



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
2021





Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Voluntary National Review)

**Prepared by the Government of the Lao PDR
In consultation with national stakeholders and
development partners in the Lao PDR**

July 2021

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Opening statement

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is at an important stage of the national development planning process. 2020 and 2021 mark the conclusion of the implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP 2016-2020) and the commencement of the next five-year plan (9th NSEDP 2021-2025). This transition has been dominated by the challenges associated with the COVID-19, sustainability and climate change, quality and inclusive growth, human capital, infrastructure development and the transition from Least Developed Country status, which Lao PDR hopes to achieve.

The world is currently facing serious outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, which is an immediate and long-term challenge for us to respond and recover from its impact on economic development. In Lao PDR, achievements and efforts to eradicate poverty and progress in the implementation of SDGs within the framework of the 8th and 9th NSEDP has been severely impacted. What is more important now is the fact that we have only 10 years left for the fulfilment of SDGs by 2030 with the slogan "leaving no one behind".

The Government of Lao PDR is strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since the publication of the first Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2018, efforts from line Ministries and Provinces have been accelerated to ensure effective SDG localization. In the past years, although then Government has actively implemented SDGs and many achievements have been made, in particular on poverty reduction, but with the impact of COVID-19, achieving SDGs will be a challenging task. In the time like this, multi-stakeholder participations and engagement is the most critical element for moving the 2030 Agenda and SDG localization forward. An important task for the country under the 9th NSEDP framework is to recover from the setback due to COVID-19 on top of already existing challenges, based on Lao context. We have to mobilize and engage all stakeholders across the country for the achievement of SDGs by 2030.

Through the implementation of the 8th NSEDP as well as the SDGs, Lao PDR has made many significant achievements. The country continues to enjoy political stability, social order and continued economic growth which has significantly contributed to the poverty reduction and improving living standard of all multi-ethnic people. We have been able to reduce poverty rate from 46% in 1992 to around 18% to date. Nonetheless, due to the impact of natural disasters and COVID-19 pandemic, the economic growth is at the lowest level in 2020. In our upcoming 9th Five-year National Socio-economic Development Plan for 2021-2025, Lao PDR will continue to develop our economy in line with sustainable and green growth strategy, integrate SDGs into our NSEDP, as well as to build a strong foundation and necessary condition for the country to graduate from the LDC status in the future.

To help Lao PDR to achieve the national development agenda highlighted above, the Government is working closely with all segments of the Lao population, line ministries, provinces, the United Nations agencies, development partners, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders to ensure the support necessary for accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs are providing opportunities for the whole country to coalesce around the goals and to build synergies as never before. This second VNR was prepared by the SDG focal points from line Ministries and Ministry-equivalent under lead coordination of the National SDG secretariat. It was also developed based on the strong partnership with development partners and all national stakeholders which takes place at several levels, from the National SDG Secretariat and the various

line ministries and departments including provincial authorities, to cross-sectoral forums that engage with a broad array of stakeholders.

This VNR Report takes a critical look at progress and challenges in each area, as well as lessons learnt and way forward. Lao PDR will continue to work closely with development partners and relevant stakeholders to ensure steady progress towards the SDGs, achieving LDC graduation, and improving the well-being of all citizens. It is now more important than ever to uphold the multilateral cooperation. In this unprecedented situation, due to the impact of COVID-19, we need to continue working closely, making bold decision and carrying out concerted actions. If we can do so, we will be able to address global and national challenges and safeguard our future.



**Phankham Viphavanh
Prime Minister and Chair of the
National Steering Committee on SDGs**

Summary – Update on recent progress of the SDG implementation

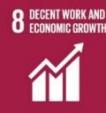
SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
	<p>1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eradicating extreme poverty; - Implementing social protection measures; and - Ensuring equal access of men and women to economic resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lao PDR has been successful in reducing absolute poverty, based on the national poverty lines, from 33.5% in 2003 to 23.2% in 2013 and further to 18.6% in 2019. • But this downward trend will be reversed due to COVID-19 and the poverty is projected to go up to 21.5% in 2020.¹ It will begin to decline in subsequent years but still not meet the trend line for some years. • There has been an increasing trend of public investment on rural development which has been an important force contributing to the national poverty reduction efforts • The coverage of social protection system in the country is not adequate. The country spends only 0.7% of GDP on social protection, much less than the peers.
	<p>2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ending hunger and malnutrition; - Halting food insecurity, improving agricultural production, sustainable and resilient food production; - Correcting trade distortions, and - Ensuring functioning food commodity markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country ranked 87/117 in the 2020 World Hunger Index. • Proportion of hungry people has declined from 33% to 23% over past decade. • Food and nutrition insecurity has been an issue even prior to COVID-19 • Stunting is declining but still affects nearly 33% of children under 5 years and wasting 9% which is rising. COVID-19 will increase wasting by 14.3%.² • Children from rural areas, poorer households, ethnic groups and whose mothers are not educated were more likely to be stunted. • Food insecurity is unevenly distributed across districts and low-income households and farm laborers were most likely to be affected by COVID-19 • In 2018, for children under 5 years, 21.1% were underweight (26.6% in 2012), 3.5% were overweight (2.5% in 2012), 9% were wasting (5.9% in 2012), and 33% were stunting (44% in 2012). • Undernutrition among general population was 18.5% in 2016.
	<p>3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing maternal mortality; - Ending preventable child deaths; - Ending or reducing AIDS other diseases; - Universal health coverage, affordable essential medicines, sexual and reproductive health care; - Vaccine research, and - Access to medicines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life expectancy (male and female) has increased from 66 in 2016 to 67 in 2018. • Significant progress has been made to reduce maternal mortality from 405 (per 100,000) in 2005 to 185 (per 100,000) in 2017. • Under-5 mortality has declined from 97 (per 100,000) to 46 (per 100,000) over same period. • The MMR and U5MR are significantly higher than the ASEAN average and in rural areas and for ethnic groups. • New HIV infections have declined from 1,100 in 2010 to 780 in 2019 but only 56% of PLHIV were covered by ART. • High out-of-pocket-expenses (45% of total health expenditure) is a major health-financing issue and can push people in poverty

¹ Poverty Assessment, World Bank, September 2020.

² Rapid Assessment of Food Security and Agriculture in Lao PDR, May 2020

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of births in a health facility or attended by skilled personnel stood at over 64% in 2018. This ratio is much lower among ethnic groups (42.8 for Chinese-Tibetan) and in rural areas (55.8%). Among poorest quintile this ratio was 33.9%. The adolescent birth rate was 83 per 1,000 women in 15-19 age group (in 2017). The rates are much higher for poorer quintiles, rural areas, ethnic groups and by education level. Prevalence of tobacco use among persons 15-49 years was found to be 43.5% among males and 7.2% among females (2017). Over 71% women of reproductive age currently in marriage or in union stated that their demand for modern contraceptives is satisfied-Only 48% of children received full recommended vaccination. General government expenditure on health was 2.8% of GDP in 2018 (3% in 2016).
	<p>4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal access to free, quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education; Improving vocational skills; Equal access to education; Expanding education facilities, scholarships, and training of teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant progress has been made at the primary school enrolment with minimal gender gaps. However, there are major gaps in enrolment at the secondary and tertiary education. The share of children (36-59 months) attending early childhood education was 45% (2018). The share is much lower in rural areas, in ethnic groups, by wealth quintiles, and mother's educational level. The percentage of children out of school was 10% at primary level and 38% at upper secondary level General government expenditure on education was 2.94% of GDP in 2018 down from 4% in 2013. There is no precise data about the children and adults with disabilities in all levels of education. Quality of education is an area for greater attention alongside with the use of technology, ICT and innovation.
	<p>5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls; Valuing unpaid care and domestic work; Ensuring the full participation of women; Access to reproductive health care; and Equal access of women to economic resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant progress has been made and a number of laws on gender equality have been passed. Adolescent birth rates are high at 83 per 1,000 with wide variations across regions, ethnicities, and educational levels. Women's share in the National Assembly in 2019 was 27.5% (31.8% for Provincial People Assembly), above the global average of 24.5%. At sub-national levels and in managerial positions women's representation is much lower. Women are more likely to be self-employed than being a wage worker compared to men. Women are vulnerable to violence and trafficking. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older who report having been subject to physical and sexual violence by partner/non-partner was 20.2%. More efforts in local community outreach need to be enhanced in order to raise more awareness and understanding about land rights, particularly in the rural areas.

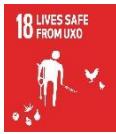
SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
	<p>6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring universal and equitable access to safe, affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all; - Reducing pollution; - Increasing water-use efficiency; and - Promoting participatory management of water and sanitation services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water supply coverage has improved and covers over 80% of the population. • Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (well and stream – Nam Lin and Nam Badan) stands at 71%. • Water quality is a concern. 18.9% of population (2017) using water for drinking (well and stream – Nam Lin and Nam Badan) free from zero e-coli sources. • Water pollution is increasing in both urban and rural areas, and most urban areas have no wastewater treatment facilities, so inadequate sewerage facilities have accelerated the discharge of domestic liquid wastes to water bodies. • Open defecation is practiced by 23% of population, especially in rural areas. • About 84% of population was using an improved source of drinking water facility (97% in urban areas and 78% in rural) with wide ethnic differences. • Wetlands provide vital environmental, economic and cultural services to the country's people and biodiversity, and are central to livelihoods of the rural population, supplying fish, fodder as well as future nature-tourism opportunities • The Government has designated the country's first two wetlands of national significance, the Xe Champhone Wetlands and the Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands.
	<p>7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% coverage of electricity. The target of 90% set by the 1st Lao Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015 to Paris Agreement was achieved. However, urban-rural differences are observed (80.3% of the rural population and 97.4 % of the urban population). • A number of households across the country still use fuelwood for cooking. • To expand biofuel development, Lao PDR is creating a national program with a goal of introducing 10% biofuel in the transport sector by 2025. • Solar power, while not the main energy source, has incredible potential to play a critical role in off-grid electric power for remote rural areas. Currently, around 13,000 households in remote areas have been equipped with solar home systems. • Lao PDR has a high potential for renewable energy, especially from the hydropower resources, with a technical potential was estimated at around 26,000 MW. • The Ministry of Energy and Mines has issued a Renewable Energy Development Strategy aiming to make 30% of the country's energy sources renewable by 2025. • To reduce fossil fuel imports, the government has outlined a tentative vision to reach 10% of the total transport energy consumption to be derived from biofuels.

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting sustained economic growth; - Improving resource efficiency in production and consumption; - Full and productive employment and decent work for all; - Eradicating forced and child labour and trafficking; - Protecting labour rights including those of migrant workers; and - Increasing access to financial services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High growth rates (between 5 and 7% during the last decade) • Labour force participation rate 81.3% (2019). • Percentage of growth in labour productivity (GDP/per person employed) was on the downward trend decreasing from 4.9% (2015) to 4.4% (2019). • Unemployment rate was on the rise (increasing from 2.1% in 2015 to 9.4% (10.7% male and 7.8% female). • Youth unemployment was at 16.1% in 2017 (7.8% male and 8.3% female) – the rate was at 18.5% in 2015 (10.1% male – 8.4% female). • Informal sector employment was 82.6% (2017) (42.6% female and 40% male) – the rate was at 83.8% in 2015. • The economy is characterized by high degree of informality (proxied by the proportion of own-account workers and contributing family workers in total employment which decreased from 80.8% in 2015 to 66.5% in 2017). • Percentage of children aged 5-17 in employment (“Working Children”) was estimated at 42.8% (42.4% of girls and 43.2% of boys) Percentage of financing and loans issued to SMEs was on downward trend (30.9% in 2015) to (19.45% in 2019).
 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable and equitable access to quality infrastructure; - Employment generating industrialization; - Access to financial services and markets; - Innovation and technology transfer, and - Increasing access to ICT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Doing Business Index, Lao PDR ranks 154th out of 190 countries (in 2020) and at 113th place out of 131 countries under the Global Innovation Index 2020. • The country has made excellent progress in infrastructure and now 85% of rural population lives in villages connected to all weather roads. • Share of manufacturing value add to GDP was decreased from 8.7% in 2016 to 7.4% in 2019. • Manufacturing employment as percentage of total employment was 6.3% (2017), increased more than double from 2015 which was 3.1%. • Proportion of population covered by a mobile network is 95% (2019) and 45% - internet user of the total population. Households with access to the internet is 27%. • Research and development expenditure as percentage of GDP stands at 0.09% in 2019. • Lao PDR ranked 167 of 193 in the UN e-government index in 2020, reflecting low levels of e-government development and e-participation.
 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting higher growth rates for the bottom 40 per cent; - Promoting social, economic and political inclusion; - Reducing inequalities in opportunities and outcomes; - Ensuring social protection for all; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both income and non-income inequalities have been rising - Gini coefficient, a measure on inequality, has risen from 36.6% (2013) to 38.8 (2019). • Economic growth has been regionally imbalanced and the benefits of the growth have not been inclusive enough in term of age, sex, and the most vulnerable groups. • Between 2013 and 2019, the growth in the incomes of the bottom 40% decile was 2.1%, which was lower than the average growth rate of 3.3%, pointing to the fact that growth was not pro-poor.

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Securing participation in economic decision making; - Facilitating migration, and - Reducing transaction costs for migrant remittances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration of labour force, including some migrants that are illegally smuggled into neighbouring countries have been an area of concern and further efforts are needed to address them. • Due to COVID-19, about 100,000 migrants are likely to return to the country with loss of incomes for households for whom remittances account for up to two-thirds of the total income. • The country received US\$ 407.19 million or 2.1% of GDP as remittances in 2019. This is likely to decline to US\$ 360.85 million in 2020 or 1.82% of GDP due to COVID-19.
 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring access to housing, basic services and public transport for all; - Participatory planning of human settlements; - Safeguarding cultural and natural heritage; and - Strengthening resilience to disasters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The share of urban population currently at 33% will go up to 47.7% by 2025. • Urban air pollution is an area that need an attention as 82% of it contributed by among others, burning of firewood, charcoal for cooking, and slash and burn. • Though Lao PDR has ambient air quality standards, however, emissions inventories are not performed routinely. Also, emissions inventory data for common pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), Sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are not available. • Number of deaths missing persons due to natural disasters were 738 per 100,000 in 2015 and the number is estimated to be higher in recent years due to the recent disasters incurred in 2018 and 2019. • Three disasters in 2018 resulted in a loss of US\$371.1 million and displacement of 600,000 people. • While economic conditions and social problems still ranked among top household concerns, priority concerns had shifted away from flooding, inadequate drainage, and poor access roads to the need for better solid waste services, water supply, and traffic management. • The limited implementation of the 2011 Vientiane Urban Master Plan can be seen as a pick-and-mix – while elements supporting certain large-scale economic projects are promoted, the full planning package needs to be taken into greater consideration.
 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieving sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; - Improving waste management; - Promoting sustainable public procurement; - Ensuring access to information; and - Building capacity for sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste collection services are incomplete, particularly in rural areas. Only 27% of households in the city have access to waste collection services (2019). • Natural resource management is a high priority that needs greater attention. • The country has embarked on the ‘green growth’ strategy and a circular future aimed at improving resource use efficiency and low carbon development. The Government in particular pay attention to, as mentioned in both 8th and 9th NSEDP, a model of economic, social and environmental production and consumption that aims to build a sustainable society based on a circular development. • Regulation on open burning was imposed and came into effect in 2019 specifically in Vientiane Capital. Still, household waste (organic and inorganic) is often burnt. • Responsible consumption sits on one of the key priorities that need engagement of various stakeholders across the country. In recent years, several awareness-raising campaign or events on the

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
		reduction of single-use plastic and responsible consumption have been conducted.
	13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening resilience and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters, including in marginalized communities; - Country's strategic engagement with the Green Climate Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lao PDR registered record increase in GHG emissions doubling between 1990 and 2000 mostly caused by land-use change and forestry. • CO2 emissions per unit of GDP PPP went up from 1.5 to 1.8, yet is still lower than the ASEAN average of 4.2 • The country is one of the most vulnerable to floods in Southeast Asia. There have been eight major floods from 2008-2019 displacing more than 100,000 people. • The country's technical capacity to access GCF funds is still limited. • The 2020 updated Lao NDC commits a new unconditional GHG mitigation commitment by reducing GHG at the rate of 34% of the 2020 baseline by 2030, and will reach net zero emissions by 2050.
	14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lao PDR has adapted Goal 14 to suit its landlocked status and covers "aquatic resources" under this goal. • Fisheries is at subsistence level and captured mainly for food security. • Fish Conservation Zones (FCZs) have been officially established throughout the country as a community fisheries management strategy over the past 25 years. • Aquatic resources are under threat due to habitat degradation and water pollution. • There is also illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing that requires a national framework.
	15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sustainable management of freshwater, mountain ecosystems and forests; - Combatting desertification; - Halting biodiversity loss; - Combatting poaching and trafficking of protected species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall forest cover declined from 70% in 1940 to 40% in 2018 (or 58% if revised definition is followed) • The country is making steady progress on sustainable forest management, reaching nearly 110,000 ha, which has created a strong foundation for scaling up timber certification. Lao PDR is now seeing the results of stronger forest governance and the intention to solve country's problem on illegal logging, since the passage of Prime Minister Order No. 15 in May 2016, which has led to a strictly enforced ban on the export of logs and primary wood products, drastically reducing this export. • The country's target to achieve 70% forest cover by 2020, set by the 1st Lao NDC in 2015, is beyond reach and has moved to 2025. • Share of land area covered by protected forests area was 20% in 2015. • 24 National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCAs) designated as protected areas that cover almost 18% of the total land area of the country. • Land area covered by conservation forests was 15.1% • Percentage of rural villages reporting land degradation was 29%. • Number of species threatened with extinction were 210 (in 2018).

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uplands and mountainous regions face threat from slash-and-burn, deforestation for major projects, logging and land and forest degradation caused by climate change.
 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing all forms of violence; - Ending violence against and trafficking of children; - Promoting rule of law and justice for all; - Reducing illicit financial and arms flows, corruption and bribery; - Developing effective institutions; - Participation in decision making at all levels; - Legal identity for all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The administration framework was updated in line with government policies including amendments to the Law on Government, the Law on Local Administration and Regulations on City and Municipality. Progress has been made in establishing rule of law and ensure its compliance with international norms and standards. New important laws have recently been adopted such as the Civil Code and the Penal Code. Government structure reforms have steadily progressing – restructuring of ministries, capacity building of civil servants, anti-corruption campaigns (Corruption Perceptions Index in 2020 was 134 out of 180 – scoring 29/100). Lao PDR has various channels and forums on people's participation and engagement in national development process in recent time compared to a decade ago. The National Assembly has provided increasingly proactive oversight of public services and aspired to increase people's participation in the decision-making process. A constitutional amendment adopted by the NA Ordinary Session in January 2021 was the most recent one. Nearly 73% of the member of the current NA were elected to the NA for the first time, and 27.5% of the member are women. Decentralization and local government are governed by the Sam Sang (Three Built Directives) proposes provinces as the strategic units, districts as the integration units for planning and budget preparation, and villages as the development units. Birth registration is important, not only as a goal in itself but to protect children by making it easier to trace and report them. Universal birth registration has not yet been achieved. In 2017, the percentage of children under 5 whose births had been registered with a civil authority was 73%. Lao PDR has a positive trend in reduction in violence against children from 79% (2011) to 70% (2017). Recently, the National Plan of Actions to address violence against children (2021-2025) was developed.
 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	<p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening domestic and international resources; - Debt sustainability; - Technology transfer and capacity building; - Promoting trade; - Enhancing policy and institutional coherence; - Respecting countries' policy space; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation reflects greater commitment from both the Government and partners. Regional and global cooperation and integration is a high priority for the Government as articulated in the 9th NSEDP. The country met two out of three LDC graduation criteria in 2018 and 2021 and it is on the verge of graduating out of LDC status. A longer timeframe for transition period up to five year has been granted. This means Lao PDR could be graduating out of LDC status by 2026 right after the conclusion of the 9th NSEDP (2021-2025). Development finance landscape has been changed and it needs greater attention due to weak global growth outlook due to COVID-19. The Government's commitment to continue to effectively enhance macro-economic management and stability by

SDG	Goals and Targets as per the SDG global framework	Recent Progress Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships; - Measurements for progress, disaggregated data. 	<p>maintaining a low budget deficit policy, together with a stable exchange rate and inflation below the rate of GDP growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal deficit projected to be around 7% of GDP (2020) reflects a need to strengthen macroeconomic management and improve revenue collection which was around just over 70% (2020). • Public debt is expected to rise to 69% of GDP in 2020. External debt-service payments stood at US\$1.2 billion for 2020. • The country ranks 167/193 in the E-Government Development Index (2020) and 192/196 in broadband pricing. • The country's Statistical Capacity Score of 67.8 was lower than the East Asia and Pacific average of 75.9 in 2019. • Greater efforts are needed on disaggregated and quality data for evidence-based policymaking and monitoring of the national development indicators including those of SDGs and relevant development agenda such as LDC graduation and green growth.
	<p>18. Remove the UXO obstacle to national development</p> <p>Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UXO clearance • Mine Risk Education • Victim Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given its importance and cross-cutting impact on SDGs, Lao PDR adopted this as the National Goal. • Clearing of UXO, rehabilitation of victims and creating economic opportunities for the affected communities have made significant progress. • Number of reported UXO casualties declined from 302 in 2008, to 59 in 2016 to 25 in 2019. • Percentage of registered UXO survivors mainstreamed into health, education and employment services increased from around 12% in 2015 to around 21% in 2019. • Proportion of registered active age UXO survivors unable to earn sufficient income with access to basic income security slightly decreased from around 96% (2015) to 95% (2019) – important improvement even though the decrease is relatively small margin. • With a very high percentage of high priority hazardous areas (99.25 in 2019) remaining to be cleared, a detailed survey is under way to map all confirmed hazardous areas throughout the country. This will help improve clearance efforts in the long run. • The magnitude of the problem far exceeds the resources and capacities available • Despite its cross-cutting nature, UXO are not included in other sector plans and strategies.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Lao PDR is at an important stage of its national development planning process. 2020 marks the conclusion of the implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP 2016-2020) and the commencement of the next five-year plan (9th NSEDP 2021-2025). This transition has been dominated by the challenges associated with the COVID-19 recovery, sustainability and climate change, quality and inclusive growth, human capital, infrastructure development and the transition from Least Developed Country status, which Lao PDR hopes to achieve. The conclusion of the 8th NSEDP and the commencement of the 9th NSEDP come in a time where the country is in the process of preparation of the second Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, when possible, progress of SDG implementation in Lao PDR since the first VNR prepared in 2018 will have key elements of COVID-19 on top of various challenges that the country has already encountered during the past two years.

1.1 Methodology and process for the review

The VNR of the 2030 Agenda was developed based on the principle of leaving no one behind. In partnership with UN agencies, the National SDG Secretariat conducted series of consultations with different types of partners for the SDG implementation and preparation for the second VNR in the second half of 2020. Public officials from all 18 provinces have also been engaged with the aim to increase their understanding of the SDGs and implement relevant strategies in each province. Advocacy and awareness programmes on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs have been annually conducted among students and academia at local universities.

The VNR process builds on key recommendations from the first VNR and the conclusion of the 8th NSEDP - Since around 60% of the 8th NSEDP indicators are linked to the SDGs and the rest of SDG indicators are being integrated into the 9th NSEDP and the next one, the inputs from monitoring the NSEDP – particularly the Mid-Term Review of the 8th NSEDP and its final reports have also been used. Narrative and analysis of SDG progress have also been prepared based on key recommendations from the first VNR.

Securing data on localized SDGs in advance of the VNR has been challenging as a result of COVID-19 disruption. However, baseline and updated data for key SDG indicators have now been available. While this second VNR provides snapshot of progress toward all SDGs, the detailed discussion is on selected SDGs (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 13, SDG 17 and SDG 18) which are in line with the global theme of the 2021 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Government of Lao PDR selected these nine SDGs in consultation with various partners during various consultation meetings organised in 2020.

1.2 SDG synergies and trade-offs

SDGs interact differently with each other and there are synergies and trade-offs. The Government recognises these synergies and trade-offs which will help prepare a cohesive plan for accelerated achievement of SDGs. This is even more important as the country embarks on the preparation of the 9th NSEDP during a fiscal crisis made worse by COVID-19. The Government has been working on partners with an overarching aim of creating synergies and trade-offs which is in line with the typology of SDGs given by Nilsson et al.³

- The poverty reduction goal (SDG 1) and ending hunger goal (SDG 2) are *indivisible*.

³ Nilsson, M., Griggs, D., & Visbeck, M. (2016). Map the interactions between Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature*, 534(15), 320–322. <https://doi.org/10.1038/534320a>.

- The reduction of malnourishment (SDG 2) *reinforces* goal on educational attainments (SDG 4). High stunting levels in Lao PDR affect the educational outcomes of children.
- The goal on access to electricity (SDG 7) *enables* the goal on education (SDG 4) whereas the goal on infrastructure (SDG 9) is *consistent* with the goal on education (SDG 4).
- Goals on climate change and reduction of emissions (SDG 13) may be *constraining* for the options for energy access (SDG 7) just as promoting food security (SDG 2) could constrain goals on renewable energy (SDG 7) and biodiversity conservation (SDG 15) by competing for water and land.
- The goal on economic growth (SDG 8 and SDG 9) or the one on food security (SDG 2) can have *counteracting* effect on all other goals that aim to mitigate climate change impact (SDG 13) or promote sustainable natural resource management (SDGs 11 to 15).
- There are also *cancelling* SDGs such as full protection of forests may preclude community access to the same and may affect livelihoods.

1.3 Discussions, consultations and inputs

Discussions on SDGs have also been inserted into the agenda of Round Table Meetings⁴ over the past four years (2016-2019) and line ministries submitted sectoral progress reports on their SDG implementation to the National SDG Secretariat, as inputs for the first VNR report for Lao PDR. To ensure an inclusive, participatory, and transparent VNR process, the National SDG Secretariat organized a number of consultations since mid-2020 with stakeholders from government, the National Assembly, private sector, academia, civil society organizations, international non-governmental organizations, the UN agencies, and development partners. While inputs from various partners have been mostly integrated into this VNR, all recommendations, inputs and suggestions will be summarised and submitted to the SDG National Steering Committee for further guidance on follow-up actions. Some of those key consultation meetings which have provided direct inputs to the VNR are:

- Consultation across line ministries
- Consultation with provincial authorities and local communities
- Consultation with private sector
- Consultation with civil society
- Consultation with youth and volunteers
- Consultation with UN agencies and Development Partners

Inputs from the COVID-19 Multi-Stakeholder Taskforce. The SDGs set an ambitious development agenda, for the entire world, including the Asia-Pacific region and Lao PDR. With the shock from COVID-19, achieving targets by 2030 and making progress against SDG indicators will become even more challenging. To this end, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), on behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, has requested UN support in the convening of a multi-stakeholder taskforce to support the process of making the necessary recalibration for the period of the next 5-year plan that can be used to revise national and sectoral plans and targets including those relating to SDG indicators. Therefore, narratives highlighted throughout this VNR reflects policy priorities for the national development agenda including the SDG localization that appropriately reflect the changed circumstances, as a result of COVID-19.

⁴ Round Table Meeting (RTM) (organised every five years) and Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) (organised annually) and 10 Sector Working Groups (SWGs) are an integral part of a national development cooperation forum called “Round Table Process” aiming to promote and advance the agenda of partnership for effective development cooperation.

Inputs from UN agencies and Development Partners. UN agencies and Development Partners have provided direct inputs to the Government for the VNR preparation. The contributions from these partners help sharpened the structure and content of this report in all aspects. While detailed contributions cannot be highlighted in detail, one of key important messages from engagement with the UN agencies and development partners for this year VNR is on **integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda**. The 2030 Agenda is an integrated one. Its implementation will require integrated strategies to address the intertwined challenges of poverty eradication, inclusive and rapid economic growth, environmental sustainability and structural vulnerability in a coherent manner. Broad coalitions are therefore required to achieve the SDGs, including a whole-of-Government approach – across sectors and all levels of Government (not only at national and sectoral levels, but also provincial one), and increased coordination also among the development partners to enhance efficiencies, improve division of labour and avoid duplications.

