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The pilot Nam Ngum River Basin spearheaded for IWRM development in Laos

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A first management plan for the Nam Ngum River Basin had already been studied a few years ago with the French Development Agency financing.

The new Ministry of Water Resources and Environment (MONRE) has just been created and takes over the powers of the former WREA (Water Resources and Environmental Administration).

To accompany the reforms in progress for Integrated Water Resources Management, the French Loire-Brittany and Rhine-Meuse Water Agencies decided to support a pilot project in the Nam Ngum River Basin under their decentralized cooperation.

The International Office for Water will take care of coordination.

An International Seminar, organized on 28 and 29 March 2011 in Vientiane with AFD funding, helped launch this project, with an excellent level of participation. The Lao Minister for Water Resources and Environment and the French Ambassador co-chaired the first part of the seminar, thus demonstrating the local political will and enriching debates with their ideas.

The contribution of the French Water Agencies thus made possible to continue and deepen the work already done in this basin.

The challenge is to develop mechanisms for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) included in the new Lao legislation.

In practice, it will be necessary to build the capacity of the Secretariat of the Nam Ngum River Basin Committee (NNRBCS), of MONRE, of the Provinces and Districts, so that they can prepare and implement, in a participatory manner, a sustainable water resource Management Plan in their Basin.