



Representatives of the government and Swisscontact in Laos shake hands at the agreement-signing ceremony last week.

Govt, Swisscontact extend youth employment support programme

Times Reporters

The government last week signed a Letter of Agreement with development partner Swiss Foundation for Technical Cooperation (Swisscontact) to continue the Vocational Training and Employment Support Services (VTESS) project.

The project has a total budget of CHF 8.6 million (over 78 billion kip) and is taking place from August 2019 to July 2023 with the prospect of future phases.

The project aims to enable 3,300 disadvantaged youth from the provinces of Oudomxay, Xayaboury, Xieng Khuang, Khammuan and Saravan who did not finish lower secondary school to find their way into the labour market or back into education.

Director General of the Department of Technical Vocational and Educational Training, Ministry of Education

and Sports, Mr Nouphan Outsa; Deputy Director General of the Department of Skills Development and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Mr Khornsy Mahavong; and Country Director of Swisscontact in Laos, Mr Richard Rose, signed the agreement on Wednesday.

The project is being implemented under the Department of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in close collaboration with the Department of Skills Development and Employment.

Swisscontact leads the project implementation in a consortium with the Swiss Academic Institution – Lucerne University of Applied Science and Arts, School of Social Work.

The VTESS project is funded by the Swiss government and builds upon a previous Swiss-funded initiative, the

Vocational Education Laos (VELA) project phase 1, but introduces an innovative employment support services component applying a ‘coaching cycle’ approach.

This involves the selection of disadvantaged youth, guiding them in making their choice for training, encouraging them through the training and supporting them in finding (self) employment or re-entering education.

The signing ceremony coincided with a workshop about the project’s objectives, results and activities, preparations made so far, work plans for 2020, and project organisation.

Participants also engaged in group discussions on issues such as the processes for selecting project beneficiaries, coaches who will provide employment support services, and internship locations.