Inputs from Private Sector. Reiteration is on some key messages and commitments for further enhancing private sector development and investment contributing to the development of Lao PDR. Some of key recommendations are highlighted as follow:

- **Leveraging private sector investment and development.** Official Development Assistance (ODA) cannot meet the needs of eradicating poverty and achieving national development aspiration in particularly graduating from the Least Development Countries (LDC) status and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and private capital has increasingly become much more important for the growth of developing countries. It is part of development assistance, and is an important priority for the Government to support Lao PDR in achieving the goals and objectives of our 8th & 9th NSEDP including SDGs, LDC graduation and green growth. Therefore, an increasing part of development aid should therefore be used to enable private sector development and leveraging private sector investments.
- **Private sector contribution.** It is encouraging to see the Government's commitment to creating the right conditions for businesses to expand and grow which is essential for job creation and development. There is a great need to work with the private sector and businesses – small and large – to reduce poverty. The contribution private companies can make to development is dependent of their success – investing, improving productivity, securing employment and taxes.
- **A sound framework for the private sector to invest.** To assume automatic trickling down and redistribution of wealth is too simplistic. It is important to get policies right; creating enabling environment as well as preconditions for inclusive growth. Investment climate, transparency, anti-corruption, rule of law, taxation, etc, are crucial matters. How can we make it work? We need policy, legal and institutional measures that provide a sound framework for the private sector to invest. What this really boils down to, it to have a better understanding and strategy for:
 - How to strengthen the regulatory framework for local businesses.
 - How to contribute to the development of essential infrastructure.
 - How to ensure local effects of economic activity.
 - And how to develop local expertise in the entire supply chain.
- **Knowledge development is important for further realising quality private sector investment for development.** There is an acknowledge that limited competencies, research based knowledge, local innovation and education are some of the biggest bottlenecks. Without relevant knowledge and education, it is difficult to get a job or create sustainable local businesses. It is also difficult to be innovative and competitive on the global market. This is why the Government recently launched the Human Development Strategy and has increased support to education. Furthermore, increased efforts in private

sector development will include R&D cooperation and promote innovation. Private sector is also keen on supporting partnerships between private companies and local private sector, as well as increased cooperation between research and innovation institutions. Therefore, a few issues that need to take into great consideration such as

- There is a need to be realistic, and prioritize.
- What is our comparative advantage?
- What are the priorities of development countries?
- What are international and national obligations?
- How can private sector support country development in an efficient manner?

Inputs from provincial authorities and local communities

- **Equality.** The 2030 Agenda underlines that no one should be left behind. There is the need to ensure that the benefits of the rapid economic growth are evenly distributed and translated into inclusive and sustainable human development. Widening development gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural areas of the country, and ethnic groups need to be addressed. The development of infrastructure in rural areas is essential for improving livelihoods and creating equal access to public and private services. Particular importance should be attributed to SDG-5 on gender equality, which is one of the cross-cutting priorities of the 8th NSEDP and 9th NSEDP. Therefore, disaggregating data by sex will allow the identification of priority areas. While there has been significant progress on gender equality at central level, lead positions and local level positions remain dominated by men.
- **Participation, monitoring and evaluation.** The Government's sustained effort to eradicate poverty need to be a mass mobilisation exercise, empowering local communities and providing a coherent framework for mutually supportive actions by all stakeholders. In this way, the circumstances and opportunities for the Lao multi-ethnic population will greatly improve.
- **Advocacy and awareness-raising.** Public awareness raising and communications for SDG are important aspects of SDG implementation to gain support and promote partnerships which are essential for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, it is important to promote common awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the national priorities not only at national level but also at local level. There needs to be greater efforts to include local communities into the SDG stakeholder engagement plan. In order to do so, they will need to have greater understanding of sustainable development agenda and necessary capacities to take SDGs forward.
- **Capacity building.** All priorities identified in the 8th and 9th NSEDP including the SDG roadmap include aspects of participatory planning, implementation and monitoring. Capacity building for participatory planning is a top priority and development planning will increasingly be based on local participation through appropriate planning manuals and participatory processes. In particular, capacity building for the poorest districts is essential so that they can prepare on an urgent basis, district-wide development plans.

Inputs from youth, volunteer groups and Lao civil society

As youth make up more than half of the Lao population and the majority of volunteers in the Lao PDR are youth, it is imperative that their perspectives are taken into account when evaluating the Lao PDR's progression towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and thereby contribute to the country's development over the coming years. Some of their volunteering activities that have contributed to SDGs include:

- Advocating for capacity building for a community on poverty reduction and socio-economic development (SDG 1);
- Providing food supplies to primary schools in remote and rural communities (SDG 2);
- Assisting in raising awareness on reproductive health for youths and guiding them to reliable sources of information at Vientiane Youth Center (SDG 3);
- Promoting reading for children, providing learning materials, assisting in school construction, and volunteering to teach young children in rural communities (SDG 4);
- Conducting activities to promote gender equality (SDG 5);
- Providing academic and career planning advice for youths in schools and career expos (SDG 8);
- Conducting a workshop on inclusion and access for people with disabilities, and advocating for equality for LGBTQ+ (SDG 10);
- Volunteering in the Second-Hand World project, a UNDP award winning project aiming to promote circular economy (SDG 1, 12 & 13);
- Conducting skill development workshops on climate change awareness for youths in communities and joining awareness raising campaigns on environmental issues (SDG 13);
- Providing legal advice (SDG 16); and
- Advocating for community involvement in community development activities (SDG 17 and SDG 18).

Realising their contributions, the Government in collaboration with some key partners organised a series of discussions with volunteer groups, young people and civil society on the SDG implementation as a follow up from the first VNR. Some of key recommendations from youth, volunteer and Lao civil society discussions are highlighted as follow (key recommendations are those relating on the key selected SDGs for this VNR. For other SDGs, key recommendations are to be highlighted during meeting of SDG focal points as follow up activities after this VNR):

Well-being (SDG1, 2 and 3) as the foundation to achieve other goals. If people are still unable to feed themselves, it is hard for them to focus on other aspects of life such as education and environment. By achieving the SDGs related to wellbeing, people will be able to achieve and contribute to other aspects of their life. Some of key recommendations are:

- Support the transition from subsistence production to commercial production via promoting the development of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by relying on local potentials and connecting to local markets at district and provincial levels to ensure sufficient income and sustainability;
- Develop the necessary conditions and an enabling environment for collaborative partnership between government organizations, INGOs, CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and private enterprises to eradicate poverty effectively and efficiently;
- Support local communities to take ownership of their own local development and at the same time build their capacity so they can reduce their reliance on external development assistance and to utilize local potential and resources productively and in a sustainable manner;
- Support knowledge and capacity to produce quality and environmentally-friendly agricultural products to ensure they are safe for producers' and consumers' health;

- Support clean agriculture (organic and good agricultural practices), ecological agribusiness and processing to create sufficient supply to meet the demands of the local markets and at the same time ensure food security and non-discriminatory access;
- Improve the capacity for agricultural production resilient to climate change, unstable weather conditions, drought, floods and other natural disasters by improvement of soil conditions;
- Provide support for trials and utilization of agricultural technology through the application of modern, safe and environmentally-friendly scientific approaches, and at the same time develop agricultural enterprises at the household, group and cooperative levels;
- Support diversity of crops and livestock and the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity via establishment of seed banks with diverse seed types and effective management at the local and national levels, with fair and equal distribution of benefits from the use of the seeds and related local knowledge;
- Support multi-partnership exchange of knowledge, technical information and lessons learnt related to agricultural development and nutrition to ensure ease of information access;
- Support access to quality and sufficient nutrition, especially for pregnant women and children under 5 years old, to reduce malnutrition and stunting;
- Promote effective behaviour change communication practices including discouraging drunk driving to reduce road accidents due to alcohol, reckless driving and road traffic laws and regulation infringement; and
- Ensure equal access to health services without discrimination and with special policies to assist people in poverty, people with disabilities and elderly citizens.

Education and Work (SDG 4 and 8) as the main contributors for Lao PDR to graduate from the least developed country. Quality education is the necessary foundation to further achieve other SDGs such as decent work, good health and well-being, and clean water and sanitation. Those who can access quality education tend to reach their full potential in life and achieve their dream job in the future. Education helps improve literacy which in turn improves the quality of life of the people. Decent work and economic growth are significant to promote inclusiveness and sustainable economic growth, productive employment, and decent work for all. Lao PDR has the hidden potential in terms of the natural resources as well as young generation population as a driving force of the country (i.e. demographic dividend). Thus, improving the education system and fostering access to technology especially in rural areas are the key to prepare the qualified workforce for the future. Progress towards the SDG 4 and SDG 8 will also ensure equity in society, end poverty, prevent child labour, and stop human trafficking. Some of key recommendations are:

- Address the learning challenges on illiteracy: raise awareness on the importance of learning and development, especially to students and revise outdated curriculum which focused too much on theories and less on practicality;
- Ensure adequate educational institutions especially primary and secondary schools in rural areas as school retention will keep children away from child labour; and provide learning material such as textbooks and laboratory equipment to every school
- Designate an agency to support people with disabilities especially in rural areas to access to education and employment opportunities;
- Ensure inclusive education and enable safe environment and facilities to prevent violence and discrimination in schools;

- Apply technology in education for a better-quality education and support children in rural areas to access digital learning;
- Promote entrepreneurship and agricultural work to create job opportunities;
- Promote and give an importance to a wide range of careers, not just certain sectors such as doctors and lawyers;
- Encourage youth to volunteer more to increases self-confidence and provide safe space for youth to raise their voices and express their opinion;
- Promote girls and boys, ethnic communities, people with disabilities and vulnerable people to complete free equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to effective and appropriate lifelong learning;
- Build the capacity of teachers on quality pedagogy, and increase their ability to access modern technical information, and to be able to contribute to the advancement of society;
- Ensure concise quality standard indicators for each level of education, with periodic monitoring, supports and evaluation for improvement, and ensure standards-based human resource development in both quantity and quality;
- Integrate life skills and vocational activities for students starting from primary education; and increase Lao language and cultural awareness for children, youth and the general public;
- Support and protect both formal and non-formal workers and at the same time support the engagement of multiple stakeholders to protect labor rights and labor law enforcement in all sectors equally;
- Support participation and access to the labor market for people with disabilities, people in poverty and other vulnerable groups of people, and at the same time improve the skills they will need for this;
- Support youth to develop vocational skills and to have legal, moral jobs with professional ethics.

Inequalities (SDG 5 and 10) - to eliminate the inequalities there is a need to promote gender equality in all settings. The two SDGs are vital towards building a more just society. Ensuring equality is important to ensure that everyone is entitled to the same rights, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. People should have the right to raise their voices and to involve in decision making. However, since the role of women is defined based on socially constructed gender norms, women were not given the same opportunities as men. As a young generation living in a fast-changing world with technological development, they should be provided support to reach their full potential, regardless of their gender and any other status. Some of key recommendations are:

- Invest in human resources development and ensure adequate budgeting to combat inequalities;
- Provide safe space for people's participation including those who are vulnerable groups and provide opportunity for children and young people to engage in the Council meeting where they can express their opinion;
- Ensure quality education throughout the country to address the widening disparity between urban and rural areas and intensify actions to address violence against women and children;
- Raise public awareness on kindness and empathy education as a key to prevent and respond to violence and discrimination against vulnerable people;

- Support volunteers so they can add their valuable contribution to SDG implementation;
- Take stern actions to reduce corruption and consider punishment for corruption;
- Integrate gender into all levels of learning and into all socio-economic sectors and acknowledge gender diversity and eliminate violence against women and children in households, schools and workplaces;
- Ensure government officials and private sector staff have knowledge and understanding of gender;
- Ensure equality, fairness and equitability in access to education, health services, government services and accurate information sources; and
- Ensure equality in socio-economic development and community participation in local development and support access to policy and legal information among people in rural areas to ensure effective local development.

Climate Action (SDG 13) - Nearly 80% of Lao population still relies on traditional agriculture for their livelihood. In the past few years, climate change has been causing natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and rising of greenhouse gas emissions in Lao PDR which has a serious impact on agricultural production that will affect the country's food security, economy and society. Therefore, if the issue is not addressed as a matter of urgency, the economy and human lives could be affected by climate change-related disasters. In this context, awareness raising on the climate change among the public needs to be continued. Some of key recommendations are:

- Organize awareness-raising activities both in urban and rural areas on climate change and environmental protection;
- Promote and support the participation of CSOs in the process of planning and implementing the cooperative actions to mitigate the impacts of and adapt to climate change;
- Promote knowledge and understanding of climate change among government officials, private enterprise staff, students, intellectuals and the general public to understand impacts, mitigation strategies and systematic resolution;
- Foster joint efforts from both the Government and the public; and promote climate change education since an early age;
- Cultivate personal responsibility for individual climate action; and promote the right to participation of all people in the society; and
- Set up a taskforce for monitoring and follow-up on projects related to climate change and develop policies that encourage clean energy consumption and responsible consumption.

UXO (SDG 18) has resulted in deaths and injuries of a number of people every year. Since the majority of people living in rural areas depend on agriculture for livelihood, the presence of UXO makes the use of lands for agriculture and community purposes impossible and unsafe which in turn negatively affects socio-economic development of the country. Food shortage and disrupted livelihoods were also identified as a result of UXO. The presence of UXO widens the disparity between urban and rural areas leading to unequal opportunities among the population. It was further shared that the clearance of UXO will allow people to access to safe agricultural land and contribute to achieving other SDGs such as SDG 1, 3 and 10 on ending poverty, promoting well-being for all and reducing inequality. Some of key recommendations are:

- Ensure adequate response to the health and livelihood needs of UXO survivors;
- Support CSOs to participate in assisting people affected by UXOs;

- Expand the dissemination of information on the danger of UXOs in at-risk areas;
- Increase UXO clearance to ensure the safety of the people and national development; and ensure adequate investment in financial and human resources;
- Foster collaboration among relevant sectors and identify clear roles and responsibilities; and provide capacity building to government officials; and
- Raise public awareness on the importance of SDG and to promote the participation of citizens to achieve the common goal and how the achievement will benefit the society including provide space for young people to have their voices heard and be part of a decision making

1.4 Update on policy and enabling environment for SDG implementation in Lao PDR

The government's institutional mechanisms established by Presidential Decree show the highest priority accorded to the implementation of the national development plans and the SDGs. The President issued a Decree on 20 September 2017 appointing the Prime Minister to chair the National Steering Committee for SDG implementation, with members of the Committee drawn from all concerned ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, and mass organizations. The National Steering Committee oversees the coordination and implementation of the SDGs through the NSEDP and the sectoral development plans of various ministries up to 2030, including the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation results. The Decree mandates SDG implementation by every ministry and sector, and at different levels throughout the country. The 26 National Steering Committee members all have ministerial or vice-ministerial status. The Committee then appointed the National SDG Secretariat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SDG focal points in relevant line ministries to lead and take ownership of each SDG. The National SDG Secretariat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Planning and Investment) works with line ministries to track the progress of SDG implementation. Also in coordination with line ministries, the National SDG Secretariat works closely with United Nations agencies and other development partners to ensure the support necessary for accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda. During the past two years, under the close supervision of the National Steering Committee some key milestones have been produced by the National SDG Secretariat in collaboration with line ministries and stakeholders concerned.

The SDG Roadmap was finalised and approved by the National Steering Committee in 2019. The Lao SDG roadmap with timeframe till 2030 was prepared based on series of consultation with both national and international partners. It focuses on institutional strengthening and partnerships. The Roadmap will include awareness-raising strategies, multi-stakeholder consultations and dialogue, mechanisms to create horizontal and vertical policy coherence, budgeting for the future, and plans for monitoring, reporting and accountability.

Assigning SDG Indicators to relevant line ministries and agencies for implementation (SDGi owners) and reporting (SDGr owners). Currently, around 60% of SDG indicators have been integrated into the 8th NSEDP (2016-2020), and on-going discussions have been made on how the rest of SDG indicators will be fed into the 9th NSEDP (2021-2025) and 10th NSEDP (2026-2030). All SDG indicators have been assigned as relevant to nineteen different ministries and ministry-equivalent through a consultation process. Each ministry/agency owns certain SDG indicators which lie within its portfolio. This setup is called “SDGi owner”. In addition, the SDG coordination/reporting matrix (each SDG has been assigned to ministries/agencies – this setup is called “SDGr owner”) has been prepared by the national SDG secretariat to encourage better coordination work across national stakeholders and this will also contribute to better advocacy work in the long run. The table below summarizes key elements of SDGr and SDGi in Lao PDR.

SDG	Ministry assigned as SDG reporting owner (SDGr)	Ministries assigned as SDGi owners (SDGi)			
		Reporting/coordination	No. SDGr	Implementation	No. SDGi
1, 2, 14, 15	SDG 1 – No Poverty Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in partnership with Ministry of Health		5	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)	5
			2	2. Bank of Lao PDR (BOL)	2
			1	3. Ministry of Finance (MOF)	3
			3	4. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)	
			3	5. Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE)	3
	SDG 2 – Zero Hunger Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) in partnership with Ministry of Public Health		5	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)	5
			6	2. Ministry of Health (MOH)	5
			1	3. Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC)	1
	SDG 14 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry		5	• Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	3
	SDG 15 Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry		12	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	10
			3	2. Ministry of Planning and Investment	2
3	SDG 3 Ministry of Health		29	1. Ministry of Health	26
			1	2. Ministry of Public Security	1
4	SDG 4 Ministry of Education and Sports		20	1. Ministry of Education and Sport	18
			1	2. Ministry of Post and Telecommunication	1
5	SDG 5 Lao Women Union		18	1. Lao Women Union	18
			1	2. Ministry of Post and Telecommunication	1
6, 12, 13	SDG 6 - Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment		7	1. Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment	7
			4	2. Ministry of Health	5
			2	3. Ministry of Public Work and Transportation	
	SDG 12 - Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment		1	1. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	1
			1	2. Ministry of Education and Sports	1
			3	3. Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	2
			5	4. Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment	5
	SDG 13 - Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment		7	• Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment	7
7	SDG 7 - Ministry of Energy and Mine		6	• Ministry of Energy and Mine	6
8, 18	SDG 8 - Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare		8	1. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	8
			2	2. Bank of Lao PDR	2
			4	3. Ministry of Industry and Commerce	4
			3	4. Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	3
			2	5. Ministry of Planning and Investment	2

SDG	Ministry assigned as SDG reporting owner (SDGr)		Ministries assigned as SDGi owners (SDGi)	
	Reporting/coordination	No. SDGr	Implementation	No. SDGi
	SDG 18 – UXO and Mine Action Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in partnership with Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6	• Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	6
9	SDG 9 - Ministry of Industry and Commerce	4	1. Ministry of Industry and Commerce	4
		1	2. Bank of Lao PDR	1
		3	3. Ministry of Science and Technology**	3
		2	4. Ministry of Planning and Investment	1
		1	5. Ministry of Post and Telecommunication	1
		4	6. Ministry of Public Work and Transportation	3
10, 17	SDG 10 - Ministry of Planning and Investment (Lao Statistic Bureau)	1	1. Bank of Lao PDR	1
		1	2. Ministry of Finance	1
		2	3. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	2
		2	4. Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare	2
		1	5. Ministry of Public Security	1
		1	6. Ministry of Home Affairs	
		1	7. Ministry of Planning and Investment	1
	SDG 17 – Ministry of Planning and Investment	1	1. Bank of Lao PDR	1
		3	2. Ministry of Finance	3
		1	3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1
		2	4. Ministry of Home Affairs	8
		7	5. Ministry of Planning and Investment	
		1	6. Ministry of Industry and Commerce	1
		3	7. Ministry of Science and Technology**	2
		4	8. Ministry of Post and Telecommunication	4
11	SDG 11 - Ministry of Public Work and Transport	3	1. Ministry of Industry and Commerce	3
		6	2. Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment	6
		4	3. Ministry of Public Work and Transport	4
16	SDG 16 - Ministry of Home Affairs	4	1. Lao Women Union	4
		4	2. Ministry of Finance	4
		2	3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2
		4	4. Ministry of Home Affairs	4
		3	5. Ministry of Justice	3
		4	6. Ministry of Public Security	4
Total		257		238

**The role of Ministry of Science and Technology will be modified due to the restructure of the Government after the 11th Party Congress, 2021.

SDG Advocacy and Communication Work Plan is developed based on the recommendations put forth in the “Part D: Next Steps” of the first Voluntary National (VNR) of Lao PDR 2018. VNR shows that knowledge and awareness of SDGs among many stakeholders requires significant strengthening, especially at the local levels. This gap is critical and needs to be addressed soon as communication, especially building public awareness, should be understood as a first step towards a participatory process in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Four main strategic objectives are as follow:

- To integrate SDGs into the national education curriculum as well as educational materials and notes tailored for relevant stakeholders;
- To raise public awareness of the SDGs to stakeholders to be in line with the principle of “leaving no one behind”;
- To create platforms for public participation in the process of implementing SDGs towards 2030 Agenda; and
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategies.

Formal adoption of 238 SDG indicators was done in 2019. After the first Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals prepared in 2018, the Government of Lao PDR officially adopted the 238 SDG indicators (SDGi) during the national SDG Steering Committee meeting in June 2019 where the SDG roadmap was also endorsed and then disseminated to all partners at all levels in 2020. These adopted indicators have been categorized into three types such as:

- (1) *Same as global SDGi (104)*- Referring to adopting the exact global SDG indicator, albeit some differences in the data disaggregation requirements;
- (2) *Adapted SDGi (61)*- Referring to the proxy indicator with similar requirements to the global SDG indicator that can still respond to the SDG target requirements; and
- (3) *Additional SDGi (73)*- Referring to the new indicator that is not similar to the global SDG indicator. However, they are still relevant in responding to the SDG target requirements.

1.5 Stakeholder participation

In development programmes, Lao PDR has made good progress in advancing and enlarging the space for stakeholders.

There are various channels and forums for participation, which range from indirect channels through representative institutions such as the National Assembly to the mass organizations and formal business associations. Participation also takes place through other interest groups, including CSOs, the media, and other forms of communication. At the national level, Round Table Process is a platform for an engagement of all national, sectoral, provincial and international stakeholders including private sector, CSOs, academia, and others to engage in the policy dialogues which have implications for the SDG implementation in the country. At sectoral level, 10 Sector Working Groups (SWGs) have been formulated to ensure participation of all stakeholders in sectoral consultations to take SDG based national development agenda forward. Through these arrangements, the National SDG Secretariat has been able to seek contribution, inputs, and feedbacks from various types of partners at different levels for the preparation of the VNR and the SDG implementation.

Engaging local administrations in systematic implementation and monitoring is critical. The effectiveness of implementing and monitoring the SDGs depends on a wide range of issues relating to local-specific contexts and challenges. These challenges require the government and local administrations to develop local monitoring systems, identify gaps, and implement corrective action to accelerate progress. To this end, on top of the governance work (public service improvement, participation, rule of law and sound financial management), the Government has already initiated institutional strengthening within local administrations:

- Seeking their inputs for the mid-term review and conclusion of the 8th NSEDPA and the development of the 9th NSEDPA with strong focus on SDG implementation;
- Development of 9th NSEDPA M&E framework with data disaggregated by not only population groups but also sectors and provinces, among others; and

- Potential use of SDG open platform which will highlight various data to monitor SDGs at national, sectoral and provincial levels.

All of these governance framework and initiatives cut across every sector. Therefore, the Government has committed to ensure that issues in service delivery, financing planning and management in health, education and other sectors will be addressed from a governance perspective.

Chapter 2

Progress update - Key selected SDGs since the first VNR

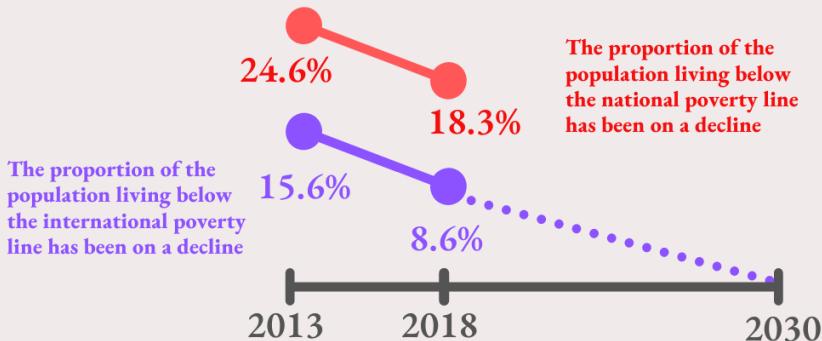
This Chapter sets out the progress and challenges in localizing, implementing and reporting in relation to the SDGs under review. In some instances, the success or shortcoming of government policies are also elaborated. This Chapter also shows the updated infographics on each SDG under review. They were developed by LSB in collaboration with the National SDG Secretariat in Lao and in English to support its advocacy in publications, posters and online.

For progress of the national strategic priorities and policy implementation based on key recommendations from the first VNR and the 8th NSEDP review, overall discussion is made available under Chapter 3. The decision not highlighting implementation of strategic priorities for each SDG under review is due to the nature SDG synergies and trade-offs as highlighted under chapter 1. With this, the Government believes that by discussing the implementation of key national strategic priorities in an overall manner, good practices and areas where progress is lagging could be more strategic and provide national priorities in going forward.

SDG 1 – No Poverty

(End poverty in all its forms everywhere)

Eradicate Extreme Poverty



7.0
PERCENTAGE
POINT
DECLINE
IN 5 YEARS

The share of population living below the national poverty line has been declining.

in 2013, about
 1 in every 4 (24.7%) persons in Laos were poor

in 2018, only about
 1 in every 5 (18.3%) persons in Laos were poor

SEX

The share of population of both male and female population who are poor is declining		2013: 24.7%		2013: 24.6%
		2018: 18.5%		2018: 18.2%

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Poverty in Laos is more prevalent in rural compared to urban areas.



	2013:	7.9%	31.4%
	2018:	7.0%	23.8%

AGE GROUP

Younger persons (below 15 y/o) are more likely to be poorer than their older counterparts.



	Below 15	15-24	25-54	55-64	65+
2013:	32.6%	22.7%	20.4%	18.0%	22.1%
2018:	24.3%	19.7%	14.7%	12.4%	15.1%

The proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions is also declining

33.1%
in 2013
about
 1 in every 3

about
 1 in every 5
22.0%
in 2018

11.1
PERCENTAGE
POINT
DECLINE
IN 5 YEARS

Tremendous progress in reducing poverty. The absolute poverty, based on the national poverty lines, from 33.5% in 2003 to 23.2% in 2013 and further to 18.6% in 2019. But this downward trend will be reversed due to COVID-19 and the poverty is projected to go up to 21.5% in 2020.⁵

Reduction in population in multidimensional poverty. The proportion of population in multidimensional poverty has declined over the years reducing from 40.4% in 2012 to 23.1% in 2017. The percentage of children who are multi-dimensionally deprived also decreased from 33.1% in 2013 to 22% in 2018.

Poverty reduction and growth. Even though the poverty reduction has steadily been reduced over time, the pace of reduction has not been that quick compared to those of the GDP growth. Between 2013 and 2019, one percentage growth in GDP led to 0.67% reduction in poverty (this situation was only 0.4 between 2008 and 2013).

Inequality risen due to widening consumption gaps. In recent years, consumption grew at a faster pace among the better off. Between 2013 and 2019, the average consumption per capita of the bottom 40% grew by 2.1% per year, compared with the national average of 3.3%, while for the richest quintile, the average consumption grew by 4.1% per year. Thus, welfare gains were substantially lower for the poor, and poverty remained less elastic than it would have been had consumption growth been more equal. The inequality has also been witnessed by the increase of Gini Index going up from 36.0 (2013) to 38.8 in 2019.

Different poverty levels across provinces and regions. While most provinces experienced a decline in poverty rates, poverty in Vientiane capital doubled from 2.5% in 2013 to 5% in 2019. Four other provinces also saw an increase in poverty during the same period (Xayabouly, Bolikhhamxay, Khammuan, and Attapeu). The geography of poverty has shifted toward urban areas and the central region, although rural areas are still home to the overwhelming share of the poor. Five provinces account for more than half of the poor in Lao PDR: Savannakhet (20.6%), Oudomxay (8.7%), Khammuane (8.3%), Saravane (8.0%) and Luangprabang (7.7%).

Rural poverty reduction. Rural poverty is more than three times higher than in urban areas. Despite accounting for 67% of the population, rural areas are home to nearly 90% of the poor population. Small towns created by the agglomeration of large villages according to the rural development policy increased from 11 towns in 2015 to 30 in early 2018, meaning an increase of 19 new towns. In the agriculture sector, activities such as the creation of the Department of Rural Development and Cooperatives, participatory land-use planning in villages, and support provided to farmers' organizations contributed to poverty alleviation.

