



ensure good environmental

He said workshop attendees

The Ministry's core

## Microfinance staff improve operational skills

### Times Reporters

Some 32 branch staff of the Women and Family Development Deposit-Taking Microfinance Institute (WFDF) under the Lao Women's Union (LWU) recently took part in a training course to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

The participants were representatives of branches in the capital and Borikhamxay and Vientiane provinces. Throughout the course, they furthered their knowledge of branch operations, credit management, accounting and

auditing in Vientiane.

It presented an important opportunity for participants to meet, share experiences and discuss issues surrounding the operational skills of the microfinance sector.

Attending the opening ceremony of the workshop was Director General of the Development Department of the Lao Women's Union, Ms Sirikit Boupha along with other concerned officials.

WFDF has a strong savings focus where customers have to build a savings base first before being able to apply for loans for productive purposes.

It particularly aims to improve the quality of life of poor women in rural areas to enable them to participate in economic activities and to play a more dominant role in their communities.

Depositors can open up their savings accounts with a minimum weekly deposit of 5,000 kip, and individual loan amounts are available from 500,000 kip to 10 million kip, with loan terms of three and 12 months.

Since 2010, loans of more than 30 billion kip have been disbursed to support income generating activities of the

targeted groups. Women are the main targeted customers, who engage in small production, trade, service and agricultural activities.

Up to now, more than 4,000 households are supported by five branches and 110 customer service centres in central Laos.

In 2012, WFDF obtained a license as a deposit-taking microfinance institution from the Bank of the Lao PDR, and it also received technical assistance from the Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation (SBFIC) in Germany.