



Award of Merit, Government Buildings: U.S. Embassy Compound - Vientiane



September 3, 2015



Photo Courtesy U.S. State Dept.



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The \$110-million phase one of a project to relocate the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, has put in place some 7,673 sq meters of office space on a 7.4-acre site south of downtown.

A \$35-million, phase-two project has entailed the remodeling and repurposing of an existing compound in the city's center into a recreational and cultural outreach facility. Phase one finished in October 2014 on schedule and under budget, and phase two is on track for completion in September 2015.

The general contractor, BL Harbert International, was challenged to aim for a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Silver certification, maintain a U.S.-grade safety culture and build to U.S. construction standards on a job in which 95% of the workforce is unfamiliar with these credentials.

Many of Harbert's supervisors and subs responded by learning Lao—some to fluency—to communicate better with the local workers. Further, supervisors successfully trained from scratch many workers to the level of trade proficiency required to perform construction to U.S. industry standards.

Project Team

Owner: U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations

Contractor: BL Harbert International LLC

Lead Design Firm: Page

Design Architect: Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects

Structural Engineer: Ehlert Bryan

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