Table 1.1 – Status of poor districts, villages and families using national administrative data from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Status of poor districts, villages, and families from 2015 to 2019 ⁶			
	2015 baseline	2019	Results
Total number of districts	148	148	Number of poor districts reduced by 7
Number of poor districts	30	23	
% of poor districts	20.3%	15.5%	
Total number of villages	8,507 ⁷	8,514	A net total of 83 villages no longer

⁵ Poverty Assessment, World Bank, September 2020

⁶ Lao PDR has two systems for measuring poverty prevalence. The first is the five-yearly household survey (managed by Lao Statistic Bureau-LSB) on expenditures and consumption, measuring poverty indicators according to international standards and definitions. In the second approach, the Government monitors poverty annually by using administrative data on income and access to basic services, going down to household level. This administrative data is managed by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The programme monitors access to clean water, health facilities, and schools, in terms of their distance from the households in a given village.

⁷ Fourth Lao Population and Housing Census 2015

Status of poor districts, villages, and families from 2015 to 2019 ⁶			
Number of poor villages	1,736	1,530	fall into the “poor” category
% of poor villages	20.4%	18.07%	
Total number of families	1,162,388	1,190,792	A net total of 6,646 families no longer fall into the “poor” category
Number of poor families	76,418	65,059	
% of poor families	6.6%	5.04%	

Source: Department of Rural Development and Cooperatives, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Note: the Government of Lao PDR monitors poverty annually by using administrative data on income and access to basic services, going down to household level. This is an innovative home-grown system, which gives yearly data needed for policy monitoring and any adjustments needed for poverty reduction. This measure is managed by MAF. For the rest of the report, poverty headcounts managed by LSB – measuring poverty indicators according to international standards and definitions - will be used.

Public investments in rural development and poverty eradication have been the focus for the Government in recent years and they are on the increasing trend. There were three main sources of funds: domestic funds, foreign and the Nayobai Bank. Despite this improvement, disparities remain and inequality has even increased in some cases as the delivery of basic services remains uneven due to lack of resources and constrained implementation capacity.

The coverage of social protection system in the country is relatively limited. General government expenditure on social protection as a percentage of GDP decreased from 0.68% in 2015 (accounted for 2.24% of total government expenditure) to 0.53% in 2019 (amounted for 3% of total government expenditure). A large proportion of the working age population work in subsistence-level activities, mainly for own consumption and decent work opportunities are limited. The high level of vulnerable work is driven by the agriculture and fishery sector sales workers, and elementary occupations. Most agricultural work and informal sector work are characterized by low incomes, poor working conditions, and inadequate access to social protection and workplace representation. Lao migrant workers are a vulnerable group, accounting for around 8% of Lao PDR’s working population, and mostly working in the neighbouring countries.

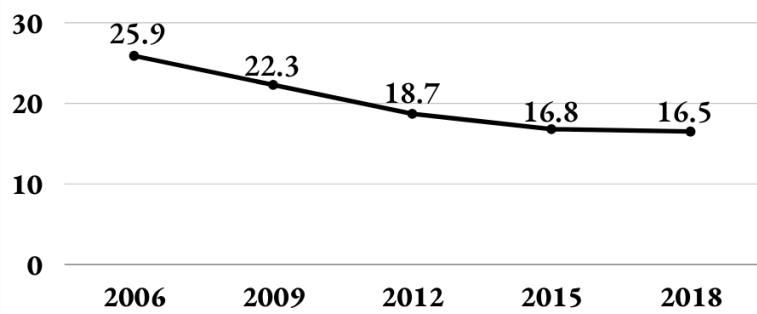
Realizing these challenges, the Government is committed to strengthening social protection systems to cover vulnerable groups. Access to social security coverage remains limited and welfare programmes fragmented. Support is required to widen the scope of social protection schemes namely, to support the implementation of National Social Protection Strategy, which was recently approved and endorsed during the second half of 2020. Building upon the recommendations from the review of CEDAW, 8th NSEDP review and the first VNR, the Government has continued to improve on the quality of healthcare and services aiming for universal health coverage by 2025.

While progress has been made, access to social protection is still inadequate. Only workers employed in the formal Lao economy have social security coverage, while workers in the informal economy have inadequate access to basic coverage. In term of the National Health Insurance scheme, it covers 17 provinces, but except Vientiane capital, which is 94% out of total population as of 2020. The coverage is at high level, but the quality of health care services and access to health care services remain to be improved. In term of social state enterprise protection scheme, the percentage of population covered by the scheme has been on a downward trend decreasing from 12.7% in 2015 to 10.8% in 2019. To help address these challenges among others, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in partnership with various partners continues to launch awareness campaigns on social security through traditional and social media platforms, and workshops to public and private sectors as well as the general public to increase the sign-up rate.

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger

(End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture)

The prevalence of undernourishment has been declining across the years.



	2012-2013	2017-2018
Stunting	44.0%	33.0%
Wasting	5.9%	9.0%
Underweight	26.6%	21.1%
Overweight	2.5%	3.5%

Stunting in children under 5 years of age has been decreasing.

From nearly
1 in every 2
(44.4%)



in 2013

To about
1 in every 3
(33.0%)



in 2018

However, wide gaps persist in stunting between the poor and the rich.

Poorest
(wealth quintile)



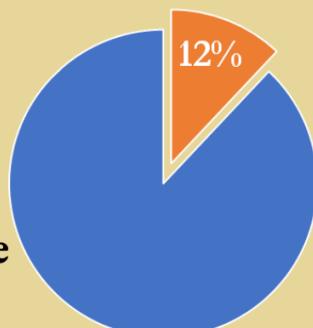
(48% as of 2018)

richest
(wealth quintile)



(13.9% as of 2018)

In 2020, the government allocated **12 percent** of its total expenditure to **Agriculture**.



A total of **US\$100 million** (constant 2018 prices) in official development assistance and other official flows were distributed to the agriculture sector in 2018.



Food production outcomes. Lao PDR is performing well in food production, particularly farm production is meeting or exceeding all the national per-capita food production targets. Even with flooding and a major pest infestation, the production since 2016 was strong: rice production was more than double the national consumption targets for 2020, vegetable production was nearly four times, and fruit production was over seven times the consumption targets. Lao PDR as a country is, therefore, producing sufficient quantity and diversity of foods for good nutrition.

Food and nutrition security have improved over the years. However, it is still an issue of concern. Proportion of hungry people has declined from 33% (2010) to 23% (2018). The country ranked 87/117 in the 2020 World Hunger Index. With a score of 25.7, Lao PDR suffers from a level of hunger that is serious. Food and nutrition insecurity has been an issue even prior to COVID-19. Percentage of prevalence of undernourishment in the population remains almost unchanged (16.8% in 2015) and (16.5% in 2018).

Significant threats to food security. The threats to food security include soil degradation and decreasing yields, linked to land pressure from population and large-scale investment projects, limited access to irrigation, rainfall-dependent agricultural practices, disease outbreaks among livestock, the difficulties for farmers to find economically viable alternatives to opium growing, low resilience to natural disasters and climate change, and UXOs, which make farmland unsafe. Around 11% of rural households have poor and borderline food consumption. Insufficient food supply is still a concern in some key provinces among others such as Phongsaly, Bokeo, Houaphanh, Sekong & Attapeu. These have been exacerbated during the time of COVID-19 and the threats to food security will remain. As such, the Government is working with national and international to come up with proper measures to sustain food security recovery in coming years.

Child nutrition outcomes. Recent Government survey (LSIS) and administrative data show that moderate or severe stunting among children under age five had decreased to 33% (2018) from the previous 2012 level of 44%. However, wasting among children in the same age group has not improved; rather, moderate or severe wasting has increased to 9% in 2018, from 5.9% in 2012. Underweight has been reduced from 26.6% in 2012 to 21.1% in 2018. At the same time, overweight has been a concern as its prevalence increased from 2.5% in 2015 to 3.5% in 2018.

Slow progress and disparities. Undernutrition in Lao PDR is still high, showing strong inequalities, associated with poverty patterns. While all provinces have seen reductions in stunting rates in 2018 compared to 2012 levels, stunting in rural areas without road access (43.3%) is twice that in urban areas (21.5%). Children from the poorest households have stunting rates 3.4 times higher than children from the richest households. Even in households of the richest and fourth quintiles, some 14% and 23% of children respectively suffer from stunting. The extremely high levels of stunting and wasting in many provinces as per the summary highlighted in the following table have become a public health concern according to the prevalence cut-off values for public health significance as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO).⁸

Table 2.1 - Children under age 5 by nutritional status

% of children under age 5 by nutritional status according to the anthropometric indices of height for age (stunting), and weight for height (wasting), Lao PDR, 2018 (in order of stunting prevalence)				
	Stunting		Wasting	
	Moderate & severe	Severe	Moderate & severe	Severe
Vientiane Capital	13.8	5	5.5	1.8
Champasack	24.6	7.1	9	2.7
Xayabury	25.1	10.9	19.1	8.4
Savannakhet	28.4	11.2	10.4	2.9

⁸ WHO, 2010. *Nutrition Landscape Information System (NLIS) country profile indicators: interpretation guide*. Geneva: WHO.

% of children under age 5 by nutritional status according to the anthropometric indices of height for age (stunting), and weight for height (wasting), Lao PDR, 2018 (in order of stunting prevalence)				
	Stunting		Wasting	
	Moderate & severe	Severe	Moderate & severe	Severe
Attapeu	29.6	12.5	15	4.2
Khammuane	29.7	8.8	9.8	2.3
Borikhamxay	29.9	9.6	5.6	1.6
Vientiane	33	12.1	6.6	2.3
Luangnamtha	34.1	9.1	3	1.4
Bokeo	34.7	11.3	4	0.7
Huaphanh	40.7	18.1	16.4	8.3
Luangprabang	41.3	16.5	8.9	3.2
Oudomxay	42.7	17	6.2	1.6
Saravane	42.9	20	12.5	3
Xaysomboune	44	17.9	5.8	1.1
Xiengkhuang	46.3	14	5	1.8
Sekong	49.9	21.8	8	2.9
Phongsaly	54	28.9	8.9	4.5
Lao PDR	33	12.7	9	3

Source: Lao Statistics Bureau, 2018. Lao Social Indicators Survey.

The causes of undernutrition have been inadequately addressed. These are primarily poor infant and young child feeding practices (including low rates of exclusive breastfeeding for children under the age of 6 months), cessation of breastfeeding before the recommended 2 years of age, poor maternal nutrition, high adolescent birth rates in some communities, and poor sanitation and hygiene practices, including open defecation. The percentage of children below the age of six months who were exclusively breastfed remains low, although slightly increased from 40.4% in 2012 to 44.9% in 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to worsen the nutrition and food security situation across the country. At the global level, due to COVID-19, it is estimated that there could be a 14.3% increase in the global prevalence of moderate or severe wasting among children under five years as this relates to a prediction in mortality rates and country specific losses in GNI per capital. Although there is no official predicted data for Lao PDR, the trend will be similar to those of the global picture. Making progress toward the target of reducing undernutrition is the most challenging task for the country. Stunting is declining but still affects nearly 33% of children under 5 years and wasting 9% which is rising. COVID-19 will increase wasting by 14.3%.⁹ Children from rural areas, poorer households, ethnic groups and whose mothers are not educated were more likely to be stunted. Food insecurity is unevenly distributed across districts and low-income households and farm laborers were most likely to be affected by COVID-19.

The agriculture and forestry sector - the main source of livelihoods - grew at an average rate of only around 3% over in recent years. This growth lagged the other sectors although the sector is central to the Lao PDR economy. While the Government aims for non-resource industrial growth as a key to the country's future development model, the agricultural sector will remain critical for meeting the country's aspirations related to poverty reduction and inclusive growth. The sector accounts for nearly 70% of total employment over 60% of expenditure for low-income groups.¹⁰ For the near future, agriculture will still be the primary source of income and livelihoods for a majority of people—many of whom remain at a subsistence level. Reducing poverty and more

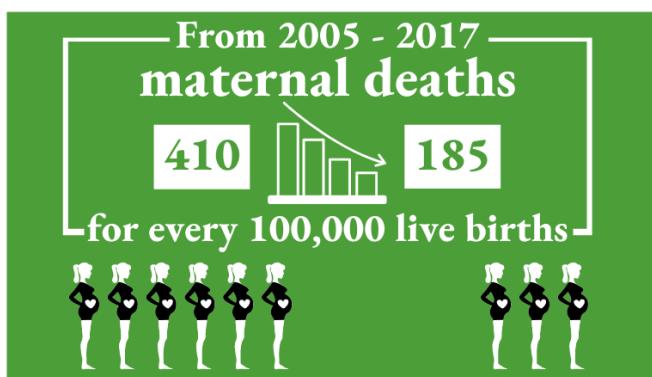
⁹ Rapid Assessment of Food Security and Agriculture in Lao PDR, May 2020.

¹⁰ ADB Country Diagnostic (2018).

widely sharing the gains of development requires measures to help this population increase productivity, become more commercially-oriented, and better connect to markets.

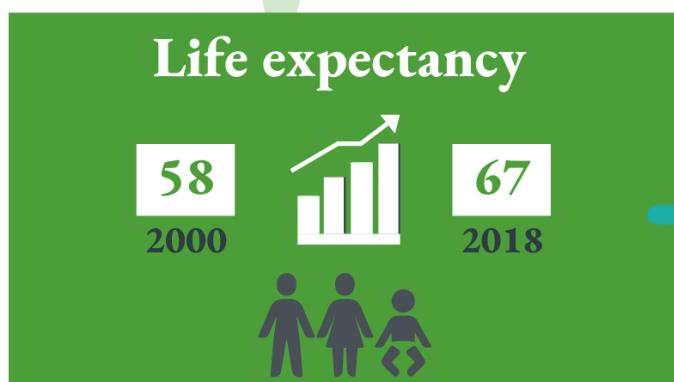
Managing the shift to commercialization. The agriculture sector faces challenges in managing the shift to commercialization. One challenge is to better integrate nutrition within the effort to promote equitable commercialization. Unless this is done, the rapid commercialization of agriculture could undermine local food security and nutrition strategies. Addressing this challenge requires promoting the local production of nutritious foods in quantities sufficient for local consumption, not just for export, and helping communities that have shifted to commercial production to access nutritious foods produced nearby. Another challenge is to address women's workload and empowerment within the agriculture sector. Several studies have indicated that as women are working more in commercial agriculture, making more money than before, they are away from home for more hours, and have less time for attending to family nutrition needs in traditional ways. Strategies that genuinely empower women need to involve men.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being
(Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages)



The adolescent birth rate was 83 per 1,000 women in 15-19 age group

Proportion of birth attended by skilled health personnel increased from 41.5% (2013) to 64.4% (2017)



Social and economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 poses great risks to the nutritional status and survival of young children, with long term impact on human capital.



General government expenditure on health was 2.8% of GDP in 2018 (3% in 2016).

Out of pocket health expenditure per capita (US\$) increased from \$24 in 2015 to \$28 in 2018.



Significant progress made against core health indicators.

Progress on the ten core indicators in the Health Sector Development Plan						
	Indicator	ndic	Source	2019	Source	2020 Target
1	Underweight prevalence	25.5	LCAAS	21.1	LSIS	20
2	Infant mortality rate	51 57	UN estimation Census	40	LSIS	30
3	Stunting prevalence	35.6	LCAAS	33	LSIS	32
4	Under-five mortality rate	67 86	UN estimation Census	46	LSIS	40
5	Maternal mortality rate	197 206	UN estimation Census			160
6	Proportion of births attended by trained health personnel	54	MoH: NHSR 2014-15	64.4	LSIS	80
7	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	85.7	CEHWS	83.9	LSIS	90
8	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	69.3	CEHWS	73.8	LSIS	75
9	Vaccination coverage	79.5	MoH	66	LSIS	95
10	Health insurance coverage rate	32	MoH	71	MoH	80

Source: Ministry of Health – data provided for the 8th NSEDP review.

Health infrastructure and expansion

The Government have made concerted efforts to improve the facilities and services at all levels with support from all partners. These include the following:

- **Village level.** The number of Healthy Villages¹¹ has grown to 5,676, representing 67% of all the villages across the country. Some 84% of the 1,020 health centers across the country are equipped to perform deliveries. Some 12% or 12 of the 103 health centers in the Three Build districts have been upgraded. In total, 9% of all health centers in the country have been upgraded to ‘small hospitals’.
- **District level.** There are now 135 district hospitals in 148 districts, compared to 127 in 2010. Some 21.5% of these hospitals are able to provide comprehensive emergency obstetric and neonatal care services, an improvement from 14% in 2015.
- **Provincial and central level.** Of the 17 provincial hospitals (1,979 beds), two meet health reform requirements (Houaphanh and Xiengkhouang province hospitals). Provincial hospital personnel across the country have had their capacity upgraded in the use of medical technology. Certain provincial hospitals are able to provide quality services equivalent to that of some central level hospitals. At central level, there are five hospitals and 3 special treatment centers.

HIV/AIDS trends. HIV prevalence has been generally low in Lao PDR. The HIV prevalence among the reproductive-aged population (15-49 years) is estimated as 0.3%. While HIV prevalence among female sex worker remains stable (1%), it is increasing in men having sex with men (MSM), from 1.6% in 2014 to 2.4% in 2018. The overall knowledge on HIV remains low: comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention among women and men has not improved and has even declined. There was an estimation of 780 new infections and about 500 AIDS-related deaths in 2019. *HIV treatment and scale-up* - Progress on the three global targets for HIV treatment scale-up

¹¹ The Model Healthy Villages program was established by the Lao PDR Ministry of Health in 2011. It combines eight elements of primary health care, including water supply, sanitation, village health volunteers, village drug kits, sleeping under mosquito nets, immunization, birth spacing, breast feeding, antenatal care, risk case referrals, and birth and death reporting (Ministry of Health 2011). *The Seventh Five- Year Health Sector Development Plan (2011-2015)*.

beyond 2015¹² is constrained by difficulties in reaching people living with HIV (PLHIV) and referral to treatment. In 2019, 56% of PLHIV were receiving antiretroviral therapy (increased from 32% in 2015); and around 46% of those on antiretroviral therapy had suppressed viral load.

Malaria, and Tuberculosis control. *Malaria* - The utilization of insecticide-treated bed-nets (ITNs) is on track: the recent survey conducted by the Ministry of Health in three high-malaria burden provinces showed 1.6 people per net against the target of 1.5 people per net. The percentage of children under age 5 sleeping under ITNs was 74.3% in 2016 (MoH data). The mortality rate from malaria remains low (0.03 per 100,000¹³ in 2015 and 2019). *Tuberculosis* - Treatment rate for TB cured under DOTS and others was 87% in the first six months of 2018 (in 2015 it was also 87%). TB detection needs to be urgently improved. TB detection rate has improved from 37% in 2015 to an estimated 50% in 2019.¹⁴

Non-communicable diseases - *A growing threat.* Some 59.6% of all deaths for all ages in the country were due to non-communicable diseases (NCD) in 2017. Coronary heart disease in Laos reached 5,769 or 13.5% of total deaths, according to the latest WHO data published in 2017. WHO has identified adult risk factors in Lao PDR, among them a high rate of tobacco use. The age-standardized NCD mortality rate per 100,000 population in 2016 was 780.6 (829.9 for males and 739.4 for females).¹⁵ The Ministry of Health has started NCD prevention and control with an action plan for NCD 2014-2020, including through a holistic approach involving other sectors to encourage physical activities and reduce the risk factors for NCDs at community level. *Death from injury.* Injuries, estimated as 9% of total deaths in the Lao PDR, are mainly from road accidents. Road accident statistics show a rise of the death rate from road accidents, from 14.2 per 100,000 in 2015 to 15.5 per 100,000 in 2016, 15 per 100,000 in 2017 and 14.12 per 100,000 in 2018. The increase is largely associated with limited capacity to enforce traffic laws and regulations, unsafe road conditions, and the growth in the number of motorbikes and vehicles.

Health systems during pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to the health system in Lao PDR. Data from health facilities compared to past years clearly shows a drop in use of essential health and nutrition services, specifically for vulnerable population including mothers, newborns, children and adolescents. The global social and economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 poses grave risks to the nutritional status and survival of young children, with long term impact on human capital.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for Lao PDR to build crisis-resilience through strengthened and more systemic health and social protection measures for all. However, this will require setting policies that ensure consistent consideration of reach to the most vulnerable population groups, and reflect a core role for the private sector in making investments in the development of Lao PDR's human capital. Policies will prioritise critical interventions and programmes along the life cycle, and recognise the need for coordinated multi-sectoral solutions. Greater use of detailed disaggregated data to inform more targeted policies could help improve efficiency in the increasingly resource-constrained environment. Digital connectivity is making it technically possible to cost-effectively deliver more services remotely, but investments are needed to ensure sustainability and equity in access.

Traumatic events such as COVID-19 and recent floods and disasters incurred in 2018 and 2019 can be a trigger for mental illness. The Government has paying great attention to mental health of all citizens due to the recent impacts of the national disasters incurred in 2018 & 2019 and now the impact of COVID-19. During this recovery time, the Government is working with

¹² The targets for the HIV treatment scale-up beyond 2015 are (i) by 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status, (ii) by 2020, 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy and (iii) by 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

¹³ From MDG reporting.

¹⁴ WHO global TB database. <http://www.who.int/tb/country/data/download/en/>

¹⁵ WHO Global Health Observatory. <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.2490>

relevant partners to ensure sufficient number of skilled mental health staff which can respond to a surge in demand when emergencies happen. The development of Lao PDR's national guideline will be an important step forwards in this. The guideline should make sure mental health services are available to all who need them, both during times of peace and during emergencies. Recent additional investments in this area are the toll-free Lao Women Union counselling helpline and the newly established Lao Youth Union counselling helpline.

Safe drinking water and improved sanitation. The use of clean water has increased in the past 5 years from 69.9% in 2012 to 83.9% in 2018. There remain many mountainous and remote provinces with lower coverage, and water sources may be prone to contamination from the increasingly frequent floods. The use of improved sanitation facilities has increased significantly from 56.9% in 2012 to 71% in 2018. The rate of open defecation has decreased from 37.9% in 2012 to 23.9% in 2018, but the practice is still a significant health risk. Flooding also poses risks to sanitation facilities and sanitation in general. Estimated deaths/year attributable to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (diarrhea only) increased from 11 (2015) to 72 (2018).

Health protection and expenditure - Increased government spending. Many schemes have been introduced to support universal health coverage, including health equity funds, free maternal and child health services, and social health protection schemes. The total health expenditure per capita has increased from US\$29 (2011) to US\$59 (2016). The total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP has increased from 2.7% (2011) to 3% (2016) but then drop to 2.8% in 2018. The general government health expenditure as a percentage of general government expenditure has nearly doubled from 4.7% (2011) to 8.4% (2018), but still not yet reached the level endorsed by the National Assembly. Out of pocket spending is still a concern, even though it has decreased from 48.6% of total current health expenditures in 2011 to 45.1% in 2016. In term of Out of pocket health expenditure per capita (US\$) indeed increased from \$25 in 2015 to \$29 in 2018.

Greater efforts are needed for investing in primary health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and nutrition services. Investments in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, as well as Nutrition, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescents and Child Health, can positively impact human capital and macroeconomic performance. This will be particularly crucial for Lao PDR's young population to reap the possibility of the country's demographic dividend. The Government will work with all partners to achieve a sustainable and efficient health financing system. This will be built on a stable government budget, recognising anticipated donor transitions, in close collaboration and coordination with development partners based on the Health Financing Strategy. In working towards the achievement of universal health coverage by 2025, implementation of the essential health service package will be prioritized, with service delivery redesigned to be more resilient to disruptions during crises, and ensure equitable access to quality healthcare. Policies will also be prioritized to protect gains in infant and maternal mortality, and scale up family planning services, along with Lao PDR's renewed commitments to International Conference on Population and Development 25 (ICPD 25) during the 2019 Nairobi summit. Careful consideration must be done to look at disaggregated data to identify and target interventions to address disparities along with geographical location, age, sex, gender etc. For example, in 2017, the adolescent birth rate at a national level was 83, compared to 42 in urban areas, 95% in rural areas with road access, and 136 without road access.¹⁶ The 2020-2025 National Plan of Action for Nutrition prioritizes the delivery of interventions and activities which address the multifactorial determinants of stunting particularly the key proximal determinants of child growth. Building resilience for the health system to respond to COVID-19 and prepare for future public health emergencies, will include building systems for mental health and psychosocial support for COVID-19 patients and other target groups. The Government is committed to necessary steps to build the competence of the health workforce through long-term investment in pre-service and in-service training.

¹⁶ LSIS II Survey (2018). <https://lao.unfpa.org/en/publications/lao-social-indicator-survey-ii-2017-18-0>

The execution of policies and plans still face many challenges due to limited capacity of human resources, difficult terrain, dispersed population in remote areas, and lack of demand for services. The disparities in health status and service coverage are, as in education, are determined by (i) geography and access, (ii) by the level of education of the mother (in the case of maternal and child health) or the household head (in the case of water and sanitation facilities), (iii) ethno linguistic group (some groups are more remote than others or may have different cultural practices that affect health), (iv) wealth of the household. An additional factor in child, infant and neonatal mortality is the age of the mother: children born of mothers who are too young (below age 20) or older (above age 35) have a higher probability of dying before the age of five. The disparities are greater for certain indicators than others, meaning that for those indicators, the vulnerable groups have much further to catch up.

SDG 4 – Quality Education

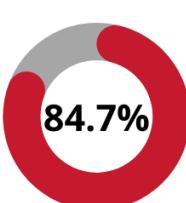
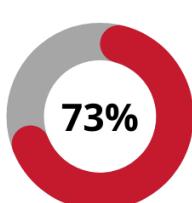
(Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all)



Around 99% of children enrolled in primary schools



Adult literacy



Children learning outcomes need greater attention

- **2.5%** - achieved at least a minimum proficiency level in reading
- **49.6%** - unable to perform basic reading
- **51.9%** - limited ability to present ideas in writing
- **8%** - mathematics proficiency level
- **33%** - lowest proficiency band

The 2019 South-East Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) learning outcomes assessment

The share of children (less than 5 years old) attending early childhood education was **49.7%** (2019).

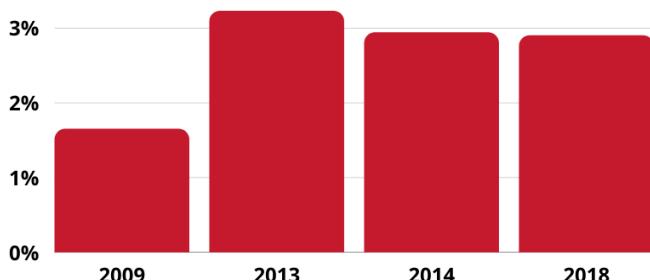
Percentage of youth (15-24) in Lao PDR having used computer/ICT skills in education (2018)



11.8%

7.3%

General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)



40 “Priority Districts” identified

as the most disadvantaged and therefore needs additional support



Significant progress has been made at the primary school enrolment with no gender gaps.¹⁷ Although universal access for primary education has largely been achieved, completion rates continue to lag and grade 1 dropout and repetition rates continue to be high, contributing to relatively low cohort completion rates (83.4% - 2017). For lower secondary education, completion rate is 53.5% (2017) and only 31.1% (2017) for upper secondary education.

Table 4.1 - Indicators on access, internal efficiency and completion, primary education, 2016 – 2019

Indicator	2016 baseline	2018			2019		
		Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Net intake rate, first grade of primary ¹⁸ (%)	97.2	97.8	97.6	97.9			
Repetition rate (%)	5.8	4	3.3	4.8	3.1	2.4	3.8
Drop-out rate (%)	5.2	4.1	3.8	4.4	4.3	3.7	4.9
Gross intake ratio in grade 5 (last grade of primary) ¹⁹ (%)	N/A	104.5	104.3	104.8	92.2*		
Net enrolment rate (%)	98.7	98.8	98.6	99.1	99		
Survival rate	79.6	82.2	83.5	81	93.7		

Source: MoES-EMIS and MoES calculations for the VNR report submitted to the UN General Assembly, school census 2019-20. *UNESCO 2019 (<http://uis.unesco.org/country/LA>)

Increased adult literacy rates and gender parity for adult literacy. A literate population is necessary to exit from least developed country status, since adult literacy rate accounts for one-quarter of the weight in the HAI (Human Asset Index). According to the population census, adult literacy has increased from 73% in 2005 to 84.7% in 2015. However, these are based on self-reporting. The LSIS reports on tested literacy.²⁰ Among 15-24-year olds, LSIS data indicates an improvement in literacy rates for both men and women but the difference between men and women has barely improved.

Lao PDR has also achieved gender parity at primary level. Gender parity has not yet been achieved at secondary level, which explains why the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in literacy is still low (that is, in favour of males) among the youth and adult population, especially among the older groups.

