



Doctors operate on an infant at the Huaphan provincial hospital as part of the free treatment programme.

Mothers, infants to benefit from nationwide health programme

Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

A new nationwide health programme will soon provide free health checks and treatment for mothers and their children under five who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The initiative, titled 'Health Sector Governance and Nutrition Programme' will be rolled out

in 135 target districts in the country's 17 provinces, with the goal of improving the health of impoverished mothers and infants.

The programme is being funded with about US\$51 million from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank and will run from 2016 to 2020.

It will support health sector

governance reform and provide nutrition services in the target provinces.

Speaking at a conference about the programme in Vientiane yesterday, Project Director of the Sector Governance and Nutrition Programme, Dr Pasongsith Bouppha, said "We are continuing this programme to help improve the health of

mothers and young children and provide nutrition services in communities that have poor access to health services, of which there are many."

"Too many women are unable to pay for the treatment of their babies," he added.

The programme will play an important role in persuading

CONTINUED PAGE 2

Mothers, infants to benefit... FROM PAGE 1

mothers-to-be to have regular check-ups and to give birth in a hospital.

This component will support the development, implementation and maintenance of an improved health management information system under the Ministry of Health, and provide technical support, capacity building and training for ministry staff at the central, provincial and district levels, Dr Pasongsith said. Cooperation between the Department of Planning, overseas development partners and the Ministry of Health has already seen good results in 64 districts of eight northern provinces: Phongsaly, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Xieng Khuang, Bokeo, Luang Prabang, Huaphan and Xayaboury.

In the south, the project has been implemented in 42 districts in Savannakhet, Borikhamxay, Khammuan, Xekong, Saravan and Champassak provinces.

Another component will support the development of an integrated national strategy and implementation plan for social and behavioural change, communication to improve nutrition.

The contingent emergency response component allows for the reallocation of financing in accordance with the International Development Association immediate response mechanism, in order to provide an immediate response to an eligible crisis or emergency, as needed.