



SNV

Functionality of Rural Water Supply Services

Levels of Service

63% OF LAOS IS CONNECTED TO IMPROVED WATER SUPPLIES. THE PROBLEM: MOST DON'T WORK

Improved water supply coverage in Laos' rural areas has steadily increased in the last few years. In 2014, 65% of the rural population have access to an improved water supply. The 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan aims for 75% by the end of 2015.

These statistics do not tell the whole story as mere access to a water supply provides no guarantee that the water is safe, plentiful, accessible and reliable year round. Instead of building more water supplies, SNV's "Functionality of Rural Water Supply Services" (FRWS) programme in Lao PDR focuses on ensuring that the existing ones work. To do that, we need to know which supplies work and which do not.

Assessing water point functionality

This paper highlights some of the results of the FRWS baseline survey in 2013, which assessed the water supply service levels received by rural households in Atsaphone and Phine Districts of Savannakhet.

Among other things, the report assessed Levels of Service (LoS) received by households for the five programme Functionality Impact Indicators: Quality, Quantity, Accessibility, Reliability and Overall

Household LoS. The data was collected through 734 household interviews in Atsaphone and Phine Districts, by SNV and our local partners to better understand the local water supply situation in the two districts.

Finding the water points that don't work

The results suggest that simply increasing access to water supplies in rural areas is not enough. SNV's baseline data, from a representative sample, shows clearly that many of these sources are not functional, that they don't provide enough safe, reliable and accessible water.

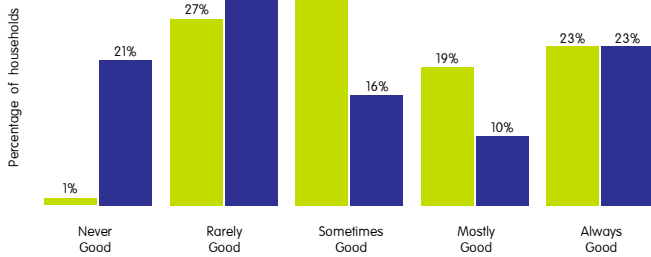
The baseline reveals that not having enough water was the aspect of water supply functionality having the greatest impact on household LoS, and that poor water quality was the next biggest challenge.

The Laos FRWS programme will aim to address water supply quantity, this could raise the overall LoS to the benchmark level for 50% of households in Atsaphone and 30% of Phine households.

Although SNV's baseline was conducted in two districts of Savannakhet, it is very likely that similar situations also exist in other parts of rural Lao PDR.

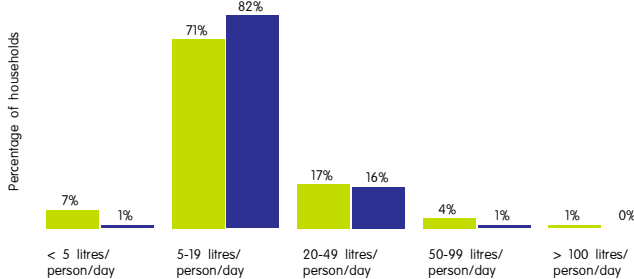
**MANY
RURAL WATER
SUPPLIES DO
NOT WORK**

Perceptions of Quality in Atsaphone and Phine



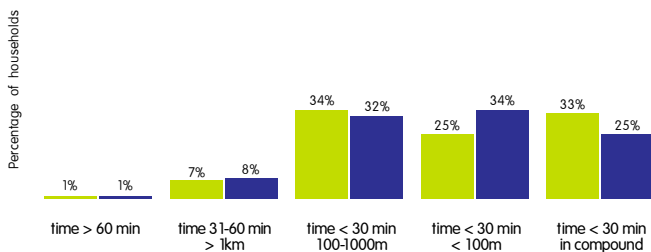
Quality service levels were based on household perceptions about the quality of their supply as well as assessing risk by noting whether their supply is Improved or Unimproved.

Assessment of Quantity in Atsaphone and Phine



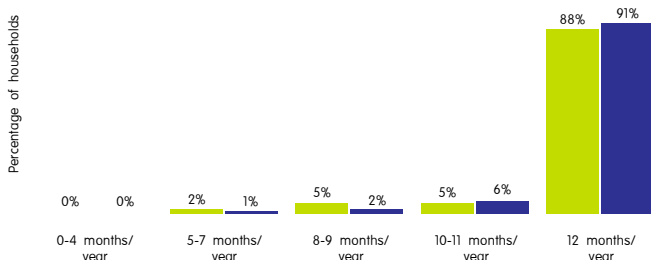
Over 70% of households do not meet the benchmark for quantity of at least 20 litres per day, which is the national standard for drinking water¹.

Access Times to Rural Water Supplies in Atsaphone and Phine



Household Accessibility LoS is based on how long it takes to reach their water supply, queue, fill containers and return home as well as how far the supply is from their house.

Perceptions of Reliability in Atsaphone and Phine



Nearly all households use at least two supplies throughout the year meaning nearly 90% of households have access to water for 12 months, exceeding the benchmark service level. However, we also found that over half the population relies entirely on public supplies, and that these same households tended to have lower Overall service levels.

¹ Drinking water is defined as that used for consumption and personal hygiene.



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Wealthier households have better water supply LoS

The baseline found that the wealth of households has a strong relationship to their Overall LoS. Better off households are more likely to use water supplies which provide enough safe water year-round.

The study also found that if a house is connected to electricity, it is very likely to have a high LoS. This suggests that being connected to the electrical grid and having access to information contribute to improved functionality.

Programmes working on the functionality of water supplies in rural Laos should focus on quantity and quality service levels. SNV's FRWS programme will make this its central focus with a goal of increasing quantities of safe water. Focusing on solutions which benefit the poorest households is essential as these are the families with lower service levels who more likely rely on public supplies.