

Helping to build a 'powerhouse for Asia'

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LAOS has to be more competitive, says Lao businessman Phanthachith Inthilath, who has set his mind on making his country the battery of Asia.

Laos could become the battery of Asia, and its abundant natural resources, which include hydropower and food resources, will help it build links with the rest of the region, says Lao businessman Phanthachith Inthilath.

He is the chairman of Intra Corporation Sole Co, a renewable energy company that is supporting the country's desire to become the powerhouse of Asia.

"Even though Laos is a land-locked country, the government has a policy and purpose to turn it into a land-linked country by developing the east-west economic corridor," he told *Vientiane Times*.

Laos recently took steps to develop the Vung Ang seaport, as well as railways and highways, to facilitate the transit of goods from the west, including Myanmar and Thailand, that pass through Laos on their way to the east, he said.

With the Asean Economic Community becoming a reality, pressures have increased. Laos has to become more competitive, said Phanthachith. One way forward would be to focus on tourism as there are many spots yet to be discovered and developed. Intra Corporation is



As Asean companies expand regionally, the Asia News Network (ANN) celebrates the 50th anniversary of Asean by profiling companies and their respective CEOs to explore Southeast Asian business opportunities and challenges. The Nation is a founding member of the ANN.



PHANTHACHITH

engaged in the power sector, especially hydropower development, solar plants and coal-fired plants.

Other interests include finance and investment consultancy, construction, real estate, import and export, media, marketing and sport centres.

The country's mountainous terrain and rivers support hydropower development, but most of its dams can generate power effectively only during the rainy season.

"The company plans to contribute to the power management system and invest in renewable energy," said Phanthachith.

Intra Corporation is developing nine hydropower projects with partners in Thailand, China and Australia.