Table 4.2 - Gender parity indices, 2018

Level	Gender Parity Indices calculated for:		
	Net enrolment rate	Gross enrolment ratio	Completion rate ²¹
Early childhood education	1.00	1.00	1.00
Primary education	1.00	0.98	1.00
Lower secondary education	1.04	0.95	0.939
Upper secondary education	1.04	0.91	0.905

Source: MoES-EMIS and calculations by MoES for the VNR report submitted to the UN General Assembly.

While primary enrolment has increased, learning outcomes and other contributing factors need greater attention. There are equity concerns as the educational attainments are lower for children in rural areas. Currently, the share of children (less than 5 years old) attending early childhood education was 49.7%. The 2015 amendment of the Education Law has made lower secondary education compulsory. Access rates are on the rise for lower secondary education and

¹⁷ There are some challenges with the data. These data are based on population data that is collected by the principal rather than national census data. It is expected there is some overestimation in enrolment data. However, the difference in calculation expects to be insignificant. Therefore, Lao PDR has made very good progress in expanding access to primary education in last decades.

¹⁸ New entrants in the first grade of primary education who are of the official primary school-entrance age, expressed as a% of the population of the same age.

¹⁹ Gross intake ratio in grade 5: Total number of new entrants in the last grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a% of the population at the theoretical entrance age to the last grade of primary (UNESCO).

²⁰ This is self-reported data and is likely to be an overestimation of actual skills when considering several sources of student performance data.

²¹ UNESCO definition of completion rate: Total number of new entrants in the last grade of each level of education, regardless of age, as a% of the total population of the theoretical entrance age to the last grade of primary education.

the gross enrolment ratio has nearly achieved the 2020 target for lower secondary. The current transition rate from primary to lower secondary is already quite high (86% in 2018) but has decreased slightly over the past three years (91.7% in 2015, 90.4% in 2016, and 89.7% in 2017). Further increases in lower secondary enrolment will require much higher primary completion rates. The percentage of children out of school at primary and upper secondary level was 10% and 38%, respectively. The figure was higher among girls (15-17 years) was around 41.8%. There is, however, evidence for disparities in terms of school drop-outs looking at gender and, in particular, rural populations (44.5% with road access, and 56.5% without road access) with higher rates than urban areas (19.1%). Therefore, improving and increasing usage of disaggregated data play a crucial role in designing, implementing and monitoring development interventions. This is a serious concern and it needs a multi-sectoral approach to address the issue. In particular, primary causes for high dropout rates will be carefully analysed in order to come up with proper and meaningful actions to address this alarming concern. This has links to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescent girls, with high rates of early marriages and adolescent pregnancies, among other factors making girls' education a second or third priority. There is no precise data about the children and adults with disabilities in all levels of education. Identifying and addressing barriers, raising awareness of and access to reproductive health services, and increasing investments for young people will be crucial for Lao PDR to improve human capital and realize its demographic dividend, along with the renewed commitments to the ICPD 25.

The vast majority of children are not well prepared for school and are not adequately learning which have led to the lack of knowledge and skills for continued education and a better future. The education system is facing the “greatest challenge” as it is not equipping Lao children and young people with the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed for further learning and to thrive in Lao society. Part of the challenge is that many children are not prepared to start formal schooling in the first place due to low ECE coverage. In addition, certain groups of children are not doing well compared to others. For instance, children in rural, remote areas; from the poorest families; and ethnic groups have significantly lower learning outcomes. The same group of children are more likely to be out of school, or when in school are more likely to repeat a grade or dropout. In recent years, the Government takes note of a steadily growing body of evidence showing that very low student achievement levels are the result of a cumulative process. This means that students do not acquire the foundational skills while in primary education and that many students are not adequately prepared for further studies and the world of work. Some of evidence as noted by the Government are:

- The 2019 South-East Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) learning outcomes assessment²² showed that Lao Grade 5 students show very low proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. Only 2.5% of children at Grade 5 achieved at least a minimum proficiency level in reading. About half the children (49.6%) were found unable to perform basic reading tasks and engage with the meaning of texts at the Grade 5 level (Band 2 and below). About half of Grade 5 students (51.9%) have limited ability to present ideas in writing (Band 1 and below). In mathematics, 8% of Grade 5 students have at least a minimum proficiency level (SDG indicator 4.1.1b) although 0% of students are in the highest two bands. A third of Grade 5 students (33%) are in the lowest proficiency band (Band 2 or below) indicating very basic skills and may only be able to add single digit numbers or count a small number of objects.
- These findings corroborate findings of the 2017 Grade 3 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (ASLO) that show that the levels of functional literacy and numeracy skills of Grade 3 students (8 to 9-year-olds) are insufficient to support learning at higher grades. It showed that only 34% of Grade 3 students met the literacy standards for promotion to Grade 4; and less than 20% met the mathematics standards for promotion to Grade 4. The 2019 Grade 9 (end of lower secondary) ASLO tells a similar worrying picture: only 27.8%

²² https://www.seaplsm.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=332

of Grade 9 students acquired a “proficient level” in Lao language; and 1.1% in science. For mathematics, the findings were particularly worrisome with 92% of Grade 9 students performing at “below basic” proficiency levels. The data shows that girls outperform boys on all three test subjects. There are also significant differences in proficiency levels based on students’ socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and their mothers’ level of education.

General government expenditure on education (% of GDP) was 1.65% in 2009, to 3.23% in 2013, down to 2.94% in 2014 and down to 2.9 in 2018. To ensure that the overarching goal, specific goals, targets and focus areas of the education and sports sector will be met, public investment needs to reach the sector budget requirement of 18% of the national budget allocation identified in the education law. However, due to the recent economic hardship, the requirement of 18% of the national budget allocation for the education and sports sector has not been met, but more efforts have been emphasized. In particular, efforts need to be on an increase of more public and external investment particularly non-wage investment categories.

In the past few years, the National Assembly has consecutively approved the share of the education sector at 17% of total government expenditure. However, due to the government’s budget constraints, the education sector has accounted for only 13% to 14% of government expenditure. In actual amounts, the amount MoES has received increased from 4,013 billion kip in 2016 to 4,142 billion kip in 2018. Some 60% of the education budget goes to salaries, 20% goes to non-salary recurrent costs, and another 20% to investment costs. MoES now ensures that District Education and Sports Bureaus (DESBs) receive larger operating budgets.

Table 4.3 - Approved budget versus required budget (in billion LAK)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2019/20
Financial requirement identified in ESDP	4,416	4,898	4,969	5,322
Approved budget	4,023	4,037	4,142	-
% share in total government expenditure	15.84%	13.40%	14.02%	-
Financial gap	-393	-861	-827	-

Source: MoES

The quality and number of post-basic education graduates from public and private education needs further attention to address skills shortages. Employment in Lao PDR continues to be highly concentrated in the agricultural sector although this situation is changing. Lao PDR faces major skills shortages in key technical fields including for the construction, furniture, plumbing, electrical, and automotive industries. The number of female students is increasing at public TVET colleges, with women accounting for 43% of all students enrolled in the academic year ended 2017, but mostly in programs such as tailoring, basic business administration, and hospitality.

Promoting advanced research and teaching. The Government is investing in infrastructure and human resources to establish, by 2021, centers of excellence for (i) agriculture in Champasack, (ii) logistics in Savannakhet, (iii) engineering and tourism in Luang Prabang, and (iv) engineering and environmental studies at the National University of Laos.

Increased numbers of basic education graduates who have acquired basic skills and knowledge and can apply for work in the labour market, or continue post-basic education, or become entrepreneurs. The new intake in TVET institutions has been increasing every year since 2015. The transition rate from lower to upper secondary has declined from 93% (2015) to 78% in 2018. Currently, 20% of students who enrol in upper secondary education follow the academic route while 60% enrol in TVET and another 20% go to labour market. This will be crucial to ensure an inclusive economic growth that reduces inequalities for women, youth, rural and other vulnerable populations, and help Lao PDR to profit from contemporary trends,

including urbanization and the demographic shift. Taking these into consideration, the Government is committed to have a rigorous review of lower secondary and secondary education, including a review of curricula and include more vocational teaching and learning.

ICT and education outcomes - Percentage of youth (15-24) in Lao PDR having used computer/ICT skills in education (7.3% (female) and 11.8% (male) is low compared to neighbouring countries. Realising this shortcoming, one of the Government's focuses for education development in Lao PDR is to apply ICT as the tools for improving education administration and management and education quality including digital literacy. As part of a more holistic and comprehensive approach, this in long run help improve education outcomes.

COVID-19 and educational outcomes. COVID-19 impact and response strategies have significantly affected the accumulation of human capital. Children and adolescents have been forced to stay at home without access to remote learning. The crisis is exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, adolescents and youth to continue their learning. Learning losses also threaten to extend beyond this generation and erase decades of progress, especially for girls and young women's educational access and retention. The Lao context necessitates putting in place a blend of interventions to meet the learning needs of the population, including vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. This would include a combination of take-home printed materials, TV, radio and online platforms to support continuity of learning, accompanied by support to teachers and parents/caregivers so they can facilitate learning at home. When schools eventually re-open, additional support may be needed by some students who have lagged further behind. It is also important to put in place interventions that are inclusive and sustainable and can continue to be used post COVID-19 or during other emergencies, such as temporary closure of schools due to floods. The current situation provides an opportunity for MoES to put in place a sustainable distance education system of good quality, including an online teaching and learning platform and a satellite education television that can be used both by students and teachers, including for their professional development.

Investing in education, starting from early childhood to technical, vocational, and tertiary education. While children in Lao PDR can expect to complete 10.8 years of schooling by age 18, the quality-adjusted learning is equivalent to only 6.4 years, which means there is 4.4 year of learning gap.²³ This has a strong implication for a much-needed investment in early childhood education to have a solid foundation for formal learning and acquisition of skills needed. The Government is committed to stabilize the fiscal situation, especially given government revenue lost due to COVID-19. In this context, it is imperative to recognize and invest in the most cost effective interventions (e.g., early childhood education and integrating comprehensive sexuality education) that guarantee the highest impact on learning and skills development as core human capital assets. Comprehensive sexuality education is being integrated into education curriculums at various levels as per the renewed ICPD25 commitments and needs more investment for nationwide coverage. These investments are also associated with generating diverse range of jobs and provide a mechanism through which the working age people can generate enough income to support themselves, contribute to poverty reduction, and ultimately improved fiscal stabilization with GDP growth sustainably. Given the critical stage in the demographic transition that Lao PDR is currently in, it is crucial that investments in education are protected over the course of the 9th NSEDP if the demographic dividend is to be realized.

Investing in technical, vocational, skills and competencies development in urban and rural settings. Seizing the economic opportunities that will be generated over the course if the 9th NSEDP and beyond, including those made possible by investments in improving regional integration, will require appropriate skill sets and broader competencies. This could be pursued through the expansion and strengthening of targeted technical and vocational training

²³ World Bank, Human Capital Index and Components (2018)

programmes, and investment in 21st century skills development from primary education priority (also includes ICT, financial literacy and communication). Strengthening Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprise development initiatives, including necessary skills development, would support the creation of new livelihood opportunities. Crucially, policy will be developed to strengthen private engagement and investment in skills development that links with wage and employment policies for better employment opportunities and decent work. This could include policies to systematically increase trainee, apprenticeship, and mentorship programmes in both domestic and foreign enterprises.

While investment is needed for education in the country, prioritisation is much needed given current status of student performance as well as the tight budget situation. An urgent need is prioritization of various key interventions to address pressing educational challenges while a continued effort for more investment. Based on a set of social development and education indicators, MoES has identified 40 “Priority Districts” (among 148 districts) scattered over the 18 provinces. These 40 districts have been identified as the most disadvantaged and therefore needs additional support. To maximize effectiveness of extremely limited state resources, MoES has encouraged all partners to prioritize much needed programme/project support and capital investments in these districts. There are 148 districts in the country and 18 provinces. MoES 40 priority districts are scattered over the 18 provinces.

SDG 5 – Gender Equality

(Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

3

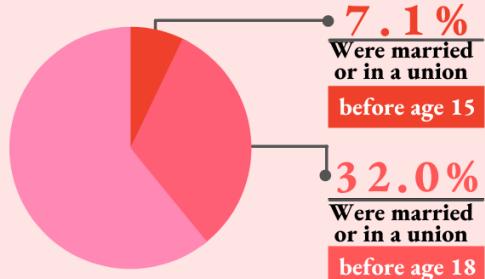
Laws have been enacted to promote gender equality and non-discrimination against women and girls.

- Law on the Development and Protection of Women
- Law on the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children
- Law on Women Union



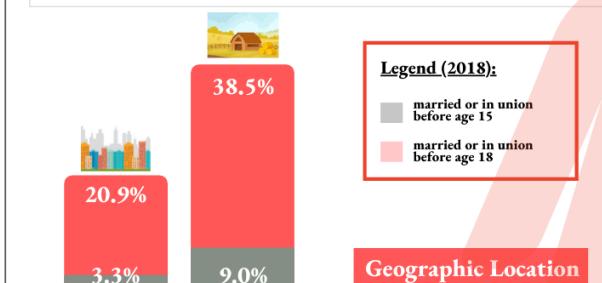
Mechanisms are operational in 'enforcing and monitoring' the implementation of legal frameworks for each area of the law.

Among women aged 20-24 years (2017)



From 2000 to 2020, the female share of seats in the National Assembly had ranged from 21.2% to 27.5% with the share increasing across time.

Early marriages among women were more prevalent in rural areas and among poorer families.



Province



Province



11.8%



In 2017, about

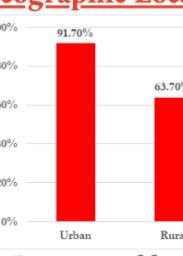


3 in every 4 (73.1%) women aged 15-24 years owned a mobile phone

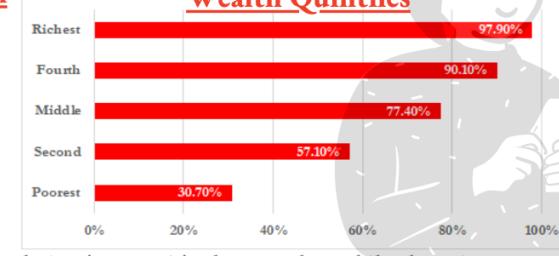


Mobile phone ownership increases with wealth, and is higher in urban compared to rural areas.

Geographic Location



Wealth Quintiles



Percentage of female population (15-24 y/o) who owned a mobile phone in 2017.

Legal and policy framework. *Legal and regulatory* - The Lao PDR always attaches great importance to the empowerment of women, gender equality and relevant issues. This can be evidenced from the provisions in the constitution and relevant laws and regulations of the country stipulating that the state has the responsibility to adopt a policy to develop and promote the advancement of women so that they can be on equal footing with men in terms of legal rights, economic and social opportunities. Women empowerment and gender equality-related domestic laws were enacted. These includes: 1) Law on the Development and Protection of Women, 2) Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Children, and 3) Law on Women Union. In addition, two important Laws are: Law on Family and Law on Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children which contribute to promote advancement of women and child and protects their rights and interests in politics, economy, culture and society as well as in the family.

At policy and operational level, Lao PDR has developed a policy framework for the promotion of gender equality, which includes various, national strategies and plan of actions which are in line with the international commitments. The Vision for Development of Lao Women 2030, the Strategic Development Plan for Lao Women 2025 and the Five-Year Lao Women Development Plan 2020-2025 which aim to protect the rights and create opportunities for women in the process of the national socio-economic development (8th and 9th NSEDP) are being implemented by the National Commission for the Advancement of Women and Mothers and Children (NCAWMC) and the Lao Women's Union (LWU). The National Strategy for Advancement of Women (2016-2025) and the five-year Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2016-2020), and the recent approved National Plan of Action on Mothers and Children (2021-2025)/National Plan of Action on Violence against Women and Violence against Children (2021-2025) provide the guiding framework for the implementation of activities by NCAWMC and LWU.

CEDAW. The Government's commitment to achieving the objectives of the CEDAW was demonstrated in the Government CEDAW report submitted to the CEDAW Committee in August 2017. Lao PDR's policy framework for women and gender equality are also grounded in the commitments under the CEDAW. The Strategy and Plan is quite comprehensive in content, but do not sufficiently specify targets and goals for each Ministry. On the other hand, MOHA has drafted Strategy 2030 on gender equality for staff and civil servants. The objective is to ensure the equal rights of men and women, and promote the equality of women in decision making. Some other ministries have been working closely with NCAWMC and LWU on gender issue. For instance, MAF has conducted a Country Gender Assessment of Agriculture and the Rural Sector.

Important institutional setup. The Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children (NCAWMC) and Lao Women's Union (LWU) are the operational arm of the Government in promoting gender equality within all the ministries and other government structures. LWU is tasked to upgrade knowledge to improve the implementation of socio-economic development and poverty reduction, contribute to the achievement of the gender-related SDGs in Lao PDR, and promote gender equality, especially within the family structure. NCAWMC is responsible for monitoring the implementation of gender-related national strategies and the follow-up on the implementation of the obligations under CEDAW. NCAWMC is also the main focal point action on eliminating violence against women and children. Under the guidance of the NCAWMC, it is expected that all ministries will develop strategies and action plans to promote gender equality at national, provincial, district and village levels. Line ministries have begun to mainstream gender concerns by:

- Establishing high-level gender working groups.
- Collecting sex-disaggregated data relevant to poverty reduction and other national goals.
- Using the data to develop a gender profile or assessment of the sector.

- Developing a gender strategy and action plan, identifying issues or problems related to women's participation in the sector and actions to redress them.
- Providing gender training and capacity-building to staff.
- Improving the gender and ethnic balance of staff at all levels.
- Screening all new policies, programs and projects from a gender perspective.
- Consulting local women in the design of new projects for poverty reduction, and ensuring that they participate in project activities, including extension services and training.

Gender quality has been making positive progress over the years.

Education. Gender parity has steadily improved in education in Lao PDR. The country is well on track to achieve parity between boys and girls in primary education. Progress is also seen at higher levels of education, although there is a significant gender gap in literacy that is generally associated with poverty.

Employment, sectors characterized by vulnerable employment have the greatest proportion of women, either self-employed or engaged in unpaid work for the family. The vulnerability of women workers is due to poor education, and limited access to resources and employment. The most prevalent form of gender discrimination in labour markets is the wage gap between male and female workers.

Decision making. Increasingly, it is being realised that in addition to aspiring for equal rights equal rights and the empowerment of women, it is also a matter of efficiency and enhanced outcomes if women participate together with men at all levels of decision-making in government structures, in the community, in private sector enterprises and in the home. At the decision-making level, Lao PDR has amongst the highest proportions of women in national parliaments. However, in the civil service, the proportion of women among the top civil servants in administrative position and the proportion of women in other decision-making institutions are still low (Table 5.1 and 5.2 capture key elements of these representation) despite the fact that in 2018, women represented about 45% of the total civil servants (which is around 180,000).²⁴

Table 5.1 - Percentage of women in top decision making positions/ leadership positions

	2015	2019
Civil servants in administrative position type 1 (Minister & equivalent)	19.1%	12.3%
National Assembly	27.5%	27.5%
Provincial People Assembly	NA	31.8%

Table 5.2 - Female representation in decision making positions (2018/19)

	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Number			%		
Ministers	92	13	105	88	12	100
Vice-Ministers	723	126	849	85	15	100
DG	1,882	373	2,255	83	17	100
Deputy DG	5,670	1,293	6,963	81	19	100
Head Division	9,599	3,041	12,640	76	24	100
Dep. Head Div.	14,482	5,665	20,147	72	28	100

²⁴ Ministry of Home Affairs data provided to Lao Women's Union.

	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	Number			%		
Head Sector	9,594	5,931	15,525	62	38	100
Dep. Head Sector	4,009	4,330	8,339	48	52	100
Total	46,051	20,772	66,823	69	31	100

Source: Lao Women's Union, LWU

Violence against Women and Girls. The Lao National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experiences in 2014, produced by the Lao National Commission for Advancement of Women and the Lao Statistics Bureau, marks the country's first-ever national survey on violence against women. Based on nearly 3,000 interviews with women across the country, the report states that one in seven women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their partners at least once in their lifetime. The majority of women, however, stated that they had experienced such violence multiple times. Only 1 in 5 women who experienced violence from their spouses turned to local authorities for help, with just 4% reaching out to the police and 3% to health services, the report states. Nearly half of all women who were physically or sexually abused by their husbands reported frequent physical injuries, and victims of violence are four times more likely to consider suicide. This is the first ever national prevalence data on violence against women, which forms a critical starting point for effective policy implementation. Besides understanding the extent of the problem, the Government will put more efforts to closely monitor the impact of policies and programmes over time, and track budgets and resources allocated to ensure that all women who experience such violence and trauma have optimal access to justice and support services. More and better work with communities, men and boys, and in schools is also needed to challenge and transform damaging attitudes from an early age that eventually perpetuate violence against women.

A range of actions to uphold the rights and welfare of women and youth. At the recent Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, the Government committed to a range of actions to uphold the rights and welfare of women and youth. These included ending gender-based violence through the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women 2021-2025, as well as providing age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education, which addresses the importance of healthy and respectful relationships.

Institutional constraints for women's empowerment. Rollout and implementation of gender strategies across the public service is a wide and long term undertaking. The LWU and NCAWMC require the continued and strengthened political support and the resources for their advocacy work to ensure Ministries integrate targets and priorities into their sectoral strategies reflecting the aims and intent of the Second National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2016-2025) and the Five-year Plan of Action for Gender Equality (2016-2020). The challenge will be to ensure women's participation and leadership in all aspects of the country's socio-economic development, particularly in areas where there is lower female participation, such as at the village and district levels, and in rural areas.

Overall use of information communication technologies (ICT) is still low, although the majority own a mobile phone. Three-quarters of young women (75-77%) owned a mobile phone, while a slightly higher percentage of young men (76-84%) did. In 2018, only 8.8% (15-19 years) and 12.9% (20-24 years) of young women had used a computer during the last three months, while corresponding figures for young men were 17.5% and 22.8% respectively for these age groups. There appears to be no gender divide in internet use. Some 47% (15-19 years) and 40% (20-24 years) of young women had used the internet during the last 3 months, while the corresponding proportions among young men were 42% and 39%, respectively.

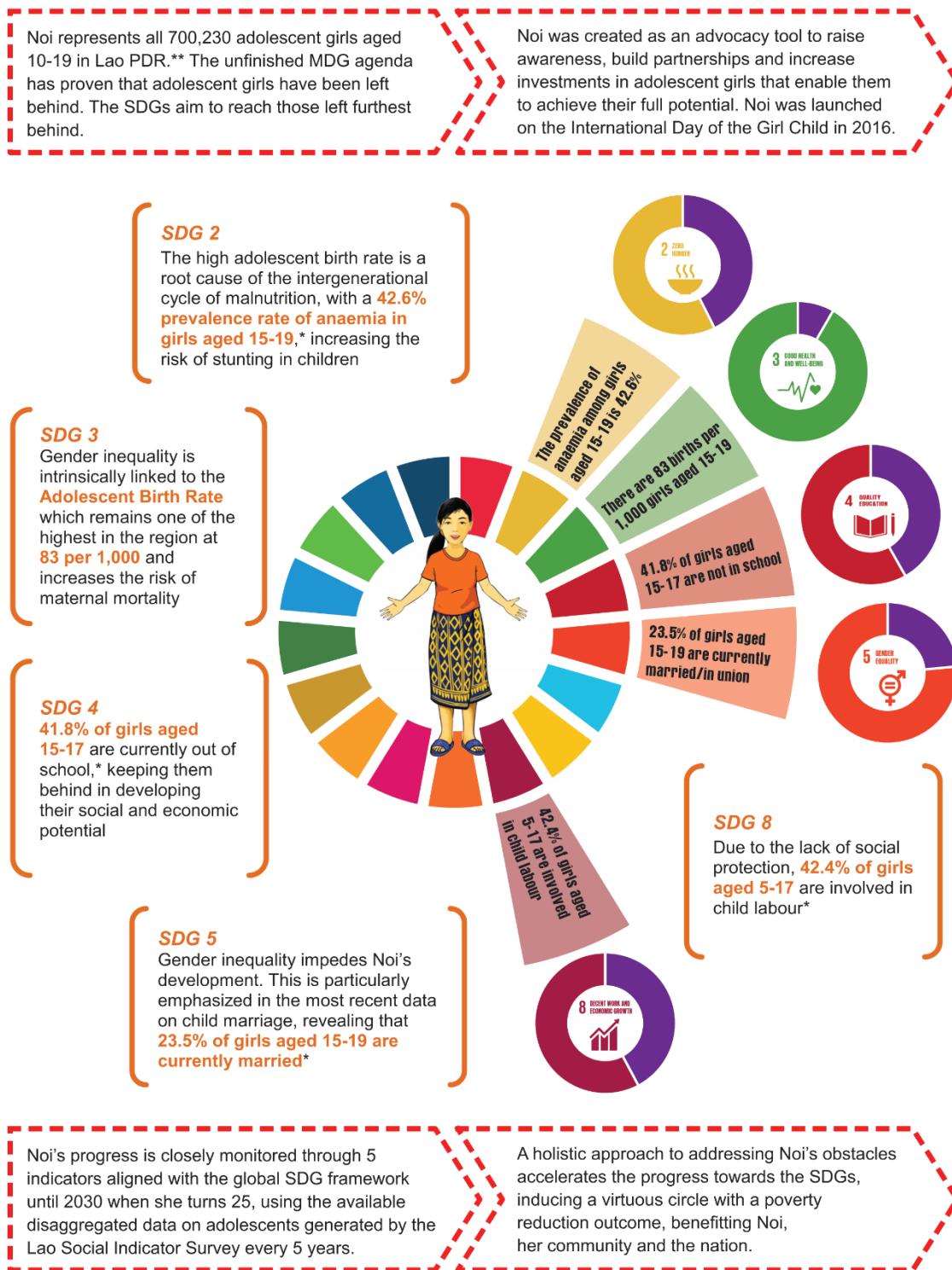
Progress has been made in land use and management in Lao PDR. However, there is still limited knowledge and understanding about Women's Land Rights, especially in rural areas. With Lao PDR transitioning from a subsistence to a market economy creating significant pressure on land and natural resources is catalyzing a change in land use and land management which threaten and undermine traditional livelihood systems and customary rights that secure land tenure for women and men. The situation for women's land rights is more favorable in cities, but in rural areas the situation varies depending on the customary rules of ethnic groups, and the level of awareness by government officials and communities. Although there is clear lay out of information on the rights of Lao citizens in land use, management and registration regardless of gender and ethnic origin as stipulated under the Law on Land Use and Management, no. 70/NA (amended in 2019), however, more efforts in local community outreach need to be enhanced in order to raise more awareness and understanding about land rights, particularly in the rural areas.

National Youth and Adolescent Development Strategy. More than half of the population are under the age of 25 years. To benefit from the demographic dividend to the economy, the Government is prioritizing the enhancement of skills and knowledge among youth. The first ever National Youth and Adolescent Development Strategy was recently developed through a consultative process under the leadership of Lao Youth Union. The process involves a series of consultations with adolescents and young people, the relevant line ministries, and other stakeholders. The strategy aims to empower all adolescents and youth in Lao PDR, including those with disability, to lead safe, healthy and productive lives and realize their potential through equitable opportunities and a supportive environment. The youth strategy was approved and endorsed by the Government in December 2020. This will help in developing and implementing programmes and strategies to address the various challenges faced by Lao youth and adolescents.

Adolescent girls require special attention. Lao PDR is among countries with the highest proportion of early marriage and the highest adolescent birth rate in the region. For every thousand adolescent women (aged 15-19), there are 83 births - this has declined from 94 in 2012, but is still the highest rate among ASEAN countries. This means that adolescent girls in Lao PDR are facing challenges, such as not being able to develop their full potential. One in five adolescent girls drop out of school; one in four girls aged 15-19 are married, and from the same age group, one in ten girls have begun childbearing. Investments in adolescent girls' health, nutrition, and education contribute to reducing early pregnancy, maternal mortality, and child stunting. Such gains translate to improved health and education outcomes, which contribute to LDC graduation. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, Noi ecosystem has been created to address the problems of adolescent girls highlighted in the Noi 2030 Framework and to increase investments in adolescent girls for their holistic development. More investments are needed in adolescent girls' health, nutrition, and education to gain further reductions in early marriage, early pregnancy, maternal mortality, school dropout, child labour and child stunting. Such gains would translate to improved health and education outcomes, which will contribute to LDC graduation.

Figure 5.1 - Noi Framework and Ecosystem

The Noi 2030 Framework – Achieving Gender Equality & Empowerment of Adolescent Girls



*Lao Social Indicator Survey (2017) **Census (2015)

Creating an Ecosystem for Noi

Impact: Lao PDR realises a Demographic Dividend and achieves SDGs by comprehensive investments in youth, reduced adolescent pregnancy and maternal mortality.

