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Attapeu sugar factory yet to install machinery

The Vietnam-based Hoang Anh Attapeu Sugar Industrial Group is constructing a processing factory in Phouvong district, Attapeu province, but has not yet installed any machinery as the main building is not yet complete.

Director of the provincial Planning and Investment Department, Mr Thanouxay Bansalith, told Vientiane Times on Thursday that in the meantime local people have been employed to plant sugarcane in the fields.

Provincial officials could not say what percentage of construction had been completed. "We will soon go down there to assess the progress of construction after work began last November," Mr Thanouxay added.

According to the provincial Planning and Investment Department, the Hoang Anh Attapeu Sugar Industrial Group will take almost one year to build the processing factory at a cost of more than US\$100 million.

The factory has 12,000 hectares of sugar plantations in Attapeu province, and a further 4,000 hectares of sugar will be grown by local people on their own land, which they will sell to the factory.

When the factory is operational it will have the capacity to process about 7,000 tonnes of sugarcane a day.

Average annual per capita income in Attapeu province currently stands at US\$300-US\$400. However, provincial officials believe this will rise, helping to reduce poverty levels.

The factory expects to employ more than 4,000 people, Mr Thanouxay said.

The Hoang Anh Gia Lai Group began investing in Laos in 2007. It is the number one investor in the province and also provides grants for development projects such as hospitals, roads and schools.

The Group currently has capital amounting to more than US\$1.2 billion. It envisages increasing its investments in Laos to US\$960 million from 2014-15, in areas such as hydropower, mining and industrial farms.

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