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LXML SEPON



MMG and Sunlabob to provide clean water solutions to Lao Villages

Vientiane, Laos, 17 Nov, 2010 - Sunlabob Renewable Energy Ltd today signed an agreement with MMG Sepon, marking the establishment of the MMG Sepon Water project. Over 1 year, Sunlabob will provide clean water solutions and community development to villages in Savannakhet Province, Laos that form the community around the Sepon Mine.

MMG Sepon undertook detailed research of community development needs through a Participatory Planning Project in 2010 that built on results of regular household survey work. The community and the research identified better water quality and sanitation as a priority need within the villages. MMG identified 8 sites, comprising of 11 villages, in Savannakhet Province that required community development support. In general the water resources for these villages are poor; suffering from scarcities and/or quality concerns in the dry season, silting in the wet season and/or being located too far away from the villagers to be collected by hand.

Sunlabob has developed a Solar Powered Water Purification System where safe drinking water can be produced safely and sustainably in villages. The system combines solar energy, active filtration, UV and ozone sterilization, local chlorine production, along with expertise in introducing technical solutions to villagers and enabling the establishment of local small enterprise. It will also include water bottling facilities, and equipment to locally produce chlorine that is used to disinfect bottles after they are returned for refilling.

The advantages of this approach over conventional solutions are that sustainability of quality is achieved by the combination of the incentive of a small enterprise, and technical and operational support from Sunlabob.

During phase one of the project, Sunlabob will install water supply systems in the neighbouring villages with the objective of providing comfortable access and improved water sources to the villagers. For each site, Sunlabob designed a public water supply system based on solar pumps. This system ensures the distribution of water to 3 to 5 tap stations in each village. Each site will be equipped with a water tank or water tower to guarantee a constant supply. The systems are designed to cover a demand of 55 litres of water per day per capita (2015 projection). Furthermore, villages will be equipped with Biosand Filters to provide improved water for drinking and cooking.

The objective of the second phase is to establish mechanisms with the villagers to ensure sustainability of the project. Water systems have been designed to minimise the ongoing cost and using solar pumps will facilitate this objective.

For the biggest site (4 villages with over 1500 people), Sunlabob is studying the feasibility of a water supply system based on a mixed solar/grid power supply. This original system aims to ensure public water supply and support the existing water distribution to private taps. This way the solar energy use is optimised, and the cost of water production to generate income for maintenance is reduced.

“We will improve community welfare by managing natural resources in sustainable and responsible ways,” says Andy Schroeter, Director of Sunlabob.

Sunlabob will also provide hygiene and sanitation training to target villages in order to improve health amongst beneficiaries. The goal is to provide at the very least filtered water for drinking and water distribution to a central location in each village for cooking, washing and cleaning.



About Sunlabob Renewable Energy

Sunlabob is a Lao commercial company, set up in 2000 and based in Vientiane. It operates as a profitable, full-service renewable energy provider selling hardware and providing commercially-viable energy services for remote areas without access to the public electricity grid. Sunlabob has a comprehensive organization structure made up of the executive management team and supported by 42 staff members in finance and administration, project management and technical departments. Additionally, Sunlabob has built a franchise network throughout Laos, and has a strong external support structure made up of business and technical consultants both in Lao and internationally. In its almost 10 years operation, Sunlabob gained an extensive project management experience and technical expertise in the fields of renewable energy, rural electrification and clean water in South East Asia, Afghanistan and Uganda. For more information about Sunlabob, visit the company's website at www.sunlabob.com.

About MMG

MMG owns and operates a portfolio of world-class base metal mining operations, development projects and exploration fields.

The group is one of the world's largest producers of zinc as well as a substantial producer of copper, lead, gold and silver.

The group currently has mining operations located in Australia and Asia and a large portfolio of advanced and early stage exploration projects through Australia, Asia and North America.

For more information, please contact:

Ann Moey, +856 2077349405, ann.moey@sunlabob.com, Public Relations, Sunlabob

Pasangane Keoboulapha, + 856 020 2213 491, pasangane.keoboulapha@mmg.com