"Noi" delays her first pregnancy, can fulfill her full potential and contributes to a sustainable future. She is healthy, educated, empowered and eventually employed.

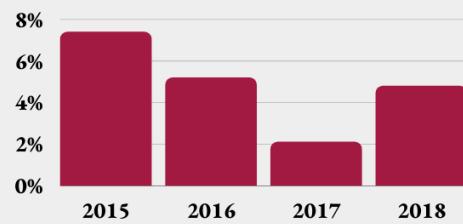


Problem: Noi drops out of school, gets pregnant before the age of 18 and is exposed to increased risk of adverse reproductive outcomes and limited opportunities. Higher levels of adolescent birth rate and maternal mortality rate, especially among marginalized groups in remote areas.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

(Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)

Between 2015 and 2018, the (real) GDP per capital had grown by 4.0 percent per year



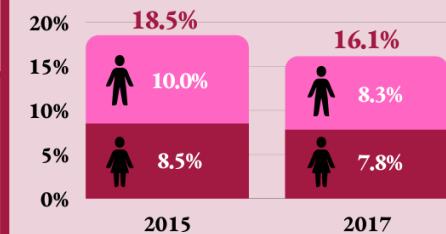
6.7%
Growth in real GDP between 2015 and 2018

In 2017, about **1 in every 10** (9.4%) persons aged 15+ were UNEMPLOYED

SEX
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE for females tends to be slightly below that for males
7.8% vs 10.7%

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
UNEMPLOYMENT is more prevalent in RURAL than in URBAN areas
12.4% vs 5.3%

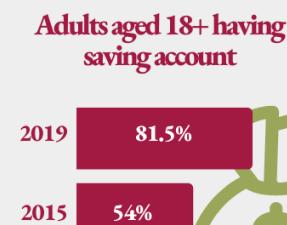
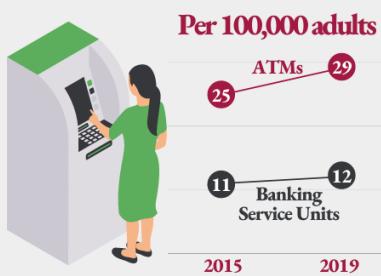
Youth aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training



In 2017, about **4 in every 5** (82.7%) jobs are INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

SEX
Informal EMPLOYMENT for females tends to be higher than that for males
85.9% vs 79.9%

Age-group and geographic area



Almost 100% increase in the number of SMEs owned by Lao citizens within 4 years



Limited job creation despite continuous economic growth. Average annual growth in real GDP has been around 6.5% to 7% during the past few years. GDP per capital grew from US\$2,212 (2015) to US\$2,674 (2018). This strong growth performance was driven mainly by the hydropower and construction sectors but was also bolstered by opening up and further steps toward regional integration. However, the majority of population continue to derive their livelihoods from agriculture, the sector where productivity has overall lagged most. Job creation outside the agriculture sector remains limited and the strong economy-wide growth has not significantly altered the composition of employment. Service sector employment, meanwhile, has increased though its overall contribution to employment remains low. Recent natural disasters and COVID-19 will put further strain on agricultural outputs.

Labour force data - The working age population was estimated to be around 4.8 million and the labour force 1.9 million. This results in a labour force participation rate of 40.8%. The unemployment rate (proportion of the unemployed in the total labour force) is estimated to be 9.4%. Youth unemployment is also relatively high at 18.2%. Table 8.1 highlights key labour market indicators.

Table 8.1 - Key labour market indicators

	2017
Working age population	4,758,031
Labor force	1,940,230
Employment	1,757,733
Labor force participation rate (%)	40.8
Unemployment rate (%)	9.4
Composite rate of labor underutilization (%)	25.8
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15-24 (%)	18.2
Share of wage workers in total employment (%)	32.4
Average gross monthly income, employees (Kip)	2,481,000

Source: Labour Force Survey (2017)

Demographic differences in labour force participation. In general, labor force participation rates were higher in urban areas, for men, and for those with higher educational attainment. Informal employment accounted for 83% of workers, with higher rates among women (86%) and in the rural areas. In general, younger and older people were more likely to be affected by informality.²⁵ The gender gap in informal employment rate was the highest in Sekong (20.1% points) and Attapeu (14.9% points).

Employment across sectors. The largest shares of workers, meanwhile, were in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors, (35.8% of all employed) followed by wholesale and retail trade (21.4%). The manufacturing sector only made up 9% of employed people. Notably, despite their importance to the larger economy and contribution to GDP, the electricity and gas sector made up 0.7% of jobs and mining only 0.5%. There were also gender differences. Larger shares of women work in wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing while larger shares of men work in public administration and construction.

²⁵ The highest informal employment rate occurred in Huaphanh (94.2 per cent) and in Luangprabang (93.4%). The lowest rates were found in Sekong (68.0%) and Savannakhet (69.1%).

Table 8.2 - Distribution of employment by sector

	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	35.8	34.7	37.1
Mining and quarrying	0.5	0.9	0.2
Manufacturing	9.1	7.0	11.5
Electricity and gas	0.7	1.0	0.2
Water	0.4	0.6	0.2
Construction	5.4	9.1	1.1
Wholesale and retail trade	21.4	17.1	26.4
Transportation	2.5	4.3	0.6
Accommodation and food service	2.6	1.9	3.6
Information and communication	0.5	0.5	0.5
Financial and insurance	0.7	0.4	1
Public administration	10.2	14.2	5.5
Education	5.5	5.0	6.1
Health and social work	1.5	0.9	2.1
Other services	3.2	2.4	3.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: Labour Force Survey (2017)

Youth labour force participation is the concern. Over the past few years, the youth labour force participation rate significantly declined from 77.5% in 2013 to 57.8% in 2019. About 8.2% men and 7.8% women (15-24 years) were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Children in the age groups between 5 and 17 years involved in the active economic labour force/activities and household chores has been on the rise during the past decade increasing from 15% (2010) (13% boys and 17% girls)²⁶ to 42.8%²⁷ (43.3% girls and 42.4% boys) in 2018.

Low participation rates in vocational and higher education. Overall, participation in vocational training remains relatively small, both in terms of the share the working age population and of the labour force. About 7.6% of the working age population had completed some form of vocational training. Another 3.1% had completed university education or above. Meanwhile, 13.5% of the labour force had completed vocational training and 5.9% university level or higher. Those who had not completed primary school still make up 53.7% of the working age population and 43.2% of the labour force.

Skills development and employment development. There remain shortages of trained professionals for key sectors and limited on-the-job training opportunities. Initiatives have been taken to use TVET as a driver of a strengthened national workforce. Limitations remain in the ability of this system to play its essential role and to coordinate among different skills development centers by different ministries and organizations and TVET under the Ministry of Education and Sports. Cooperation with private sector firms requires further strengthening. Specifically, the quality of TVET programmes ranges widely, the relevance of the curriculum to the job market is often limited, and coordination with private sector needs remains relatively weak. The development of stronger higher education institutes to support structural transformation, meanwhile, is also challenged by the capacity of staff and instructors, limited alignment of available courses and the needs of the national socio-economic development strategy, and scientific research that is not well aligned to development priorities. Finally, the non-formal education sector also

²⁶ The National Labour Force Survey and the National Child Labour Survey (LFS & CLS) 2010 has been conducted primarily with the aim to analyse the background, prevalence and issues affecting the child labour. The findings from this survey reaffirms that a significant number of persons of age 5 to 17 years contribute to the total labour force.

²⁷ LSISII 2018

faces budget constraints, limited supply of experienced teachers, and insufficient supply of learning and teaching materials.

FDI and job creation. The government has highlighted FDI as one of the key forms of the private sector finance that is targeted to provide 57% of the funding required under the 8th NSEDP (2016-2020) and this will continue to be at the similar level for 9th NSEDP (2021-2025). FDI for the country averaged US\$206.44 million from 1991 until 2020, reaching an all-time high of US\$579.76 million in the fourth quarter of 2017 and a record low of US\$8 million in the fourth quarter of 1991. The FDI increased by US\$246 million in December 2020. FDI has been strongly dominated by investment in hydropower and mining. In 2019 as recorded by UNCTAD, the FDI stock was US\$10 billion, representing 45% of GDP. With significant increase in FDI, Large mega-projects are also impacting the labour market in Lao PDR. For example, the Laos-China railway project was allowed to employ foreign workers for construction and to help Lao workers access some of these positions, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare coordinated with employment services centers, employment service companies and labour and social welfare divisions of provinces and Vientiane Capital, and nationwide to register workers before sending the available workers to work for the project. Once completed, there will be a significant increase in human mobility across the country due to increased connectivity through those mega-infrastructure projects, which will enhance people's options in determining the location and the types of jobs than before.

COVID-19, unemployment and labour migration.

Unemployment expects to increase further (to be around 20%) as a result of COVID-19 and recent natural disasters. Sectors have been particularly hard-hit are: trade, tourism, travel, hospitality, and others.

- Less than 1.8 million of a total working-age population of over 4.7 million were in employment. For people in many parts of the country, migration is a major source of livelihood, with an estimated 900,000 Lao nationals living abroad, sending an estimated US\$285 million in remittances in 2019.
- The profound economic and social disruption caused by COVID-19 threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of Lao people both inside and outside of the country. Poverty and unemployment have increased substantially in the wake of the pandemic. Moreover, the fiscal situation limits the Government's policy options for cushioning the impact and stimulating economic recovery.
- The lockdown in Thailand led to return of more than 130,000 migrants, causing increases in unemployment, loss of income, and increased risk of exploitation, trafficking, and irregular migration of the most vulnerable. Currently, the capacity to reintegrate such large numbers is still limited, and policies and systems are not in place yet to ensure effective migration governance and smooth reintegration plans, including for skills development and recognition.

Lao PDR's development aspirations require a better future after the COVID-19, with decent work for all. This necessitates an economic and labour market structure and system more resilient to crises and diverse risks. It would involve strengthening domestic supply capacities and consumption markets. A key element for this is strengthening migration governance, considering that migration will be affected by COVID-19, but will also have an impact on the recovery process once borders are again open for transit.

The Government will focus on links that need to be forged with labour, employment, skills (re)training and migration policies to maximize positive effects of domestic and foreign direct investment for local SMEs, skills development, employment and resource transfer; social protection; migration and human mobility governance; labour standards and compliance with labour law for decent work and safety and healthy workplaces.

SDG 13 – Climate Actions

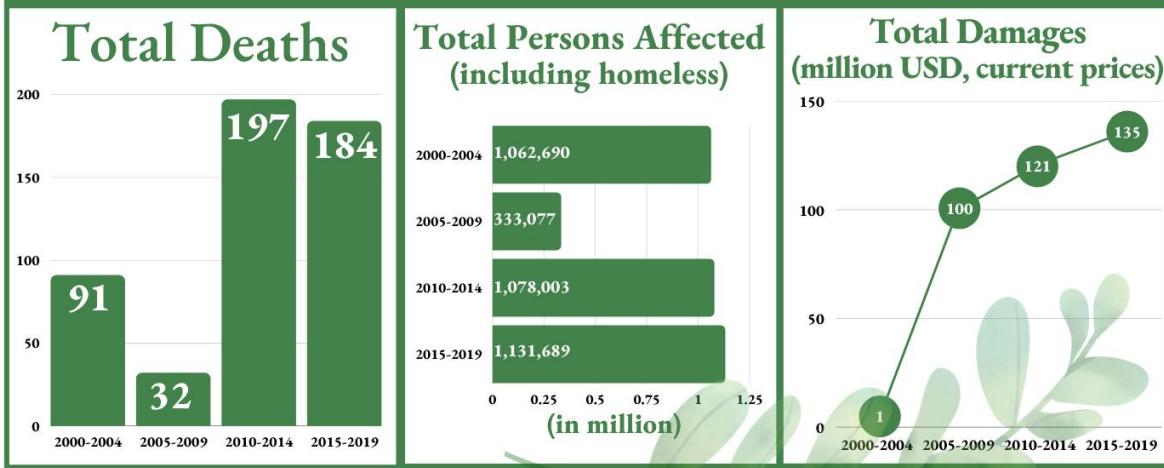
(Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts)



The Ministry of National Resources and Environment (MoNRE)

is the key ministry for coordination and implementation of the country's climate change policies

The cost of disasters to lives and property has been generally rising



The Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) in line with Disaster Prevention and Control Law as well as Climate Change Decree

On September 7, 2016, Lao PDR ratified the Paris Agreement

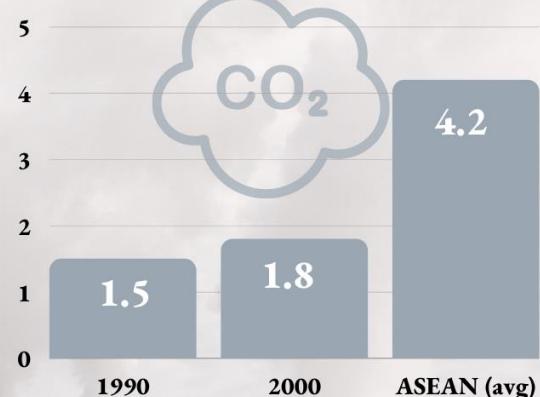


GHG emissions

Lao PDR registered record increase in GHG emissions doubling between 1990 and 2000 mostly caused by land use change and forestry

2020 updated Lao NDC commits a new unconditional GHG mitigation commitment by reducing GHG at the rate of 34% of the 2020 baseline by 2030, and will reach net zero emissions by 2050

CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP PPP



Lao PDR made much effort and progress to identify and implement measures for mitigating climate change. In past 10 years, Lao PDR developed and implemented the National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) (2009), National Strategy on Climate Change (NCCS) (2010), Climate Change Action Plan (2013), the First Intended Nationally Determined Contributions to Climate Change (INDC) (2015), and Climate Change Technology Action Plan (2017).

The Green Growth Strategy lays out a vision of transformation that supports Lao PDR's longer-term sustainable development ambitions. Six priority sectors/areas for focus to support country's approach to green growth: agriculture, forestry, urban development, transport, energy, and tourism. Moving forward, the Government of Lao PDR will put in place a plan for operationalizing Green Growth Strategy at the national, sector, and local levels. This includes following (or adapting as necessary) the implementation plan outlined by the Strategy that includes high level authorization and the operationalization of the Green Growth Promotion Center. Some other focuses for the green growth implementation in Lao PDR include: green growth public and private financing,²⁸ resource mobilization, international support for green growth, strengthening partnerships with businesses, and ensuring flexibility to changing circumstances. In addition, the Government has been working with various partners to promote green growth through transboundary cooperation including through the ASEAN agreement on transboundary haze pollution, the Mekong River Commission for river management, and illegal trade in timber.

Ratification of the Paris Agreement. On 7 September 2016, Lao PDR became the first ASEAN country to ratify the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. On that date, Lao PDR passed a national law on its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, which became the basis of Lao PDR's ratification of the Paris Agreement.²⁹ Lao PDR was the 27th country in the world to ratify the Paris Agreement³⁰ and its Nationally Determined Contribution³¹ was prepared through an inclusive stakeholder consultation process, and was based on existing national plans and strategies. At present, Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MoNRE) is currently working on a Ministerial Decision on Climate Change Impact Adaptation and Mitigation.

Lao PDR's target of zero net emission by 2050

- CO2 emissions per unit of GDP PPP went up from 1.5 to 1.8, yet is still lower than the ASEAN average of 4.2.
- Lao PDR registered record increase in GHG emissions doubling between 1990 and 2000 mostly caused by land-use change and forestry. Therefore, climate change mitigation will depend on reversing the loss of forests and other land use changes.
- The Government is committed to continue to implement the NDC and GHG emission mechanism. Building on national 'green growth' development and environmental protection policies supporting the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2011-2025, the country aims to make full use of existing institutional capacity and financial resources, and embed NDC targets in existing policies and planning. In addition, there are opportunities to scale up the ambition of the NDC which will be identified as opportunities emerge and where feasible.

²⁸ This green financing work could be part of a broader 'national integrated financing framework for SDGs as called for in the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Financing for Development'.

²⁹ Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 2015. *Intended Nationally Determined Contribution*. 30 September 2015. Available from: <http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Laos/1/Lao%20PDR%20INDC.pdf>

³⁰ UNFCCC: Paris Agreement - Status of Ratification. Available from: <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/status-of-ratification> Accessed 21 May 2018.

³¹ As countries formally ratify the Paris Agreement and look forward to implementation of these climate actions, the "intended" is dropped and an Intended NDC is converted into a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). <https://www.wri.org/indc-definition>

Potential sustainable development and climate benefits of circular economy transition.³²

In recent years, circular economy principles and practices have gained traction in Lao PDR as viable solutions to some of the most pressing global and country challenges. To date, according to the global consultations on circular economy, efforts by countries around the globe including Lao PDR to tackle the climate crisis and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 have focused on a transition to renewable energy, complemented by energy efficiency measures and avoiding deforestation. Though crucial and necessary, these measures can only address about 50% of global GHG emissions. The remaining 50% of emissions come from extraction and processing of resources and lifestyle choices. By contributing to this effort, Lao PDR has included some of the circular economy principles and practices in both 8th and 9th NSEDP, including targets for recycling and reuse of waste materials as well as for linking circular economy and climate action, plans to stimulate innovation and job creation through shifts to a circular economy, and processes to bring together important national stakeholders. Together with other countries, Lao PDR is adhered to circular economy principles and practices which hold much promise to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which guide further actions in the near future, in particular:

- SDG 3 (Health) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by reducing waste and air, soil and water pollution;
- SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) by promoting a shift towards renewable energy sources;
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by creating new jobs and incomes;
- SDG 9 (Sustainable and inclusive industrialization, resilient Infrastructure and innovation) by ensuring industrialization is sustainable and inclusive, and innovations in materials and business practices are deployed, including digitalization;
- SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by accelerating a mind-set change that values resources and reverses unsustainable consumption habits of consumers, businesses and governments;
- SDG 13 (Climate Action) by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from resource extraction and processing; and
- SDG 15 (Life on Land) by reducing the impact of resource extraction and processing on biodiversity and land.

Lao PDR is highly vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. Lao PDR is exposed to a range of natural phenomena, including typhoons, floods, landslides, droughts, strong winds, locust outbreaks, as well as small scale earthquakes in the northern parts of the country. The country is seeing an increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods. The majority of floods occur in the central and southern parts of the country along the Mekong plain. From 1990 to 2019, Lao PDR had 30 floods and storms, with the more severe ones affecting over 500,000 people.³³ Reducing the impact of these disasters on the population will require effective disaster preparedness and risk reduction. There is also a need for scaled up action for climate resilience through Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA).

Given the high dependence of the country on natural resources for development, Lao PDR is highly vulnerable to climate change. The country has experienced a number of extreme weather events like floods, droughts, landslides and storms destroying crops, livestock, livelihoods, and infrastructure like road, houses and electricity. The climate change also induced displacement and threatened food-security and health. Both climate change and unsustainable natural resource

³² Background note for the regional preparatory meetings for the global consultations on circular economy, UNIDO (2020).

³³ Emergency Events Database EM-DAT, Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Available from: <http://www.emdat.be/>.

management have increased the number of disasters and disaster risks in the country. Nearly 47% of the villages, representing nearly 3 million people, have been exposed to at least one climate-change related hazard.³⁴

The country is increasingly focusing on investing in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. Recognising the lack of capacity to anticipate and respond to disasters, especially large-scale disasters, and gaps in the social protection system, the country is investing in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. To enable communities to recover from disasters requires both preparedness before the disaster and alignment of recovery measures with on-going development plans after the disaster. Therefore, the Government of Lao PDR with support from partners has recently adopted the Disaster Recovery Framework (DRF) in line with Disaster Prevention and Control Law as well as a Climate Change Decree. The framework will guide the government and other stakeholders in the medium and longer-term recovery efforts. It will be updated and reiterated regularly based on results and changes in needs and circumstances, such as another wave of floods or economic shocks and particularly during the COVID-19 recovery phase. Two key immediate focuses, among others, to take this DRF forwards within the 9th NSEDP timeframe are:

- **Institutional Framework and Capacity Development.** The Government will act with a clear delineation of mandates and responsibilities among key agencies. Coordination among the many actors involved and the harmonization of plans of government and other development stakeholders – in particular communities who carry out much of the ground work for recovery - is critical in effectively executing the DRF. Existing organizations and mechanisms for coordination, particularly those related to DRF, have been utilized, for instance:
 - The National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee serves as a top-level coordination body and the DRF implementation.
 - The MPI, which has the mandate for development planning, has been assigned as lead agency on the recovery. The MoLSW, which has the overall mandate for DRF, will coordinate with, and support MPI, in developing and implementing the recovery action plan.³⁵
 - The existing Round Table mechanism with its ten Sector Working Groups and 30 Subsector Working Groups has been supporting the coordination of Government and Development partners around the recovery.
 - The recovery builds on existing capacities and use DRF programmes to help institutionalize these capacities within the government, private sector, and communities.
 - Utilizing existing capacity assessments and the gaps identified in the PDNA, a consultation and training of MPI, MoLSW, and line ministry focal points on risk-informed recovery development plans to be undertaken and sustained by a DRF programme. Following this step, a full-fledged disaster capacity assessment will be executed and applied to better target capacity gaps.
- **Sector Plans** are being and will be prepared under the leadership of the respective line ministries and with the support of relevant development partners under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Planning and Investment. The sector plans will be used to guide, plan and estimate resource requirements for recovery and full integration of

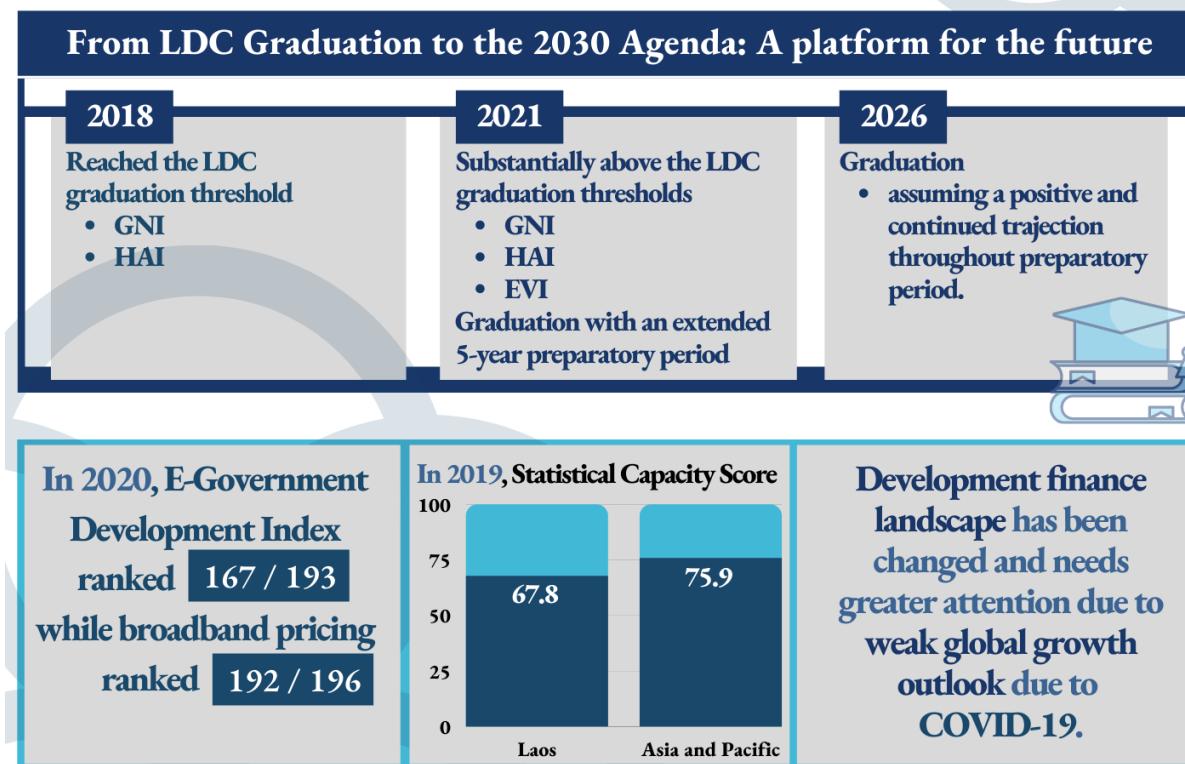
³⁴ National Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for Disaster Risk Management in Lao PDR, A Paper Prepared for CCA, UN Habitat, August 2020

³⁵ In Lao PDR the lead agency in recovery following PDNA was assigned to MPI in 2009 and the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC) in 2011.

reconstruction activities into the overall development plan of the government as outlined in the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (9th NSEDP). Sector plans will also be developed into tools to monitor progress against targets on a regular basis. These plans are meant to be living documents, to be updated periodically based on the targets and indicators which will be incorporated into them. Overall the sector plans must ensure that recovery is resilient, incorporate climate change adaption measures and fully aligned with the development agenda of Lao PDR.

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Growth
(Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development)

8 Principles of Effective Development Cooperation (Vientiane Declaration 2016 - 2025)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ownership2. Alignment3. Harmonization and Simplification.4. Inclusive Partnerships for Development Results.5. Transparency, Predictability and Mutual Accountability.6. Domestic Resource Mobilization.7. South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation, and Knowledge Sharing.8. Business as a Partner in Development
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Partnerships for effective development cooperation. Like many developing countries, Lao PDR seeks to mobilise the right scale and mix of finance, incorporating all resources – public and private, domestic and international. It has increasingly recognised that to achieve this, as well as utilising these resources effectively, requires an integrated national financing framework, as outlined in the Addis Abba Action Agenda (AAAA). Specially, on Official Development Assistance (ODA), the trends suggest that a movement towards ODA reduction and a change in the assistance portfolio are already taking place, much earlier than when the country will possibly graduate out of its LDC status, in the next few years. However, ODA plays a necessary role to support different sectors contributing to poverty reduction and economic development. DPs have been committed to support Lao PDR and align their support with national development goals specified in the 8th NSEDP and the upcoming 9th NSEDP including LDC graduation and SDG achievement within the framework of Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016-2025).

Guiding principles. Given the complexity and diversity of sources of development finance and dynamically changing development cooperation landscape, Lao PDR has found value in galvanizing its efforts to improve and adjust laws, policies and partnership mechanisms at all levels to reflect the current reality. The increasing focus on greater and more inclusive partnerships, bringing on board private sector, partners from the region, civil society and others represent something of a breakthrough. One of key commitments by the Government of Lao PDR and its partners (more than 30 of them) is the adoption of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (The Vientiane Partnership Declaration 2016-2025) highlight eight guiding principles for effective development cooperation

1. Ownership
2. Alignment
3. Harmonisation and Simplification
4. Inclusive Partnerships for Development Results
5. Transparency, Predictability and Mutual Accountability
6. Domestic Resource Mobilization
7. South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation, and Knowledge Sharing
8. Business as a Partner in Development

This signalled a shift from traditional ODA towards greater partnerships, and towards a more comprehensive and inclusive range of development financing and resourcing options. The implementation of this Declaration is at its mid-point and its progress review is under preparation. Findings of this review should be finalised by the end of 2021.

A Round Table Process to support Lao PDR's modern development vision. The Government has continued to lead and strengthen a range of mechanisms for policy dialogue and discussions, including especially the Round Table Process and Sector Working Groups. These dialogues are critical to ensuring aligned support around the Government's key priorities and strategies. Importantly, participation in these mechanisms has also been expanding to include not only the central government and traditional development partners but also National Assembly members, provincial authorities, regional bilateral partners, private sector entities, and civil society. The Government of Lao PDR and its partners continue to broadly perceive of the Round Table Process as a significant contribution to more effective partnership. Its positive characteristics include frank and open discussions, inclusive participation, and focus on concrete outcomes. Results from RTP mechanisms have consistently been translated into directives from the Prime Minister to line ministries, provinces and concerned agencies. Nevertheless, the Government recognizes the importance of continually assessing and adapting as necessary the approach. While it has led to success, there are elements of the partnership that require further strengthening. The

contribution and mobilization of support from the private sector to accelerate NSEDP achievement will be a highly pressing objective. More broadly, the Government also aims to continue shifting the development dialogue further into discussion and agreement on implementation mechanisms, capacities, and resources.

From LDC Graduation to the 2030 Agenda: A platform for the future. The country is on track to graduate from the LDC status. Lao PDR reached the threshold for graduation from the LDC category for the first time in 2018 and it is substantially above the level in 2021 review. As a result, the country has been recommended for graduation with an extended 5-year preparatory period effectively setting the graduation to 2026 assuming a positive and continued trajectory throughout the time period leading up to graduation.

