay, Vientiane Capital and Vientiane Province.

Implementation Model

The focus of the **upskilling programme** has been on industry-based training delivery through Provincial Hotel and Restaurant Associations (PHRAs) as the entry point for engagement with the private sector, i.e., the local hotels and restaurants. **176 training units** with an associated competency assessment have been developed on **Food and Beverage Services, Front Office, Housekeeping, and Food Production**. The PHRAs organized the short upskilling trainings (2-3 days) for MSMEs that sent their staff and paid a participation fee. The trainings itself were carried out by industry trainers with training of trainers (ToT) and quality assurance provided by former Lanith (now SoTH – School of Tourism and Hospitality).

The entire training process has been overseen by the provincial Departments for Information, Culture and Tourism (DICTs). Swisscontact took the role of facilitator that provided support in establishing pools of industry trainers and strengthened the capacity of the PHRAs to organize training sessions

PTHAS Implementation Model



Employer Statements:

“Staff can perform and interact well with guests applying what they learned to the real situation at the hotel”

“Their performance has changed a lot and they have more confidence”

“They had more sense of (how to) provide a good service to the costumers”



Mr Thouy Phetsavan is the Director of Champasack Palace Hotel and President of Champasack Hotel and Restaurant Association (CHRA). Phetsavan has been active as an industry trainer for the regular PTHAS Training Programme for several years. Prior to his tourism and hospitality career, he taught mathematics at the National University of Laos in Vientiane Capital.

“The training has to meet industry standards, at an affordable cost, be accessible to SMEs, and the trainers should be selected from among experienced business owners or hotel managers,” Phetsavan said. “It’s a mixture of these different factors that make this programme viable and sustainable.”

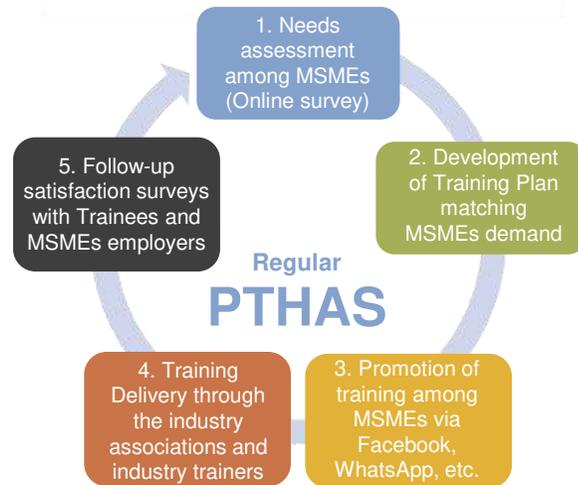
Industry trainers

The model of training MSMEs managers as **industry trainers** has been one of the **success factors** of the Regular PTHAS training programme. Different MSMEs and the PHRAs themselves confirmed that knowing the training is carried out by **“One of them”** increased their willingness to send their staff and pay a participant fee.

Training delivery

The PHRAs prepared a short needs assessment for the MSMEs and based on the responses, a training plan was developed with focus on the occupations in demand. The PHRAs promoted the training via Facebook and WhatsApp groups and then practical trainings were carried out at venues provided by MSMEs. Within one month after the training, Swisscontact carried out satisfaction surveys among MSME employers as well as the trained staff to improve training delivery.

Regular PTHAS – Implementation Process



“I am very happy to have had the opportunity to participate in such a good programme.”

- Kingrattana

Kingrattana was working as an Assistant Manager at the Rattanawadee Hotel (Pakse City, Champasack Province) when he learned about the Pheun Than Heng A Sip (PTHAS) Training Programme through an ad promoted by the Champasack Hotel and Restaurant Association (CHRA). Kingrattana eagerly signed up for the training as he wanted to learn new skills and improve in his job.

“Personally, the training programme has taught me to be more detail oriented. All the additional skills that I have learned can be easily applied to other aspects of my life,” he explained and added: “I have also managed to share the knowledge gained from the training to other hotel and restaurant staff.”



Statements from other trainees:

“The trainer has real industry experience to share with the trainees and that makes the training very useful”

“I like the assessment session, it was very challenging, but I have learnt new things”

Achievements

176 training units available

72 Industry Trainers trained (43 female)

896 (71% female) staff from 312 MSMEs upskilled

147 Mio. LAK private sector investment

Improved staff performance confirmed by employers



Lessons Learnt

- Overall, the role of the PHRA is a key determining factor in the success of the PTHAS upskilling training. The best results have come where there is a strong motivation to pursue activities for the province.
- Targeted promotion is crucial as MSMEs need to be incentivized to pay a fee for each staff they send to the training. High staff turnover is the main reason why MSMEs are hesitant to invest in upskilling their staff, thus the short-term benefit of the upskilling trainings in terms of immediately applicable skills have to be communicated well.
- The implementation experience showed that demand exists for short and practical upskilling courses led by industry trainers with the fee-for-service model being adopted and micro and small enterprises consistently willing to pay fees that cover part of the training cost.

