

# Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Case Study



## **EARTH SYSTEMS** Environmental Research & Consulting

**Client:** Oxiana Resources NL  
**Project:** Sepon Project, Lao PDR

### **CLIENT**

Oxiana Resources NL (Oxiana) is an international mining and exploration company based in Australia. The company has a primary focus on copper and gold mining and have current interests in Europe, Australia and Asia.

### **LOCATION**

Lao PDR is a landlocked country bounded by China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar. The Sepon Project is located in a remote area in the southeast of Lao PDR, in Savannakhet Province.

The Sepon area was severely degraded during the Vietnam War, but retains some significant environmental and cultural values. The area is home to numerous villages but has very limited local infrastructure and only basic education and health facilities.



Earth Systems consultants interviewing villagers as part of the health and nutrition survey for the Sepon ESIA.

### **BACKGROUND**

A due diligence study completed in April 2000 indicated that the Sepon Project was technically and commercially feasible. Oxiana subsequently commissioned the preparation, in parallel, of a

Bankable Feasibility Study and Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA).

The proposed development will involve open pit mining and processing of separate gold and copper deposits in the Nam Kok River valley. The ESIA covers the development of the gold deposits. The development of the copper deposits will be a second project phase, to be permitted separately.

### **OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT**

Earth Systems has, in partnership with NSR Environmental Consultants, undertaken the ESIA for the project. Earth Systems staff and associates have been responsible for conducting and managing studies on the following aspects:

- Archaeology & cultural heritage.
- Geochemical characterisation of waste rock and tailings.
- Land and resource use.
- Aquatic fauna.
- Rehabilitation and erosion control.
- Anthropology.
- Socio-economic household survey.
- Gender.
- Health and nutrition.
- Vietnam War residual environmental impacts.

Earth Systems' approach has been to combine Laotian and international expertise to ensure the ESIA is culturally sensitive whilst satisfying the requirements for project permitting and international financing.

### **OUTCOME**

The ESIA will be the first such report prepared for a major mining project in Lao PDR.

***For further information regarding this project contact: Nigel Murphy, Principal Environmental Scientist, Earth Systems, or Nanong Khotpathoum, Executive Director, Earth Systems Lao***

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