- The Government takes note of the result of the review by the CDP which paves the way forward for a smooth preparatory period before Lao PDR will be officially removed from the list of LDCs. Taking into account the current circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic, the Government's concerns persist since the data for this review did not fully cover the impacts by the pandemic. Against this backdrop, continued support and assistance from the international community is as much necessary as before the review, especially in the crucial transition period.
- The Government is fully aware that while graduation from the LDC category will mark an important milestone it is also necessary to look beyond. Meeting the criteria for graduation does not mean a country is necessarily on a sustainable development pathway. Therefore, to sustain development momentum, to move to an even higher pathway, and to broaden the impact across society, the Government will continue the focus on structural transformation, including through expanding productive capacity, diversifying the economy, and building resilience to shocks.
- The Government will continue its efforts to further integrate the 2030 Agenda into national processes. It is committed to building on the work already accomplished to develop follow up comprehensive strategies that align LDC graduation with the principles of the 2030 Agenda, especially those areas where there has been slower progress. This effort aims to further contribute to accelerated progress towards LDC graduation, preparation for the removal of LDC support measures, and a longer-term sustainable development pathway post-graduation.
- Working with other LDC countries, Lao PDR will focus on graduation planning and transitioning as the pre-graduation planning will help mitigate possible negative effects on key areas of international support (trade, development cooperation and support for participation in international forums), and position Lao PDR to take advantage of the new (non-LDC) status.
- During the course of the preparatory period (2021-2026), the Government will utilize relevant information to guide the development of a smooth transition strategy to appropriately manage Lao PDR's transition from the list of LDCs. This includes making use of the remaining periods of LDC-specific support measures strategically; conceiving, assessing and negotiating alternatives in critical areas like trade; and preparing government, private sector and other stakeholders for the expected impacts.

COVID-19 and its implication for macroeconomic stability and development finance. Lao PDR's economic growth in 2020 is estimated to decline dramatically to below zero (4.7% in 2019) due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures adopted to contain its spread. The agricultural sector and industry overall are estimated to grow moderately but the services sector has been severely affected by the pandemic. The spread of COVID-19 and containment measures will further aggravate the long-standing structural macroeconomic vulnerabilities of Lao PDR. These vulnerabilities stem from high fiscal deficit and public debt levels as well as low reserves buffers. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will increase the fiscal deficit in 2020 to

between 7.5% and 8.8% of GDP, from 5.1% of GDP in 2019. Consequently, debt levels are expected to increase to between 65 and 68% of GDP in 2020, from 59% of GDP in 2019, which will generate higher debt service obligations. Despite its greater efforts related to building a strong macroeconomic framework, the Government is aware of existing risks and vulnerabilities. This includes revenue shortfalls, growing public debt, risks in the financial sector, and low buffers to shocks as possible threats to sustained macroeconomic stability. On the fiscal side, efforts are needed to improve tax collection and implementation. Prudent debt management will also need to be a priority for the Government. The low level of foreign exchange reserves, meanwhile, and put the country at risk to external shocks. Many banks also have low capital buffers and an increasing number of non-performing loans. The COVID-19 induced economic downturn has deepened these existing vulnerabilities and affected Lao PDR through multiple channels including tourism, trade and investment, commodity prices, exchange rates and lower remittances.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). On 15 November 2020, Lao PDR joined 13 other countries in the region in the formation/formalization of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which is now the largest free-trade bloc in the world, comprising nearly a third of all global economic activity. The Government considers trade as a driver of economic growth and job creation and the joining of RCEP in November 2020 as an opportunity to promote both economic and job growth through greater business within the region as well as possible skills transfer.

Innovation, Science & Technology and ICT. Lao PDR ranks 167/193 in the E-Government Development Index (2020) and 192/196 in broadband pricing. Percentage of population registered as internet users was 43%. In term of fixed internet broadband connection per 100 persons, the rate was 0.525 in 2015 but declined to 0.342 in 2018. The first ICT survey published in 2018 indicates that the rate of computer users is 36%, internet users 45% of total population while those with access to high speed connection is 37%, households with access to the internet is 27%, landline telephone users 54% and mobile phone users 92%. With the low rate of population, particularly in rural areas is connected to the internet, greater efforts will be needed during the COVID-19 period. As witnessed during the coronavirus lockdowns, citizen across the country are forced to rely on the Internet for daily activities, including working from home, taking online classes, shopping and socializing. While the national budget for innovation, science, technology and telecommunications and ICT is still minimal, the Government has continued and put great efforts on various related activities on how science can better support and advance social-economic development in Lao PDR, particularly during this COVID-19 recovery period in line with the 9th NSEDP timeframe.

- Great efforts are on an enforcement of a number of legislative actions which have been enacted to improve scientific innovation, such as the Law on Intellectual Property and associated implementation of trademarks, copyrights, and industrial patents. The Law on Science and Technology has been completed and approved to the National Assembly for approval.
- On-going work is making progress on a ‘South-South’ Cooperation Plan with the Ministry of Science and Technology of Viet Nam.
- Some other initiatives with neighbouring countries and key partners in this area of work have also been carried out in order to bring advanced science and technology from overseas.
- The National Science and Technology Strategy 2013-2020 and Vision 2030 have also been developed and finalized.
- Some of key initiatives under discussions for further improving the contribution of science and technology to development include: making ICT work for education, private Sector partnership for ICT development, connecting rural communities and providing

community access, using ICT to reach remote communities for health benefits and expanding rural health service access, linking research and farmers, connection rural communities and urban population through mobile phones and on-line early warning system.

- Special focus will be on ensuring the access of rural communities to ICT, internet and technology as this will help improve their livelihood, particularly during the COVID-19 period.

The 9th NSEDP articulates the Government vision aiming to enhance technological capabilities, including innovation, as key for sustained growth through fostering structural economic transformation and building productive capacities. The use of internet and digitization are great important more than ever due to the impact of COVID-19 and how Lao PDR sustainable development will unfold in the future depends on the ability of the country toward innovation and digitalization. This will be carried out by improving linkages between and among firms and sectors as well as promoting science, technology and innovation systems, including Research & Development (R&D) centers. Supportive policies and incentives will be put in place to ensure that FDI brings with it not only capital and machinery but knowledge, skills and modern management techniques as well as technological benefits and technology transfers. Lessons learnt from other countries will also be explored, such as setting up an innovation and knowledge hub to foster IT and non-IT based innovative thinking to address issues and solve problems.

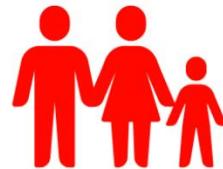
Lao PDR is one of the most heavily bombed nations in the world



**Three million tons of ordnance dropped
(More than 270 million submunition from cluster bombs)**



One ton for every Lao child, woman and man



33 casualties in 2020



An estimated of 20,000 UXO accident survivors remain need assistances

The initial estimate of land contaminated by cluster munition is more than 2,873 villages

99% of high priority hazardous areas remaining to be cleared

For recent years (from 2018 to February 2021), 116 UXO survivors received supports



Key recent progress. The initial estimate of land contaminated by cluster munitions is approximately 847,000 ha (8,470 Km²). However, **on-going survey efforts will confirm the actual extent of the cluster munitions contamination.** From 1997 to 2021 (April), Lao PDR has recorded more than 70,000 hectares of land that have been cleared from UXO and more than 1.6 million UXO items have been destroyed. From 1964-2008, there were 50,000 casualties, of this an estimated of 20,000 UXO accident survivors remain need assistances. In recent years, a combination of effective risk education, survey and clearance of contaminated areas and wider economic opportunities that reduce risky behaviour have seen the numbers of casualties dropping 85% over the last decade from 302 in 2008 to 59 in 2015 (Baseline year for SDG localization) and to 33 in 2020.

National UXO and Mine Action Policy Framework

Lao PDR has a number of instruments which form as a national policy framework to guide the implementation of SDG 18 and to ensure its better linkage with other SDGs in Lao PDR. Recent update of those policy framework instruments is highlighted below:

1. **UXO and Mine Actions – one of 25 outputs of the 9th NSEDP (2021-2025).** Addressing UXO problem has been aligned as an Output in 9th NSEDP (2021-2025). This is the UXO long-term national and local socio-economic development plans. This linkage create opportunity for greater cross-sector collaboration and increased coordination to address UXO issue comprehensively;
2. **The 3rd National UXO/Mine Action Strategy entitled “Safe Path Forward 3”** is being developed for the period of 2021-2025;
3. **The new Victim Assistance Framework (2021-2025)** is being developed and this framework will increase assistance on mental health issues faced by UXO survivors and their families and will provide more social-economic inclusive support to the wider community of persons with disabilities;
4. **Development of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Decree.** The Draft Decree on the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munition (CCM) is being developed. This Decree will define principles, regulatory and measurement for UXO/Mine Action work in the Lao PDR; and
5. **UXO prioritisation plan** has been adopted as a part of survey and clearance planning.

A new methodology for UXO Survey and Clearance

The new approach, which has been included in the Lao PDR UXO Survey Procedures, focuses on evidence-based survey and the subsequent clearance of Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHA). This approach consists of three steps: 1) Non-Technical Survey, 2) Technical Survey and 3) Clearance. Since 2015, all five humanitarian clearance operators (NPA, MAG, Halo Trust, UXO Lao and Humanitarian teams of Lao Army) have adopted this approach. As a result, the number of Cluster Munitions (CM) bomblets found per hectare cleared has decreased. This is due to most of surface UXO contamination having been cleared or removed previously and the majority of the contamination is now sub-surface. Work on this is a part of long-term resource management, prioritization and clearance planning. Throughout the implementation of the survey over the past 2 years (2016 to 2017) as reported in the first Lao PDR’s VNR (2018), 7,068 CHAs were established, equivalent to 51,247.48 hectares of CHAs remaining to be cleared. For this second Lao PDR’s VNR, over the past 3 years (2018 to 2020), 4,118 CHAs were established, equivalent to 65,153.8 hectares CHAs remaining to be cleared.

UXO victim assistance

The implementation of the UXO Victim Assistance Strategy since its adoption has enabled support to 1,400 UXO survivors, with medical care, physical rehabilitation, psycho-social support, economic reintegration and vocational training. For recent years (from 2018 to February 2021), 116 UXO survivors received supports in line with the strategy. In term of regulatory framework,

in 2020, the implementation of the UXO/Mine Victim Assistance Strategy 2014-2020 has been gone into a review with a foreword looking objective, among others, of developing a new UXO Victim Assistance Framework from 2022-2026. This will ensure the framework is up-to-date and reflects the current circumstance and situation.

Challenges

Addressing and even quantifying the impact of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) remains a great challenge. Due to the fact that UXO Contaminated areas are vast (more than 99% to be cleared) and most of them located in mountainous area. Therefore, it is very challenging to undertake a comprehensive survey that can identify the exact size and location of the contaminated areas in each province. Some other challenges include:

- **Unsustainable Funding.** International Donors funding is often unpredictable and sometimes reaches a critical point where there is an inadequate fund to maintain the regular operation teams. As the results, in some cases we have to halt the operation or reduce more than half of employees in some area.
- **Outdated equipment.** Some of the current equipment is outdated (cannot adequately distinguish between UXO and scrap metals).
- **UXO clearance at village level.** Due to the limited number of operation team and the limited technology acquired, conducting a village clearance task can only cover some portion of the entire village area at a time. Most of the villages are needed to conduct UXO clearance multiple times in order to clear all the contaminated area for the entire village.
- **Coordination and multi-sectoral approach toward UXO issues.** Inadequate capacities for coordination, planning, quality management and information management inhibit optimal operational performance. At the same time, UXO work has not been addressed in a multi-sectoral manner in term of strategic planning, budgeting and/or action plans.

Chapter 3

Recent progress on the Government's strategic priorities and policy implementation based on key recommendation from the first VNR for accelerating the achievement of SDGs

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires transformative, inclusive, and accountable multi-stakeholder partnerships involving not only states but also citizens, partners, and other stakeholders in order to ensure that no one is left behind. Therefore, the Government's development vision and strategies continue to be refined through broad-based participation and refinement of short and medium-term plans by sectoral ministries and provinces.

Building on lessons learnt since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and progresses made in various goals highlighted in the last chapter, various strategic priorities of the Government of Lao PDR in recent years have been the driving force for effective means of SDG implementation in the country. This Chapter also seeks to highlight, where possible, both good practices and areas where progress is lagging. Some of key strategic priorities and their implementation progress, on the top of what highlighted under each SDG in the previous chapter and to help addressing key challenges from the first VNR prepared in 2018, for accelerating the achievement of SDGs in Lao PDR are highlighted below:

3.1 Greater efforts to address inclusive and sustainable growth constraints

With sustained economic growth in recent years, the Government is committed to addressing some of the most critical inclusive and sustainable growth constraints and diversifying growth drivers by rebalancing from a capital intensive to a more inclusive growth model. The Government has been working with national and international stakeholders on a number of key principles to sustain and ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits from economic growth.

- First of all, the focus in recent years is on greater investment in people and places left behind and providing equal opportunities for all. Some of key directions include: (i) targeted quality childcare, early education and life-long acquisition of skills, in particular, high-quality initial education and training systems which could be implemented from early childhood through to schooling age and beyond. (ii) effective access to quality healthcare, justice, infrastructures (more efforts may be needed to weaken the link between socio-economic background and health, education and employment outcomes). It could furthermore require housing and land use policies to improve access to affordable housing and broader economic development in distressed regions through the promotion of network infrastructure. (iii) optimal natural resource management for sustainable growth - investing in communities' well-being and social capital.
- Second, efforts have been focused on the need to explore potential drivers of growth other than the resource-based industries. In this regard, the Government focuses on supporting business dynamism and inclusive labour markets through (i) broad-based innovation and technology diffusion; (ii) strong competition and vibrant entrepreneurship; (iii) access to good quality jobs, especially for women and under-represented groups; and (iv) enhanced resilience and adaptation to the future of work. The Government fully acknowledges that the resource-based industries are often capital intensive, and which, given the diminishing marginal productivity of capital. In recent years, the issuing of licenses for mining and hydropower has been put on hold and there are on-going discussions stressing the

importance of other key sectors. For instance, agribusiness and agricultural productivity have strong inter-industry linkages with huge potential for employment generation. Under the framework of the National Rice Production for National Food Security Strategy, the Government has been working with various partners to facilitate trade in paddy and rice to encourage private investment in milling. Support has also been extended to rice farmers with a more balanced approach in allocating resources for extension activities, technology development transfer and irrigation. Additional emphasis has also been placed on strengthening tourism, which is a driver of growth with many subsectors that have high degree of employment response to outputs. Lao PDR is strategically located as a tourism destination. Therefore, the Government has been working with its neighbours to the extent possible to offer a stronger cluster based tourism destination. In the next decade, the potential for nature-based tourism in Lao PDR as the potential to significant grow, and tourism in general could become the main foreign exchange earner, with nature-based tourism becoming the biggest rural employer in the country.

- Third, greater focus has been made on ensuring that citizens and society at large could have a stronger role to play in developing policies for economic growth in particular, embedding inclusiveness in policy-making. The integration of the 2030 Agenda and NSEDP has also meant changes for the latter, since the planning process (formulation, implementation and monitoring) has now to be based on SDG Multi-Stakeholder Partnership (MSP) framework. The planning process is now more transparent. The Government now shares with donors, provinces and the public information on how the NSEDP is formulated, implemented and monitored. Annual and mid-term progress reports are also publicly available and there is media coverage of what the Government annually reports to the National Assembly. Selected donors are also invited to be observers during this National Assembly sessions. In addition, the planning process is now more participatory. During the preparation of the most recent plans – 8th NSEDP (2016-2020) and 9th NSEDP (2021-2025), three regional consultations (one for the north, one for the south and another one for the central provinces) were organized to come up with a first draft. Most participants for these regional consultations were representatives from national line ministries, provincial offices and local communities. To further help facilitate MSPs at sectoral level, Lao PDR has created partnership and coordination forum which is called Sector Working Groups (SWGs). Currently, there are 10 SWGs which are covering more or less various key sectors for implementation of the SDGs. The creation of the SWG mechanism has also helped improve collaboration between the Government and the Partners. Chaired by the relevant Government ministries, each SWG now plays a meaningful role in supporting the preparation of the sector development plans fed into 9th NSEDP formulation, implementation and review, especially ensuring that sector priorities are reflected in national plans.
- While there have been numerous positive developments, challenges remain in instituting broad-based and robust consultation mechanisms. Co-ordination and partnership structures and processes will need to be made more effective, including through further efforts to widen stakeholder participation to include civil society, south-south partners and the private sector. While these partners are invited to participate in and contribute to cooperation and planning initiatives and many report good cooperation with Government, especially at the local level, more space can be given to make sure these groups can make a more meaningful contribution to Lao PDR's SDG based national development planning process.

3.2 COVID-19 recovery measures

With the impact of COVID-19, various sectors, in particular, trade and tourism have been greatly impacted. Therefore, some COVID-19 recovery measures which will be implemented during the course of the 9th NSEDP are on key areas as follow:

Financing for sustainable development and macroeconomic management

- Focus on policy responses to: (i) ensure macro-fiscal stability; (ii) promote inclusive and sustainable growth by expanding productive employment (including attracting more private investment in non-resource sectors) and supporting a sustainable resource sector development.
- Mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak through measures such as: (i) reprioritizing spending and mobilizing additional resources to support well-targeted social assistance to affected households and businesses; (ii) accelerating reforms to promote diversification and improve competitiveness in the private sector; and (iii) more and better investment in human capital and social protection system to enhance economic resilience in the longer term.

Trade and private sector, value chains and tourism

- Continue efforts to improve the business environment and facilitate investment into the Lao economy aimed at creating jobs and fostering competitiveness, connectivity and efficiencies.
- Focus on policy options based on the underlying assumptions and conditions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic – measures to mitigate the economic crisis by promoting trade, value chains and private sector development as well as recovering the tourism sector, addressing the existing food crisis, and facilitating digital transformation particularly digital technologies and e-commerce in the COVID-19 era.

Human Capital

- Focus on critical interventions and programmes to build human capital and harness the demographic dividend (working-age population) including:
 - o Investment in quality Early Childhood Education and primary education,
 - o Investment in primary health services
 - o Skills development matched to labour markets
 - o Provide social policy support for the most vulnerable population groups
 - o Ensuring the private sector plays its role in human capital investment.

Labour and Migration

- Manage changes for quality skilled workforce development and job creation in the context of slower economic growth.
- Promote labour standards and compliance with labour law for decent work
- Protect migrants/migrant workers and leveraging the benefits of migration.
- Developing a shock-responsive national social protection to respond to the crisis in Lao PDR
- Establishment of the national social protection system to be able to respond to future shocks

- Crisis response measures
- Support to MSMEs including business development and access to credit, access to employment services, vocational training

Green growth, resilience and risk management

- Maintain macro-fiscal stability by providing a framework for economic diversification to achieve more resilience, green, inclusive and sustainable growth.
- Build climate change resilience and disaster risk management. Disaster prevention rather than response.
- Lao PDR will take this opportunity now to address the much longer-term crisis of climate change, and ensure a post-COVID-19 transition that is green, and a lower carbon transition that is green transition.
- 9th NSEDP will provide a platform for Investment in resilient infrastructure and supply chains.
- Investing and accelerating clean energy transition.
- Importance of promoting green bonds for renewable energy. Strengthening biodiversity and wildlife protection and conservation. Also supporting disease risk reduction for zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19.
- Scaling up action to implement the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2016-2025 and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife (CITES).
- Investing in local communities to protect ecology.

3.3 Macro-Economic Stability

The Government is fully aware of the current economic challenges and is committed to strengthening the country economy's resilience to external shocks and put in place conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth. Some of key recent highlights are:

Fiscal policy. The Government has maintained its consolidation efforts Aiming at reducing fiscal deficit to about 2% of GDP and public debt below 50% of GDP by 2025 and improving fiscal governance through a multi-year revenue mobilization strategy, public financial management reforms, and strengthening debt management are necessary for building the fiscal space for inclusive development. Rebalancing the composition of fiscal consolidation from expenditure compression towards revenue mobilization will better enable the aligning of spending priorities with social development goals. Greater emphasis has recently been placed on revenue administration and expenditure rationalization to ensure continued consolidation. To respond to the revenue shortfall particularly during this COVID-19 period, the Government has continued implementing different measures, particularly raising non-mining revenues, improving the valuation of imported vehicles to calculate import taxes, eliminating exemptions for oil imports in public projects, revising excise taxes, and better administering Value-Added Tax (VAT). On exemptions, the Government has been revising two key Laws (Investment Promotion and Special Economic Zones) and reviewing the application of exemptions, particularly for vehicles and construction materials. New investment projects have been suspended and the authorities are taking stock of all existing projects with the view to re-prioritizing capital investment to address further infrastructure repair needs. On tax policy, the Government is planning to introduce a land tax and revise some rates on existing taxes. There is also a plan to introduce point-of-sale (POS) recording of transactions for retail businesses and to require strengthened bookkeeping for

presumptive taxpayers. This would help improve tax compliance over the long run. For tax administration, large taxpayers should be managed centrally and there has been a discussion to transfer this function from provincial offices to the central tax office. Effort has also been on the importance of increased electronic tax collection system. This has recently been producing great results. For instance, the road tax rolled out in 2018 significantly increased with 100% of fund transferred to the national budget.

Monetary and exchange rate policy. The Bank of the Lao PDR (BOL) maintained conducting policies under the managed floating exchange rate regime in order to maintain the price stability. Simultaneously, the Bank continues, on a daily basis, monitoring the implementation of these policies and reporting on results. In addition, to ensure efficient liquidity in financial system and to support economic recovery against the impact of COVID-19, BOL has conducted an easing monetary policy since early 2020, by signalling market through lowering its interest rate and continuing domestic money market development. In terms of gross international reserves, as of December 2020, it covers 4.81 months of imports. This is considered to be adequate and higher level would further increase safeguard stability.

Financial stability. To enhance financial sector resilience, the Government has been putting greater efforts on improving liquidity management, strengthening banking supervision, reducing Foreign Currency lending risks, putting in place crises management and prompt corrective action frameworks, and building capital buffers. Currently, BOL is working to amend its legal framework to strengthen risk-based supervision and move towards Basel core principles for effective banking supervision including improvement of prudential regulations. A plan to restructure state owned commercial banks is underway and work is on-going. BOL has also been working on upgrading the payment system, and other information requirements for the securities markets. To address key challenges of the banking sector, BOL is working, among others, on a repair of its balance sheet to reduce the possibility of an external shock, eliminating forbearance, introducing regulations to better account for Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) which would help clarify recapitalization estimates and restructuring options. To further improve supervision, the master plan and implementation plan on bank supervision development toward Basel standards have been issued and stronger risk-based supervision has been applied to be align with Basel Core Principles. In term of enhancing transparency, public disclosure of audited statements of banks in Lao PDR have currently been enforced. In the area of accounting, BOL considers upgrading requirements in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). On bank licensing, proper criteria to safeguard against Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) risks have been upgraded.

Debt management and sustainability. Lao PDR's risk of external debt distress has been reclassified from moderate to high by IMF. However, due to a significant part of the external debt being long term concessional loans, it is anticipated that there will be no difficulties in servicing debts and the public debt level will remain manageable. This is due to the fact that energy projects will generate high and stable economic returns upon completion and will supply enough foreign exchange to service debt. Also, a relative long maturity profile of loans, as well as US dollar returns of the exporting sectors, would help mitigate the risks of debt distress. The Government sees the importance in maintaining the public debt in manageable level for the next 5 year. Therefore, the Government has been putting greater emphasis on tightening fiscal policy, strengthening public financial management and forging a plan for a comprehensive debt management strategy which will be proposed to the National Assembly in due course. The important task is to focus on serving existing debts rather than creating new debts. Additionally, a borrowing ceiling has also been set. Projects with value of US\$50 million will be approved by the Government while projects with value higher than US\$50 million will be approved by the National Assembly. Steps have been

taken to limit the contracting of additional debt to concessional borrowing. A new legal framework for the contracting and management of public debt has been prepared and Ministry of Finance has completed organizational rearrangement of merging the management of all debt (domestic and foreign) in one department since 2020. The contracting of central banking financing of off-budget investments has now been eliminated.

In terms of improvements to the business climate and support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), a number of initiatives have been carried out to enhance and upgrade the investment climate and promote private investment in non-resource industries (Lao PDR ranked 154 out of 189 countries worldwide in the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators in 2019). For instance, implementation measures have been documented for the enforcement of the Law on SMEs. The enterprise registration process was improved to facilitate streamlined, easier and cheaper processing. The total number of days required for the registration was significantly reduced from 60-90 to 3-10 days. Similarly, the number of documents required has been dramatically reduced from 18 copies to between 4-6 copies. Permits issued are now permanent (i.e., renewal is not required). There have also been improvements of access to finance by SMEs, for example, through the Government's new SME fund via contract with assigned Banks to manage the SME loan portfolio. Fund management regulations have also been completed, with compliance to the National Treasury.

3.4 Strengthening the link between the national plan and development budget.

The approval of the Vision 2030 and the Public Finance Development Strategy to 2025 "Building Strong, Transparent, Fair, Modern Public Finances in line with International Standards" by the National Assembly in 2017 has provided a clear policy direction and framework through which to strengthen the links between the national plan and the development budget, and to improve coordination between the latter and the recurrent budget. Overall, this objective of the strategy is to strengthen public finances so as to achieve outcomes detailed in both the vision 2030 and 8th NSEDP, with overall targets on GDP growth, state revenue collection, expenditure and debt management.

While the rationale for strengthening the linkages between planning and budgeting is clear, putting in place concrete measures to improve cooperation and coordination is a challenge that the Government is gradually managing to address. For example, the four key measures that the Government is currently pursuing include: i) ensuring clarity of policy direction and institutional frameworks; ii) ensuring that budget allocations reflect priorities; iii) ensuring that spending is consistent with approved budget allocation and allotments, and iv) greater scrutiny over the measuring of results and ensuring implementation feedback into the policy process.

The current status of the above measures is generally positive and on track. Providing an outline of the likely overall resource envelope for the 8th NSEDP also serve as an important platform to enhance the link between planning, budgeting and policy implementation. The indicative overall resource envelopes in place for sectors and provinces are expected to create greater scope for prioritizing interventions based on the likelihood of resources being available. The Government's commitment to improve financial allocations to policy priorities is reflected in higher allocations to the social sectors. In addition, according to the approved 2015/2016 Budget Preparation Instruction by the Ministry of Finance, public expenditure must adhere to the budget plan approved by the National Assembly (NA). This instruction represents the Government's commitment to curb spending beyond the NA's approval parameters that would otherwise dilute the focus of financing to national priorities. Another important measure to ensure compliance

with the Law on Public Investment is that sectors and local authorities are only allowed to implement Public Investment Plans (PIPs) endorsed by the National Assembly (NA).

3.5 Central-local relations and balanced development across the country.

The Government has invested greater effort to ensure balanced development across the country. This is reflected by the 8th NSEDP and 9th NSEDP's tailored targets and priorities for different regions (North, Central and South). The aim is to develop regions and provinces based on their unique potential and characteristics. At the same time, the Government is committed to prioritizing economic and social development in areas that have lagged behind and whether more people have not benefited as much from the gains of development. Some key focuses are:

- *Central-local relations.* Poverty is greatly affected by the lack of accessibility of public services affordability, and their poorer quality in many instances. Much of this is related to the cost and difficulty of extending services to all areas of the country, especially to remote villages in mountainous terrain. But limited access to services is also exacerbated by lack of knowledge of rights and information about how the Government works, contributing to exclusion from decision-making. This hampers community participation and creates gaps between policy and practice. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Lao people are closely consulted in all areas of decision-making and that they participate fully in the economic, social, cultural and political development of the country. To this end, the Government is redefining central-local relations in accordance to the PM's Instruction No.01/PM (11/3/2000) 'the provinces as the strategic units, the districts as the planning and fiscal units, and the villages as the implementation units'. Within this framework, each ministry has gradually defining the central, provincial, district and village levels of responsibility, as part of a fully integrated approach to improving the management and delivery of public services,
- Another area concerns the *construction and maintenance of rural roads* (especially Farm-To-Market Roads) in different parts of the country in order to better link market connection with the rural population. For the national budget, the Government has also increased approval budget from US\$56 million (2015-2016) to more US\$80 million in recent years (2019).
- *Agricultural production and related activities* have been encouraged throughout the country taking into consideration of geographical advantages. For instance, in the North, a focus is on rice production, economic tree cultivation such as teakwood, rose wood, and patterned hardwood, rubber plantation, vegetable oil processing, sugar cane and tea processing and others. For the central, key activities include rice production, sugarcane and cassava plantation, livestock, non-timber forest products (NTFP), and others. For the South, priority is on plantation and production of coffee, tea, cashew nuts, and pepper, rice production, fish farming, and rubber plantation. Throughout the country, considerable efforts were made on the means for development of commercialization and for the realization of stable income earning possibilities for rural communities, which in turn, contributes to poverty reduction.

