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Engineering students gain new hydropower lab

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Students at the National University of Laos now have access to a brand new laboratory and hydropower model to facilitate research in the sector, thanks to support from the government of Finland.

The Finnish government granted US\$63,000 through the Ministry of Energy and Mines for the Faculty of Engineering's Mechanical Engineering Department to build the laboratory.

Department Head Associate Prof. Korakanh Pasomsouk told the media on Wednesday the project's aim

was to provide a learning space to give an opportunity for students to study hydropower generation.

Prof. Korakanh said the new lab included three-level tanks, water channels and electricity generation machinery imported from neighbouring countries.

The lab is able to produce 1kw of electricity, which is about enough to power up 10 homes.

The professor said small-scale hydropower dams were used in many Asean and European countries.

The lab was built at the department as a training centre not only for engineering

students, but anyone with an interest in how small hydropower damming projects work.

Mr Korakanh said the laboratory model's design was based on the basic principles used in all hydropower dams.

Facilitating hydropower research is in line with government policy to encourage the state and private sectors to invest in damming projects to generate power for sale to neighbouring countries.

The government aims to make Laos the "battery of Asean" by 2020 to help lift the nation from its current status as a least-developed country.