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# Media release:

## Leading miner, MMG Sepon, recognises value of cultural heritage

The struggle to protect cultural heritage from the rapid social changes occurring in Laos gained new momentum Monday with the signing of the "MOU Regarding National Heritage Research in the Lao PDR".

The revised MOU between the Lao Government's Department of National Heritage of the Ministry of Information and Culture, MMG Sepon, and James Cook University of Australia was previously committed to in 2007.

"We learn from the past, cultural heritage is an important source of evidence, proving the revolution of the national history. It is also a precious legacy that can not be remade or irreplaceable by other objects. Every change or destruction of the past is a great loss. Therefore, protecting the cultural heritage is a duty and responsibility of everyone in the society," said Viengkeo Souksavatdy, Deputy Director General of the Department of National Heritage, Ministry of Information and Culture, Government of Lao PDR.

He continue saying that the archaeologists have found that Lao ancestors at the Vilabouly area knew how to use copper. There had been also exchanges of goods and trading with other countries more than 2,000 years ago. Thus, the research into this area would greatly contribute to record another page of the national history.

The MOU solidifies MMG Sepon's commitment to identifying and promoting cultural heritage in the sphere of influence of its operations in Vilabouly District, Savannakhet Province.

"MMG not only wants to protect heritage, but also to look for ways to promote heritage for the long-term benefit of MMG's host communities," said Frank Reimman, Senior Manager for People & Sustainability at MMG LXML Sepon.

Work under the terms of the MOU has seen a combined project develop led by Department of National Heritage archaeologists, Dr. Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy & James Cook University archaeologist, Dr Nigel Chang that has uncovered evidence of large-scale ancient malachite (copper) mining, one of only a handful of similar known sites in the world.

Dr Chang said "...when and how the first metals were made in Southeast Asia is still unknown. This project will make an incredibly significant contribution to our understanding of the past in the region..."

MMG Sepon is also known for the discovery of a magnificent Heger I bronze ceremonial drum in 2008 currently being restored and displayed at the National Museum of Laos in Vientiane.

MMG Sepon's gold and copper operations have been underway since 2001. The company is currently expanding its copper operations and exploring further areas of the tenement for gold and copper reserves.



Mr. Frank Reimman, Senior Manager for People & Sustainability at MMG LXML Sepon shaking hand with Dr. Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, Director General of the National Heritage Department, Government of Lao PDR.

The ceremony was also witnessed by H.E. Bouangeun Saphouvong, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Information and Culture.

**For further information:**

Pasanngane Keoboulapha  
Communications Team Leader

Tel: 856 21 261 283

Fax: 856 21 414 293

Mob: 856 020 2213 491

Email: [pasanngane.keoboulapha@mmg.com](mailto:pasanngane.keoboulapha@mmg.com)

<http://www.mmg.com/>