3.6 Regional and international integration

Lao PDR is seeing significant economic benefits from its increased participation in the global and regional economy and greater efforts have been made to develop the economy, increase economic integration with regional neighbours, and deepen ties with the international community.

Legislative amendments. As part of its efforts to secure WTO membership, the Government has made legislative amendments in a number of areas, including tax, trade and intellectual

property. In addition, it has signed a series of trade-related agreements with Cambodia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, among other countries. To comply with the Asian Economic Cooperation (AEC) integration process, Lao PDR is expected to reduce its import tariffs to zero on goods imported from other ASEAN countries by the year 2018 and remove non-tariff barriers.

ASEAN integration. Lao PDR has the youngest labour force in the region and is expected to benefit from demographic transition. The share of the population of working age (aged 15-64 years) in Lao PDR is projected to increase to 69% in 2050, compared with 68% in Myanmar, 65% in Cambodia and 62% in Vietnam. In addition, ASEAN economic integration should create more opportunities for Lao PDR to grow and diversify in different directions. Deeper regional integration can also support many of Lao PDR's development priorities, including those related to LDC graduation, 9th NSEDP implementation, and the 2030 Agenda. The Government's aim to transform into a 'land-linked' rather than a 'land-locked' country supports greater access to markets for trade, deeper integration into regional and global value chains, enhanced competitiveness of Lao enterprises relative to foreign firms, stronger tourism opportunities, and expanded access to technologies and human resource expertise. Deeper regional integration moved ahead in Lao PDR during the 8th NSEDP period and will continue for 9th NSEDP, including through important regional groupings and frameworks. Many of these efforts support strengthening policy reform and infrastructure connectivity aligned with closer regional cooperation. This includes the transformative regional railway currently underway from China to Vientiane and beyond. It also includes important efforts related to regional groupings, especially the AEC and GMS.

WTO membership. Moving beyond regional cooperation/integration, Lao PDR as a member of WTO has also been actively engaging in the global economy. Lao PDR's WTO membership is, among other things, primarily to leverage economic integration as a driver for improving the business and investment regime whilst simultaneously expanding supply-side capacity. WTO accession has also been providing the opportunity for the country to strengthen and improve trade policy institutions and coordination. At the same time, it would also give Lao PDR a seat at the multilateral negotiating table and access to the dispute settlement mechanism. the WTO membership could also prove beneficial considering the effort to have established the ASEAN Economic Community (by 2025), as now all 10 diverse ASEAN nations start from the common ground of being beholden to the rules of the WTO. With benefits, WTO membership also brings some key challenges including the need to coordinate and implement commitments which will need to be addressed. As accession is only the start of the process, awareness of the WTO requirements, in particular, needs to be increased across society at large as well as among various actors within the business community. Service liberalization and regulation of strategic sectors such as telecommunication and transportation can carry many benefits for the rest of the economy, but at the same time a number of service sectors are also subject to well-known market failures. Liberalization must be sequenced with regulatory reforms such as establishing independent regulators, developing prudential regulations, and ensuring universal service. Last but not least, implementation of General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) obligations will require a strong capacity to coordinate government action across different ministries and agencies and enhance transparency practically across the broad.

International trade. Although total exports have grown steadily in recent years during the course of the 8th NSEDP's implementation, export composition has not changed significantly and remains heavily concentrated on resource-based products. Lao PDR's top trading partners have also remained steady over time and are similarly concentrated among a few countries. Thailand, China, and Viet Nam collectively received 82% Lao PDR's exports in recent years. The concentration of product lines and trading partners increases vulnerability to external shocks, such as global commodity price decreases and economic slowdowns in the main trading partners.

3.7 Environmental protection and sustainable natural resources management

The Government of Lao PDR places great importance on sustainable natural resources management and utilization, such as ensuring sustainable land use planning, implementing the national sustainable hydropower development, and environmental friendly mineral extraction. The protection and improvement of the environment is also fundamental to the third criteria for LDC graduation. The direction that the Government is taking with the 8th and 9th NSEDP framework is to ensure continued quality, green and sustainable economic growth where development and natural resource management (of land, forests, biodiversity, mineral resources, water and wetlands) will need to be planned in a practical, sustainable, fair and most effective manner. A number of rules, regulations, instructions and decrees has recently been updated and issued in Lao PDR with the ultimate aim to achieve this direction.

The Government has put greater efforts to accelerate implementation of various activities for the realization of the national goal and objectives. Regarding to land management and administration, the development of the national master plan on land use and the land allocation across the country are on-going and have been recently completed within the conclusion 8th NSEDP. Also, the Government has continued its efforts to issue land titles in the rural and urban areas. At the same time, a survey on land titles through a computerized system has currently been carried out and a plan to upgrade IT system for modernizing land management has currently been initiated. Turning to water resources management, integrated water resource management (IWRM) has been introduced in 10 priority river basins and the river basin committees have been established in key river basins. In addition, some key water-quality monitoring points have been identified. In relation to natural resource management, a number of activities start to kick off, for instance, development of forest management strategy, protection and restoration plans for key seven protected areas across the country, establishment mechanisms and databases on mineral resources, and development of an environmental management plan at provincial and district levels.

In term of environmental statistic, the Government has been working with relevant partners to collect information and data to highlight progress of the environmental SDG targets and indicators. Out of the total 231 global indicators and that of 238 indicators for Lao PDR, over 90 indicators are designated as environment related. Out of these indicators, the Government is able to report on progress 50 indicators spreading across different SDGs (Table 3.7.1).

Table 3.7.1 – Summary of key environmental indicators

SDG	Environmental indicators	Government's ability to report and data availability
SDG 1 – No Poverty	5	3
SDG 2 – No Hunger	3	3
SDG 3 – Good Health & Wellbeing	3	1
SDG 4 – Quality Education	1	0
SDG 5 – Gender Equality	1	0
SDG 6 – Water & Sanitation	11	6
SDG 7 – Energy	5	3
SDG 8 – Economic Growth & Decent Work	1	2
SDG 9 – Innovation, Industry & Infrastructure	1	1
SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities & Human Settlements	11	10
SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption & Production	13	3
SDG 13 – Climate Action	8	4
SDG 14 – Life Below Water	10	2
SDG 15 – Life on Land	14	10
SDG 17 – Means of Implementation	5	2
TOTAL	93	50

3.8 Infrastructure development

Infrastructure development has been identified as being significant both for poverty reduction and private sector development. Two important areas are road and railway networks. Lao PDR's total road network has more than doubled over the last decade. With the increase, improvement in terms of the quality of roads is a priority that needs strategic attention for during the course of the 9th NSEDP implementation (2021-2025). Regarding the railway network, it is a challenge given its high capital cost. To the extent possible, the Government has been investigating the prospect of establishing an integrated railway network in Lao PDR as it offers some distinct benefits: i) a complementary and alternative means to road transport for both passengers and commodities ii) the potential benefits of increased trade and tourism as a result of improved regional integration (and at the center of) the rail networks of neighbouring countries.

In addition, the Government has been putting great efforts to ensure that infrastructure development keeps pace with the country's fast economic growth and rapid urbanization, to ensure sustainable growth and improve the welfare of the people. Great efforts have been made to ensure regional connectivity under the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC 2025). Transport infrastructure is a prime focus of the national development. Currently, the road network serves all parts of the country. However, road density is still low compared to other countries in the region. Therefore, the Government has been putting more efforts to develop and expand this further. The Government has also been putting efforts to improve and renovate municipalities through proper urban planning and water and wastewater management. Road safety is a matter of attention in order to reduce the number of accidents. In terms of telecommunication connectivity, ICT strategic plan towards 2025 has been drafted. In all efforts, the Government has been paying great attention to the fact that it is crucial not only to provide infrastructure but also to build capacity to manage and operate it.

The Government continues to ensure the reliability, availability and maintenance of networks of infrastructures/transportation and the provision of water, electricity, and other utility services. Dependable infrastructure provides an investment climate conducive to growth since high quality infrastructure serves to raise the marginal productivity of private and public capital. Being a land-locked country, the Government of Lao PDR has introduced a "land-linked" strategy that goes hand in hand with regional and sub-regional infrastructure development trends, especially along the frameworks of, among others, the ASEAN, Greater Mekong Sub-region and Triangle Development Area. The strategy addresses the importance of infrastructure development, particularly in the road/transport sector, as the means to achieve longer term national development vision.

The challenge ahead is planning the next generation of transport infrastructure investment. The Government's commitment to eradicating poverty means that the priority focus must be, with continued improvement of the arterial network, the improvement of improved transportation facilities for the poorest districts, giving them year-round access to basic services, markets, and new opportunities. At the same time, strong economic growth for the country as a whole will be promoted, including provision for growth of urban centers. All investments must be sustainable, which means planning must be carried out in an integrated manner with other sectors so that investments in roads, air services and river transportation result in more productive lifestyles. Finding the "right balance" at local level includes community participation, with all stakeholders being careful to fully appreciate the economic, social, cultural and environmental stakes involved.

3.9 Creation of stronger pool of educated, skilled and productive human resources.

The Government acknowledges that limited competencies, research based knowledge, local innovation and education are some of the main bottlenecks. Realizing these, the Government recently launched the National Human Resource Development Strategy to 2025 and has increased its support to the education sector. Furthermore, the Government's increased efforts in private sector development will include R&D cooperation and innovation promotion. The Government has also committed to strengthening its support for partnerships between private corporations and the local private sector, as well as increased cooperation between research and innovation institutions.

Education and human development. The education sector is placed at the center of national human resource development. Recently, the Government adopted the National Human Resource Development Strategy (NHRDS) to 2025, the Law of Education (amended version, July 2015), the TVET Development Plan 2016-2020, the Higher Education Development Plan 2016-2020 and other government policies and directives. Particularly, the NHRDS aims for Lao PDR to develop human resources to be the main driver of sustainable socio-economic development, to be industrialized and modernised and to equip Lao labour with high skills and competence that will enable them to integrate into and compete with ASEAN and the international arena. Within the NHRDS framework, along with strategies for skills development, the strategies for social benefit and service access by Lao labours have been developed.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This sub-sector has received high attention by the Government. A key development drivers will be highly skilled TVET graduates that will strengthen the national workforce, and in turn, contribute to national socioeconomic development. Both public and private TVET Institutes offer a wide range of vocational and technical training courses for those who have completed lower secondary school. Furthermore, TVET offers three levels of training courses to accommodate those who dropout from lower secondary education. Despite a number of efforts made to develop the TVET sub-sector, the overall quality of TVET is still limited.

Higher Education Institutes offer a various number of study course programs including Diploma, Bachelor, Master and Doctoral courses. Currently, there are 99 Higher Education institutes (28 of which are private institutes). There are 1,711 government scholarship recipients and 6,216 privately funded students studying at the 4 public universities. The key challenges faced by the Higher Education sub-sector include capacity of staff and instructors, limited courses on subject areas to meet the needs of the national socio-economic development strategy and scientific research that is not well aligned to priority development sectors.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) sub-sector is prioritized by the Government to continue the result of the previous implementation of the 'education for all' policy. Youth and adult education contributes to the growing workforce which is a driver of the national economic growth and also pre-requisite of the LDC graduation. Thus, a creation of opportunity for youths and adults to access to education will help increase their literacy, numeracy and life skills to enable them to actively engage in social and economic actives. The NFE subsector provides a wide range education equivalency programs to target the needs for education of the youth and adult population including out of school children and the drop-outs aged from 6-14 years old. NFE's programs include the literacy training program, the primary education equivalency program, lower secondary education equivalency program, upper secondary education equivalency program and basic vocational training program. In addition, with DP support, NFE subsector has developed a

concept of Life Long Learning (LLL), subsequently featuring within a Prime Minister Decree. However, there are issues to be addressed including effective operation and function of the NFE centers at provincial and district level, a limited budget, limited experienced teachers and insufficient supplies of learning and teaching materials.

Other initiatives. The Government has also been working on high-quality labor market information with progress supporting the facilitation of employment shifts that promote employment growth across and within sectors. Labour market fairs were organized throughout the year in order to provide good-quality labour market information which is needed to identify emerging employment opportunities. The Government has also been working with partners to compile up-to-date information about the jobs held by and the general circumstances of Lao labours. A second labour market survey was launched in 2017 and a plan for a third one is underway for 2021. The findings and the new statistical information of the labour force survey will support planners, policy makers, researchers, students and other users. The latest survey's aim was to provide information about the movement of labour, training for skilled labours, the structure of employment and unemployment levels.

3.10 Health reform

The health sector has aligned its goals, targets and indicators to achieve LDC graduation by 2020, universal health coverage (UHC) by 2025, and the remaining SDGs by 2030. UHC is the highest priority of phase II of the Health Sector Reform, which has been integrated into the health sector development plan and monitoring framework. There are thus five priority areas to pave the way for UHC by 2025: (i) human resources for health; (ii) health financing; (iii) governance, organisation and management; (iv) service delivery and hospital management; and (v) health information systems. To ensure effective implementation of health sector reform in line with the 8th Health Sector Development Plan (2016-2020) and Sector Reform Framework to 2025, alongside with strengthening sustainability of the Health Sector, the Government has been paying attention to, among others, some of key strategic areas as follow:

- **Investment.** First and foremost, emphasis has been placed on greater government investment in the health sector and greater attention is given to how any additional government funding would be allocated to achieve the greatest benefit. This is a work in progress, yet many health finance indicators of Lao PDR are among the lowest in ASEAN countries. In addition, the Government has been trying its best to find every means to invest more funding in both the demand side and the supply side of the health system. In recent years, the National Health Insurance scheme was introduced and has been scaling-up in several provinces to improve financial protection of health services users in the public sector. The Government has acknowledged that the performance and quality of services, regulation of the private sector, and other barriers to access should be further addressed to improve service utilization.
- **Rural Health Service Network.** Another effort that the Government is currently pursuing is on expansion of the Rural Health Service Network including increasing the number of health workers in rural areas. The trend of health professional density has been increasing, yet two-thirds of health centers nationwide do not have midwife. A strategic move of the Government is in a hub which is at the district level, including health centers and district hospitals, as these are basic health services that rural people and the poor can better access. Therefore, significant improvements are needed in the capacity to implement these changes.
- **Capacity development of health personal.** Improving and upgrading of health personnel is important and is a continuous priority. To produce doctors that are able to

provide comprehensive services such as emergency surgery, emergency obstetrics, and the management of public health programmes in rural and remote areas, the Government focuses on the quality of training of doctors which need be improved so they have sufficient skills and confidence. MoH envisages a two-years internship in primary health care after completion of medical school be instituted. An emphasis has also been on health personnel at the district and village levels which require skill upgrading.

- **Health Information, Education and Communication (IEC)** - The IEC campaign is an important programme for communicating policy directives on health to the Lao multi-ethnic people, particularly to people in remote, hard to reach areas. Information about hygiene and proper lifestyle (the ‘3 cleans’ principle: boiled water drinking, cooked food, and hands washing before eating and after using latrine) is a major element of preventative health care. It will contribute dramatically to reduced morbidity and mortality and significantly to poverty reduction, as poor health is one of the causes of poverty. By 2020, the IEC campaign has reached out to at least 85% of total villages.
- **Water supply and environmental health.** Another high priority on the Government’s list is on water supply and environmental health as a daily life requirement and on proper sanitation as a basic building block in communicable disease control. The Government is striving to expand the clean water supply and environmental health programme. Currently, all 18 provinces have projects to improve water supply and environmental health. The focus has been on increasing access to clean water; increase use of hygienic latrines, and equip of primary schools with hygienic latrines. In term of policy front, WASH overarching Policy has recently been approved and MoH is finalizing the rural WASH Strategy for achieving SDG 6. Climate Change, Gender, accessibility are well reflected in this WASH Strategy. MoES is finalizing the National Standard for WASH in Schools. Standard Operating Procedures are being developed for Community WASH Committees which will enhance the community ownership of the facilities. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has developed the Urban Sanitation Strategy. Water laws and regulations are in effect.

3.11 Poverty focused agriculture and forestry development, food self-sufficiency and agriculture production

A priority for the Government of the Lao PDR is to modernise the agriculture and forestry sector in a manner that fully meets sustainable practices and that achieves food security and better livelihoods for all Lao people. The goal of poverty eradication, graduation from LDC status and various elements of SDGs depend on a more productive agriculture and forestry sector. The agriculture and forestry sector provides the economic, social and cultural base for the whole population, and accounts for more than 30% of GDP. The Government is firmly of the view that more progress in modernising the sector can and must be made, while respecting the traditions of the Lao way of life and the rich diversity of its ethnic population. All levels of government and all stakeholders will exercise great care in this endeavour. Together with infrastructure and rural development, this strategic priority would allow the Lao government to refer to protection of the natural resources and ecosystem services affected by infrastructure and agricultural production.

The instrument is the Agriculture Development Strategy to 2025 and Vision to 2030, the National Rice Production for National Food Security Strategy, Development Strategy of the Crop Section 2025 and Vision 2030 and the Forestry Strategy 2020. On-going work has been carried out to support the Government’s efforts to reduce the instability of agriculture production and forestry resource management which will in turn ensure sustainable development and foster stable and continued economic growth. On-going priority work includes: expanding modern and effective

agricultural production by applying advanced science and technology into primary production; providing production and technical services by promoting their use, researching rice and plant seeds and animal breeds, and experimenting with new technologies to upgrade productivity; building rice storage/warehouses to ensure food security in the event of natural disasters, food crisis and others; and establishing a risk reduction fund to help alleviate the burdens of production costs for farmers during agricultural product price fluctuations. The Government is constantly reassessing its policies and programmes that bear upon the agriculture and forestry sector, to ensure they serve the sector effectively and efficiently while favouring the interests of both the poorest and less poor people.

The poverty-focused agricultural/forestry development policy framework is a major component of the Government's overall strategy of economic growth with equity. The essence of those policy frameworks is the application of the thematic approaches for agricultural development, and area-specific development that reflects local socio-economic and agro-ecological conditions. In this way, the Government will ensure food security while diversifying agriculture, thereby reducing poverty through income generation and the creation of employment opportunities. Further, the Government is putting greater efforts on strengthening the capacity of farmers, provincial and district agriculture officers, and agricultural researchers and technicians, enabling them to modernise the agriculture sector and compete in a market-oriented economy.

In term of sustainable forestry management, together with various initiatives, the Government strives to implement the following measures to alleviate poverty and to ensure more sustainable management of Lao forests: enhance village-based natural resource management for poverty alleviation; revise the system for harvest determination, from focus on capacity of the wood industry to focus on sustainable supply; restructure the wood industry in Lao PDR to bring processing capacity into closer accord with a sustainable raw material supply; control unsustainable harvest and export of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) by unregulated traders and promote sustainable participatory management and processing of NTFPs; promote tree planting; formulate mechanisms for certifying sustainably managed tree plantations; prevent encroachment, illegal activities and bio-diversity degradation by effective law enforcement, capacity building, and the participation of villagers in conservation activities and implement a national land use policy and introduce land use planning at both the macro and field levels.

3.12 Rural development

In the Lao PDR, rural poverty is directly linked to access to resources and to the availability of social services. Resource access includes availability and tenure of land, forest and non-forest timber resources, livestock security, and access to agricultural inputs (credit and irrigation services) and markets. Needed social services include education and health services, clean water and sanitation. Among others, the major constraints on poverty eradication in the poorest districts include:

- Lack of communications and access to markets;
- Inadequate social services, poor health and low educational levels;
- Linguistic barriers;
- Large families and high dependency ratios;
- Low productivity;
- Inadequate infrastructure including roads and irrigation;
- Lack of extension services and knowledge of new technologies;

- Lack of access to markets and market information; and
- Absence of rural credit and veterinary services.

Within this context, rural development is central to the Government's poverty eradication efforts as rural poverty is of prime concern and a community-based approach to its eradication is essential. The Government's rural development strategy has two major components: 1) improving access to essential factors of development; and 2) strengthening a comprehensive, poverty-focused planning process at the district level to ensure all initiatives are mutually supportive and co-ordinated. Improving access means improving access to; 1) production inputs, 2) markets, 3) human resources, 4) social services and 5) rural finance. These five categories include a wide range of factors, including rural infrastructure (roads, irrigation), technology, education and health services and natural resource management. Market information, market linkages and trade facilitation and other factors are needed to help the transition from subsistence to commercial farming and from overwhelming dependence on agriculture to a more diversified economy. However, improving essential factors of development will only be effective if all the factors are mutually supportive. Thus, the Government places a great deal of emphasis on enabling the rural poor to attack their own poverty.

The Government's drive to expand rural infrastructure, roads and services have led to poverty reduction in many parts of the country, enhancing market access for agricultural produce and improving livelihood opportunities. Another strategy to alleviate rural poverty is to promote entrepreneurship and production facilities in rural areas, encourage agglomeration economies, especially the development of small towns in rural areas, and promote rural employment and income-generating activities for poor and vulnerable households. The strategy aims to strengthen local capacities through implementing the Sam Sang Policy³⁶, improve and strengthen provincial, district and village-level capacities, promote transparency and strong leadership, and strengthen solidarity and harmonization among different ethnic groups.

The Government intends to encourage “development funds” for the poorest districts, particularly village and district funds, which will provide support to households and villages to enable them to engage in income generating activities. Income generation empowers people to undertake initiatives and to expand their range of choices to improve their livelihoods. In such a way, through the village and district funds, the present lack of capital, which has been identified as a major cause of poverty, will be addressed. Lao PDR has been implementing different phases of the Poverty Reduction Fund (PRF). The implementation of this fund emphasizes the use of a Community Driven Development approach and community led planning processes, in line with the Government's policy of decentralization. The focus is on building infrastructure, capacity building and improving the livelihood of the poor, scale-up livelihood and nutrition activities through additional financing, to cover more districts across the country. The Government aims to ensure that PRF complements projects in Social Protection, Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, and Health. While still supporting rural infrastructure, PRF will shift toward investments that contribute to income generation (i.e., rehabilitation of roads to access markets, irrigation). Farmer Nutrition Groups – formerly Village Nutrition Centers – will focus on supporting children during their first 1,000 days of life.

³⁶ The Sam Sang Policy (Three Built Directives) proposes provinces as the strategic unit, districts as the integration unit, and villages as the development unit.

3.13 Improvement of and access to social protection

A social insurance system is at an advanced stage of development to ensure that the rights and interest of workers and the poor are protected. Implementation of various initiatives and instruments has been on-going during the cycle of 8th NSEDП (2016-2020).

- Labour Law was revised based on various consultations with various stakeholders. Also, information is available on a law covering social security which was approved with a decree on increasing the minimum wage for the labour force working in business, production and service units (from 626,000 Kip (around \$70)/month to 1,100,000 Kip (around \$120)).
- A decree on social relief for the disabled has been finalized and submitted for approval.
- In addition, the Government with support from various partners is working on a coverage of social and health security, including for the disaster affected, elderly, and disabled. For instance, the Government is also piloting the Mother and Early Childhood Grant in Attapeu Province since 2020. Based on the experience, a social protection programme for the families with children with disabilities will be piloted in Xiengkhuang Province in 2021.
- The Government has also paid considerable attention to key pending issues in the area of social welfare. Currently, there is a taskforce set up to look at how to make investment sufficient, predictable and sustained to improve the quality and access to quality social protection, including measures to address important issues related to the coverage and scope of pensions, as well as for health care service for the elderly, homeless and underprivileged.
- In addition, there is a consideration to carry out a proper analysis for establishing a mechanism to manage and protect child benefits and encouraging workers and people in all professions to contribute to the health insurance fund.

Overall, the Government is fully aware that Universal social protection is important to protect human development gains from shocks and misfortunes. Therefore, the recommendations of the Assessment-Based National Dialogue on Social Protection carried out under the oversight of the Government's Drafting Committee for the National Social Protection Strategy are important to move forward with various activities.

3.14 Information and protection of national traditions and cultures

Improved information by all Ministries, at all levels, is increasingly serving community-based development and overall transparency. Budgetary documents released by the Ministry of Finance are one example of the Government's commitment to openness and dialogue. In addition, the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism has increasingly used mass media to help disseminate information and enhance public awareness of Government policies and programmes. Every effort has been made to find ways of ensuring that information reaches the poor, and that the poor have ways of communicating back to public officials and community leaders.

The Government has clear cultural policies which focus on promoting cultural development in order to build Lao society into a society which possesses a civilized mind-set. Priorities in the cultural field focuses on the preservation of the national cultural heritage, historic sites, heritage towns and temples to attract tourists and generate income for local people. The Government pays great attention to preserving the fine national culture by preserving and promoting the priceless cultural traditions of the multi-ethnic people while at the same time selectively welcoming advanced global cultures. The Government goes to great efforts to promote cultural practices, arts and literature, creativity, and the management and preservation of the country's cultural, historical,

and natural heritage and ancient artifacts and sites. At the same time, the rehabilitation and construction of art and musical schools and cultural villages will continue. The expansion of cultural families and model development villages, a number of national and provincial events, festivals, seminars and training were organized in order to advocate for adopting attitudes towards cultural and educational policies by stressing the cultural identity and the use of national language and mobilizing the people to take more active part in all cultural fields. On-going activities have been carried out as in previous years for preserving and revitalizing cultural heritage by integrating vernacular cultures - folk tales and folk songs, handicrafts and art, museums and archaeological sites - into every-day life; drawing upon innovation and eradicating inappropriate traditions; training competent staff in the field of culture and education; encouraging the area of cultural services (*e.g.*, participation in the art); and stimulating creativity.

3.15 Maintaining political stability, social peace, order, and justice

There are activities at national and provincial levels to disseminate, encourage, and mobilize citizens to understand and follow the laws aiming at building strong family, village and towns. The Government, including local authorities, security forces and mass organisations have put more efforts on combating social problems, especially through educating and campaigning, in order to raise awareness about the government policies, obligations, customs and social problems that currently threaten society. Special attention is on drugs, sex workers, robbery, gambling, HIV/AIDS, etc. As a result, social related problems seek to be addressed in careful manners through local campaigns and many persuasive mechanisms. Efforts are also being made to increase societal awareness and enable people to be more responsible over addressing these problems themselves. Addressing issues facing youth development has also been a priority for the Government as reported in the previous section.

3.16 Public Service Improvement

Local Administration and Service delivery

Updates to the Constitution and laws promulgated in a few years were progressively applied. These updated laws including amendments to the Law on Government, the Law on Local Administration and Regulations on City and Municipality, have helped to clarify the roles and responsibilities amongst the offices of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers and Heads of Ministry-equivalent organisation; and clarify further the mandates, roles and functions between levels of government and administration. These updates to the administrative framework and legal frameworks reflect government policies and the lessons learned from the pilot implementation Sam Sang pilot during the past five years.

People's participation and representation: The NA continues to provide increasingly proactive oversight of public services and aspired to increase people's participation in the decision-making process, through such tools as the hotline, petitions, and public hearings. The Governance Sector Working Group (GSWG) forum provides stakeholders from government, development partners, civil society, with an opportunity to discuss directly with a representative of the Vientiane Provincial People Assembly (PPA), on their mandate, responsibilities, experiences, achievement, and challenges to date.

People may also decide to participate in the approved Party mass-organisations (*e.g.* women, youth, trade union, etc) and formal business associations (*e.g.*, Chamber of commerce, etc), interest groups, civil society, Non-Profit Associations (NPAs), the formal media and other forms of social communication. The amended Law on Local Administration is also aimed to promote a better functional relationship between provincial authorities and the NA Constituency Offices, and stronger collaboration with mass organizations and civil society to participate in the public-sector

development. In terms of partnership with INGOs, a regular mechanism has been established to discuss the implementation of INGO guidelines amongst INGOs, Development Partners (DPs) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) at the national and provincial levels. For NPAs, the Decree 115 on Associations marked an important step in the formal recognition of NPAs as partners in development. Some 152 Associations and 11 Foundations have since been officially registered. The ODA decree (No. 75) and the revised NPA decree (No. 238) have been approved by the Government, following a protracted process of consultations. Within the new Associations Decree 238, the process in setting up an NPA is more clearly defined; three categories of associations are defined; delegated approval given to various Ministries for those Associations that operate within their aegis; and MoHA to manage the Register for all types of Association; more clearly defined coordination mechanism amongst central ministries, ministries and local authorities. MoHA has been actively developing the necessary administrative and organizational capacities at all levels for management of civil society affairs. Guidelines on the implementation of the new Association decree have been developed and signed and will be applied in parallel with the coming into effective of new NPA decree.

3.17 Legal Sector/Rule of Law/UPR

Important changes in the legal sector have been introduced following a Constitutional amendment during the NA session 2021 and new/revised laws that approved by the NA in the past few years. Many of the activities envisaged under Legal Sector Master Plan have been, or are in the process of being, implemented. Approximately more than 115 laws have been adopted by the NA. Courts and prosecutors' offices have been restructured or expanded with new offices. In addition, plans to establish an administrative court are underway and the Village Mediation Units (VMUs) have been established in most villages.

In terms of the codifying of the criminal and civil codes, remarkable progress has been made in recent years including the adoption of the penal code;³⁷ the amendment of the law on lawyers;³⁸ the development of the legal aid and legal fund decrees;³⁹ the adoption of the law on treaty;⁴⁰ and the revision of the law on judgment enforcement.⁴¹ These legislative developments are steadily moving forward the legal reform agenda in the country.

The legal aid decree was informed by the citizens' survey led by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), which was the first in the justice sector. The survey has set a positive trend in recognising the need to have reliable and current data to draft pragmatic laws. Efforts have been made to expand nationwide coverage of legal aid services. The Lao Bar Association (LBA), which leads the amendment of the law on lawyers in Lao PDR, has continued its efforts to expand and strengthen the legal profession in country. Currently, there are three regional provincial branches (Oudomxay for northern part, Vientiane province for central part and Champasack for southern part) and legal aid offices, including recently established in Savannakhet and Sekong provinces. Several administrative reforms including the restructuring of the internal administrative frame work of the Lao Bar Association have been completed to increase stronger accountability.

The database installed to monitor judgement enforcements and the pilot case management system are being introduced and expected to make delivery of justice services more efficient and effective once completed. The case management system (CMS), in particular, is expected to reduce the time taken to transfer files from court houses from the sub-national level to the central level.

³⁷At the April 2017 NA session in April 2017.

³⁸The Amended Law on lawyers was adopted at the NA Session Oct-Nov 2016. With final minor changes to be made. The law still needs to be promulgated.

³⁹This is ongoing.

⁴⁰Adopted at the last NA session. Minor changes to be made incorporating comments from MPs before the law is promulgated.

⁴¹The amendment work concerns many stakeholders therefore more time has been granted to complete the process, until 2018.

Following the completion of the 3nd Universal Periodical Review (UPR), from a total of 226 Recommendations, the government has adopted 160 recommendations and noted 66. Lessons from the 1st and 2nd UPR cycle reveal the need to have a well elaborated action plan to follow up on UPR implementation. MoFA is leading the finalization of the action plan for the implementation of the UPR recommendations. Stakeholders' consultations are on-going, including the Sub-Sector Thematic Workshop (Legal and Institutional Oversight) on the updated status of the UPR action plan with various stakeholders including DPs, civil society and government officials under the framework of the Legal and Institutional Oversight SSWG to gather feedback and inputs on the action plan.

3.18 Statistics

The Government of Lao PDR acknowledges that data will only drive policy and decision-making if it is timely. With this view, the Government is committed to create a strong statistical system to collect and provide the necessary information for formulation of policies, strategies and plans, and monitor and assess progress toward outcomes and impacts. With statistical capacity score⁴² of 67.8 which was lower than the East Asia and Pacific average of 75.9 in 2019, Lao PDR has been focusing on various elements of statistical development in the country.

The legal and policy frameworks for statistics form an enabling environment for SDG monitoring and assessment. These include the Statistics Law came into force in 2017, Five Year Statistical Development Plans and the National Statistical Development Strategy 2010-2020. Therefore, on-going efforts have strongly been toward capitalization of the data revolution and strengthening country statistical systems. In this regard, Lao Statistics Bureau's priorities for strengthening national statistical systems are (i) an Action Plan for tracking the SDGs, (ii) capacity building, and (iii) assessment and improvement of data quality. In addition, adjustment have been made for institutional arrangement for both SDG and NSEDP monitoring and evaluation.

- **Quality data for 9th NSEDP and SDG monitoring and reporting.** Currently, LSB has been mandated to be a permanent member of the National SDG Secretariat together with Department of International Organizations/MoFA and Department of Planning/MPI and NSEDP technical taskforce to ensure the operationalization of the 9th NSEDP M&E framework including SDG one. In particular, LSB together with SDG focal points continue to carry out surveys and collect data from administrative records.
- **Horizontal and vertical statistical coordination.** At line ministry level, statistic division has been established for each ministry in cooperation with LSB who will be part of ministry SDG reporting owner to work with the National SDG Secretariat and NSEDP technical taskforce to monitor and report on SDG achievement and NSEDP progress. At provincial level, efforts are on-going and more actions will be needed in coming years to build capacity of provincial officials to engage in all aspects of statistical work.
- **Data platform and national database.** LSB with support from partners has been working on compiling metadata for the SDGs, improving user engagement and developing a national reporting platform for the SDGs. Putting together the metadata for the indicators in Lao PDR's national SDG indicator framework and making it available

⁴² The Statistical Capacity Indicator is a composite score assessing the capacity of a country's statistical system. It is based on a diagnostic framework assessing the following areas: methodology; data sources; and periodicity and timeliness. Countries are scored against 25 criteria in these areas, using publicly available information and/or country input. The overall Statistical Capacity score is then calculated as a simple average of all three area scores on a scale of 0-100 (<https://datahub.io/world-bank/iq.sci.ovrl#readme>).

alongside the data in an online interactive data platform is a significant achievement and value-added for all stakeholders in terms of the accessibility and utility of the information. The platform, together with the data and metadata it contains, will be used to engage with users to inform, educate and obtain feedback on SDG-related progress. With this view, Lao PDR looks forward to ensure the operationalization of this platform together with the current SDG application managed by MoFA and the current existing national database such as LaoInfo which will be available to all stakeholders in real time to track updated progress of all SDG indicators and other related information on SDG localization in the country.

3.19 Leaving No One Behind

The Constitution of the Lao PDR specifies the fundamental rights and obligations of citizens. It specifies that “Lao citizens are all equal before the law irrespective of their gender, social status, education, beliefs and ethnic group,” and that “Citizens of both genders enjoy equal rights in the political, economic, cultural and social fields and in family affairs”. These specifications in the Constitution indicate that Lao PDR is fully committed to “Leaving No One Behind – LNOB” agenda for sustainable development. In Lao PDR, altitude and location are the key factors setting apart the most vulnerable groups. Around 80% of Lao PDR is mountainous, and altitude and location are key determinants of livelihood options and access to services. An estimated 7% to 9% of population live in rural areas without road access, and some 26% of the population live in upland areas, with high levels of poverty. **The following texts highlight government measures for the benefits of the most vulnerable groups and ensure their contribution to the development of Lao PDR throughout the country.**

Women. Lao PDR has a sound legal framework to support gender equality and women’s empowerment including equality provisions in the Constitution and in a number of national laws. In recent years, the Government with support from various partners at all levels has been putting great efforts toward the enforcement of various laws. The ultimate goal is to ensure that women across all spectrums of society enjoy the full benefit of equality under national laws despite of the persistence of traditional practices and increase awareness of their legal rights. To help address key challenges facing women, the Government is taking concrete steps in all key economic sectors and through national programmes to: 1) support poor women’s economic activities; 2) improve their access to basic services such as education and health and productive resources, such as extension services; 3) involve them in local decision-making, and; 4) generally take their needs into account in developing national policy. To achieve the national goals and to address challenges of women empowerment and gender equality, sectoral strategic responses have been initiated. Some of sector gender responses are highlighted as follow:

In the agriculture sector, gender concerns will be integrated in specific programmes and projects through a number of measures. Research and project planning have included, among others:

- Gender-related data and needs assessments.
- The inclusion of women in project activities.
- The application of gender equity in extension and training services.
- The use of gender-related indicators to monitor projects.
- Affirmative action concerning staffing of provincial and district staff, including extension workers.
- Gender focal points in villages to promote improved agricultural practices.

- Account of women's traditional rights in land reallocation, land titling and resolution of land disputes.
- Assistance to women in accessing rural savings and credit schemes.

In the education sector, gender gaps in literacy and school enrolment and completion rates, particularly among ethnic groups, must be redressed. This is critical both to achieving the Government's education and literacy goals and the goal of poverty reduction. Accordingly, emphasis will be placed on increasing the availability, quality and relevance of primary and secondary education for girls, particularly poor and ethnic girls; ensuring that vocational and technical school programs are accessible to women, particularly poor and ethnic women, and; approaches to non-formal education that are highly beneficial to women. Lessons have been drawn from past and current projects for increasing the number of ethnic teachers, improving the relevance of primary school materials and providing incentives for girls to attend school. Provinces and districts will be encouraged to develop locally appropriate material to supplement the core curriculum, and to schedule primary and secondary school classes to encourage school attendance. Other approaches include distance learning and "bridging" courses to enable students (particularly women) to enter vocational and technical schools.

In the health sector, the Government has set improvements in several key health indicators in recent years, notably substantially reduced maternal and infant mortality rates. Improving women's access to primary health care, particularly reproductive health services, will be essential for achieving key health goals. Further, women – particularly women in poor villages and districts – must be involved to ensure successful implementation of immunisation, clean water and other public health programs. Gender concerns, therefore, are addressed through all major health care initiatives.

Specific measures include:

- Training of ethnic women for all aspects of health services.
- Designation of a gender focal point in each provincial and district primary health center.
- Gender and ethnic balance in village health committees.
- Gender and ethnic balance in all in-service and specialised training for health staff and health care providers.
- Incentive packages for health care workers assigned to remote districts and villages.
- Use of radio and other media to promote health education to men and young people, particularly relating to birth spacing and prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS infection.
- Expanding access to reproductive health services, especially for ethnic women.

In transport, the Government is committed to ensuring that the needs and concerns of women are properly taken into account in planning and implementing road and other transport-related infrastructure. Negative environmental and social impacts must be taken into account, especially since they tend to fall more heavily on poor women. Therefore:

- Local communities, including women, will be consulted in the design of transport and other infrastructure projects.
- Environmental and social assessments of new road construction and other infrastructure projects will include analysis of gender-related benefits and impacts.
- Community development projects will be designed to ensure that rural communities benefit from roads and other infrastructure projects.

- Gender data will be collected to monitor the impacts of these projects.
- Women representatives will participate in community road maintenance funds.

For information and culture, The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MoICT) has been working and co-ordinating with the Ministry of Health (MoH), mass organisations and other agencies to carry out awareness campaigns (in relevant languages) on HIV/AIDS and other health risks at road and railway construction camps, in communities along road and railway corridors, and at transit stops and border crossings. The MoICT has also been working with other agencies working on UXO in connection with plans for road construction in affected areas.

In relation to employment, due to different education levels, access to credit and assumptions about appropriate work for women and men (amongst other factors), women and men often have different opportunities and face different constraints as business owners and workers in sub-sectors such as trading, handicraft production, manufacturing, tourism and information technology. As all relevant ministries have been mainstreaming gender concerns in their policies, planning and activities. This will ensure that women as well as men can participate fully in the country's economic development. Gender issues are also being addressed through national programmes dealing with the prevention of HIV/AIDS, trafficking in women and children and illegal drug use, and also national programmes dealing with population policy and UXO.

In governance, there are a number of gender issues in the area of governance that are relevant to poverty reduction. Women represent about half of all government employees, but not many women are in leadership positions at the national, provincial, district or village levels. At technical levels, ethnic women are not well represented, particularly in the ranks of extension workers, health care workers and teachers. The Government is committed to correcting these imbalances. The Government also recognises that poverty cannot be reduced substantially without the involvement of women at the local level. Therefore, village leaders and committees will be encouraged to include more women in local decision-making. In the area of legal awareness and rights, the Lao Women's Union will continue to work with the Ministry of Justice, other ministries and external agencies to promote women's legal awareness and access to justice.

Adolescent girls. Lao PDR is among countries with the highest proportion of early marriage and the highest adolescent birth rate in the region. For every thousand adolescent women (aged 15-19), there are 83 births - this has declined from 94 in 2011/12, but is still high. This means that adolescent girls in Lao PDR are facing challenges, such as not being able to develop their full potential. One in five adolescent girls drop out of school; one in four girls aged 15-19 are married, and from the same age group, one in ten girls have begun childbearing. Investments in adolescent girls' health, nutrition, and education contribute to reducing early pregnancy, maternal mortality, and child stunting. Such gains translate to improved health and education outcomes, which contribute to LDC graduation. Importantly, the Government is committed to put greater efforts for investing in adolescent girls as it is an important task to support sustainable development. There have been joint campaigns over the years to increase knowledge on the adolescent girl's issues and diminish the obstacles to her development.

Children. All SDGs touch children's lives in one way or another. For instance, child labour (SDG 8), early childhood development, education and health as per SDG 4 and SDG 3, harmful practices such as child marriage (SDG5), violence against children (SDG16), birth registration (SDG16), UXO causality (SDG18), and so on. Also, poverty (SDG1), gender inequality (SDG5), climate change and natural disasters (SDG13) and social discrimination (SDG10) increases children's vulnerability. For Lao context, data from 2018 LSIS II shows that child disability rates are higher among poorer populations and they have less access to education. While 2% of children aged 2 to

4 years have functional difficulty in at least one domain, those in the same age group from the poorest quintile households have a higher rate (3.6%) of functional difficulty. Most cases of child disability are preventable if the family has the knowledge and means. The causes of child disability in Lao PDR are mostly associated with injury, childhood illnesses and unexploded ordnance (UXO). In 2018, according to the Government's response to the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, there were 1,010 children with disabilities (602 boys and 408 girls) living in institutions across the country. Data on children with disabilities who are kept at home is not available at this stage. As a follow-up from the Global School-based Student Health Survey and the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study 2019, the Government has also been putting more efforts to address bullying in school. Currently, the NCAWMC in partnership with MoES developed a national guideline on prevention and response to the violence against children in schools, approved by the Deputy Prime Minister at the end of 2020.

Youth. Lao PDR has a young population, with 60% of over 7 million inhabitants estimated to be under 25 years of age. Such a young population represents a unique opportunity from which the country could benefit. Therefore, the Government with support from various partners in recent years has been paying great attention and increasing more efforts and investments in the areas of education, health, employment, protection and participation which will ensure that every young person's potential is fulfilled. In general, there is a positive policy environment for young people in Lao PDR, although some specific areas that require further development, for example, young people and alcohol consumption and venue of entertainment location. With recent development and challenges encountered, there is on-going discussion and a recommendation for a development of comprehensive national policy for young people in Lao PDR that makes the linkages between the different sectoral policies and laws that exist. The Government has also been working with authorities concerned to ensure that young people are aware of the laws and policies that both govern and protect them. Particularly, they need to know their rights in relation to social protection, health, education and employment. Without an awareness of the protections afforded them by law they are vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse, and may not seek help from the authorities when appropriate. At the same time, duty bearers also need to know and understand the implications of existing laws and policies as these related to young people. In terms of programmes and projects supporting youth development, the trend is on the rise. However, a complete set of data on this is relatively limited, yet it is anticipated that this situation will improve over time. In particular, there is a general view that all policies, strategies and programmes should take into consideration the specific needs and requirements of young people, and when they are developed they need to be reviewed through a "young people's lens" and, to this end, ensure the participation of young people. In addition, youth development requires multi-sectoral collaboration as there need to be strong linkages between health, education, employment, protection and participation in contributing to the future of young people in country.

People with disabilities. Disabilities in Lao PDR are often caused by UXO, road traffic accidents, disease and congenital conditions. Data from the latest Population and Housing Census (2015) indicates that more than 160,000 (2.7%) people live with a disability among the population aged over 5 years. Disability prevalence in Lao PDR is higher in remote geographical areas (3.3% in rural areas without roads, 2.8% in rural areas with roads, 2.4% in urban areas), and higher among diverse ethnic groups. Persons with disabilities aged over 10 had significantly lower labour participation and higher unemployment compared to persons without disabilities, in both rural and urban areas. Children, youth and Women with disability were particularly excluded from the education, vocational training and workforce.

Lao PDR ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2009 and submitted the State Party's Report in 2016. Lao PDR has set up the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, and has taken a number of measures to implement the

CRPD as laid out in its Report, such as the Decree on Persons with Disabilities (No. 137) in 2014 and the new decree on social relief for people living with disabilities, and adopting a National Strategy and Plan of Action on Inclusive Education (2011-2015). For the new decree on social relief for people living with disabilities to be effective, clear roles and responsibilities will need to be laid out in the implementation plan. Health care coverage will include rehabilitation services as well as assistive products for people with disability. In addition, the management information system of the NSPS will need to have data disaggregated by disability status, including UXO survivors, such that it is possible to conduct longitudinal tracking of cases.

At the same time, the Government has been working on collecting statistics on disabled persons through the Population and Housing Census. First set of data on disabilities was produced based on 2005 Census. More questionnaires were included in 2015 Census. The Government is currently working with partners on more information and questionnaires needed for upcoming 2025 Census. At the same time, the MoLSW set up the Statistics Division to function as a place to store data on labour and social welfare, including statistics on disabled persons nationwide and also as a tool to coordinate with the Lao Statistics Bureau (LSB) to conduct research and provide reference for improving and creating legislation for each period, including legislation concerning disabled persons and removing barriers to their participation and happiness in society. In addition, the Government pays great attention to promoting international cooperation for the implementation of global, regional, and ASEAN strategies for disabled persons and makes great efforts in its participation in bilateral and multilateral seminars to exchange ideas and lessons learned on disabled persons. Currently, there are small scaled projects in this area and the plan for the future is to scale up these projects across the country through more coordinated manner.

Ethnic communities. Out of the total population, the Lao ethnic group accounts for 53%, followed by Khamu (11%), Hmong (9%), and other ethnic groups (27%). A higher proportion of ethnic populations (apart from Lao) reside in remote areas, significant distances from basic services and government support structures, and often without access to modern technologies and communications. Language barriers also limit the access and comprehension of information. While higher poverty incidences among rural ethnic communities, their reliance on traditional practices are often threatened by the reduction of natural habitats, biodiversity, and climate change.

To ensure ethnic groups' full participation and service delivery, the Government has set Lao national targets of promoting solidarity and equality between multi-ethnic people in the 8th NSEDP and 9th NSEDP. These have paved the way for sectors and provinces to ensure inclusion of ethnic communities into their public investment programmes and development projects. The Government with support from partners has also putting greater efforts on programming and communications including community radio (translation of key messages, broadcasting and production of relevant materials into Lao ethnic languages) on various development issues ranging from education, to health (in particular COVID-19 and recovery), infrastructure, agriculture, governance, UXO and others. The Government has also required, as per recommendations from the first VNR, 8th NSEDP review and others, production of statistical data disaggregated not only by gender but also by different segment of population.

LGBTQ+

In Lao PDR, no laws specifically prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. The Government recognises LGBTQ+ in the Strategic Plan on HIV/AID Prevention (Ministry of Health).⁴³ In recent years, there has been greater openness to discuss issues,

⁴³ National Strategy and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS/STI 2011-2015 (page 5 and 6)

development and matters relevant to this population group. Various public events and seminars organised gain public awareness and recognition by authorities. Like other groups in the society, stress and worries are also affecting the mental health of LGBTQ due to unemployment, lack of income, and fear of COVID-19 transmission and others as highlighted during the youth consultation for the preparation of this VNR. More could be done on these matters. During the course of the implementation of the 9th NSEDP, the Government has included youth development as one of 25 national outputs and the development issues of LGBTQ+ could potentially addressed within this framework.

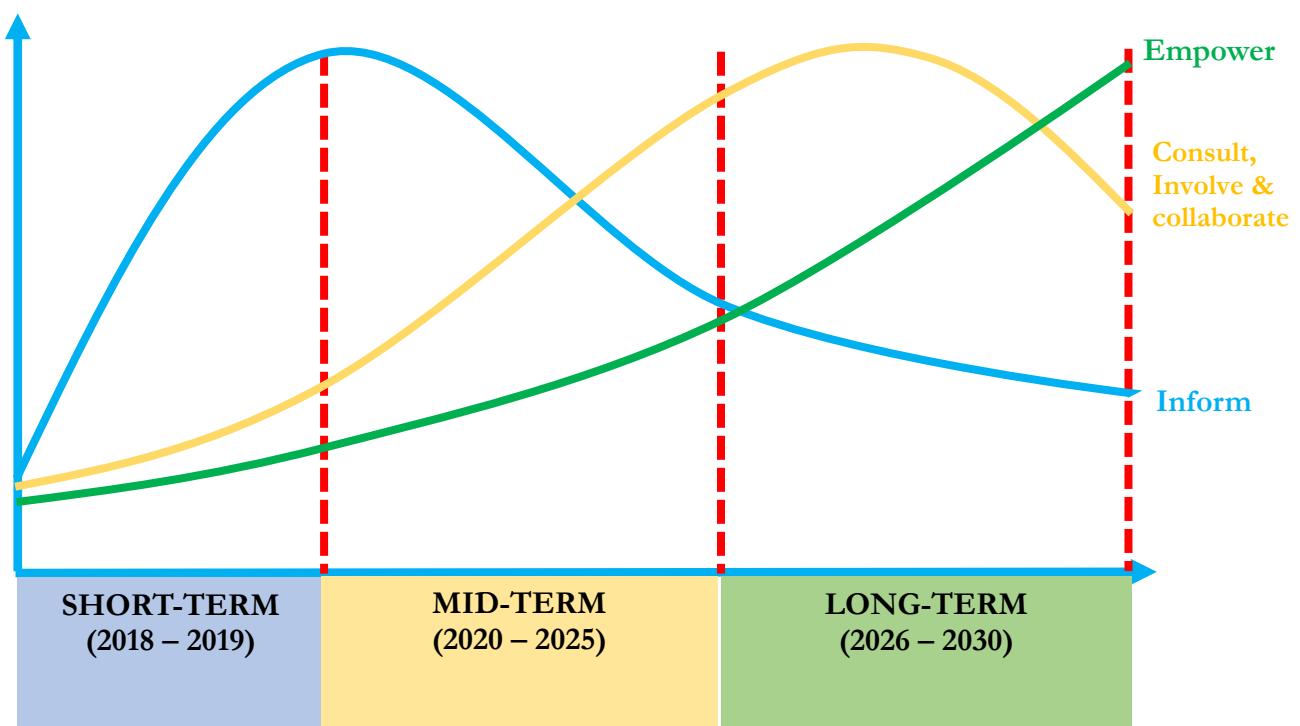
People living with HIV. The past years have seen many large infrastructure and development projects spread across the country, such as the China-Lao high-speed railway, road construction, and dams. These projects bring in internal and external migrant workers that heighten risks and vulnerabilities for HIV among the Lao population. More than 40% of people living with HIV in Lao PDR who did not have access to antiretroviral therapy (ART). The Integrated Biological and Behavioural Assessment Survey (IBBS) in 2017 highlighted a sharp increase in HIV prevalence among MSM in Vientiane capital from 3.6% in 2014 to 7% in 2017. Stigma and discrimination against PLHIV are still high, largely due to limited understanding. The integration of antiretroviral treatment in the health care system remains a challenge, especially since the health care system still does not have universal coverage. To help address these issues and to work on HIV preventions, treatment and control, set in the 8th and 9th NSEDP, the Government is working together with partners to ensure that HIV-essential services continue to be made available for people living with, and who are at risk of HIV. Also, the Government works with various partners on the continued awareness raising among communities to address stigma which is critical in building community resilience to ensure that people living with HIV are not left behind.

Other vulnerable groups include farmers with limited access to land, migrants, unskilled and unemployed workers, unpaid workers, elderly, and others. The Government fully recognise these groups and put greater efforts to ensure that no one is left behind from the national development agenda. The 8th NSEDP which was recently concluded, the recommendations from the first VNR, and other analytical reports highlight various key actions to address multi-sectoral issues of these groups. The Government takes careful approach on what needs to be done as there is no one size fits all formula. All issues need time, energy, resources and commitment. Therefore, the Government will do its best to the best capacity to take “Leave No One Behind” agenda forward with the spirit of solidarity, unity and equality.

Chapter 4 – Next Steps

Lao PDR plans to enhance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDG roadmap in case of Laos) through the greater national, sectoral and provincial stakeholder engagement (or SDG Stakeholder Engagement - SSE). Key focuses of this SSE which form an overarching framework for SDG localization in Lao PDR for the decade of actions will be on:

- Institutionalizing and legitimizing the roles of SSE in line with the development of Lao PDR,
- Providing support to national, sectoral, provincial and local levels in capacity building related to SSE in the spirit of SDGs: Inclusive, Participatory and Transparent,
- Ensuring smooth horizontal and vertical coordination and linkages across and between central and local governments, and
- Providing a platform for partnership and coordination between government and non-government sectors.



Inform: The level of SDG awareness and understanding is still relatively low among many stakeholders. Hence, informing is appropriate in the short-term strategy of SSE as building a solid base of understanding of SDG is crucial for other levels of engagement.

Consult, Involve & collaborate: The stakeholders and the objectives of each SSE have to be clearly identified so that relevant levels of stakeholder engagement can be adopted.

Empower: With the context of Lao PDR and taken into account of its development trajectory, only some activities can be taken in the hand of the public to decide.

As a follow-up from this Second VNR and under the SSE framework highlighted above, some of key next steps for SDG implementation in Lao PDR toward 2030 include:

1. Agenda 2030, NSEDP and LDC graduation

- Strengthening of links between Agenda 2030 and 9th & 10th NSEDPs (2021-2025 and 2026-2030), with focus on transition and graduation from Least Developed Country status.
- Developing a smooth transition strategy for LDC graduation as a follow up from the CDP LDC 2021 review.

2. Horizontal and vertical integration

- Continued integration of SDG indicators into local and sectoral strategies.
- Continued promotion of inter-sectoral collaboration, inter alia through the Round Table Process - Forming/strengthening issue-based coalitions to address critical issues affecting a number of SDGs, e.g. on Food and nutrition security (SDG 2), which will accelerate the SDGs on poverty, health and education, and help to achieve LDC graduation; and on adolescent girls: addressing early marriages, adolescent girls' education, health and nutrition will contribute towards many SDGs.
- Strengthening of the institutional arrangements for SDG implementation, in particular the National SDG Secretariat, with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Investment and Lao Statistics Bureau as main institutions - Further strengthening of partnership across sectoral line ministries, provinces, development partners, private sector, civil society, other stakeholders.
- Working with SDG focal points and SDGr & SDGi owners to ensure clearer roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for each NSEDP and SDG targets and indicators with an overarching aim to further strengthen their capacities on SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Prioritizing and sequencing the national SDG indicators, particularly those linked to LDC graduation and green growth which have already been integrated into the NSEDP process.
- Clarifying and articulating the interconnected system of goals and targets and analyzing and informing key policies, programs, and projects for their impact on nationally tailored SDGs - It is important to establish/strengthen explicit institutional links between sustainable development strategies and supporting processes at all Government levels, and
- Enhancing financial and capacity support to local authorities to integrate sustainability criteria and agenda into their work using existing mechanisms such as the Sam Sang Policy.

3. Data and statistics

- Mapping out the next steps to the next Voluntary National Review (VNR III-2024, VNR IV-2027 and Final VNR-2030) - high quality, disaggregated data is essential to ensure equitable progress against goals and targets.
- Working with relevant stakeholders, in particular, SDGr and SDGi owners to determine appropriate targets for all SDG indicators.
- Identification of and responding to the most urgent data gaps, in particular those indicators with no baselines and up-to-date data.
- Standardized construction (Standardization) of national indicators and data collection to ensure proper assessment of results and outcomes (rather different methodologies and processes).

- Continuing working on the SDG open platform and creating a better link with the current national database “LaoInfo” and other relevant systems.
- Ensuring the continuity of the work on metadata and user engagement for statistics, in addition to the plans for on-going work on the data platform. The need for metadata and user engagement will remain relevant as the national statistical system continues to try and fill data gaps and make use of different data sources, including expanding its reliance on administrative data for the SDGs, and
- Developing a focused and costed plan for monitoring the SDGs which will facilitate work of Lao Statistics Bureau in partnerships with national and international partners to support SDG monitoring and reporting - while surveys and censuses provide important data for majority of SDG indicators, administrative data will be needed for some of them and the process of collecting administrative data will need to strengthened.

4. Integrated Financing

- Reinforcing the better links between national budget and national planning using the 2030 Agenda as a driving force. It is not just about what kind of finance, and how much finance may be available, but about how it can be used most effectively to achieve development results. External public financing (e.g., ODA, South-South Cooperation, Climate Change Financing) will use in a complementary way. The use of expenditure and financial frameworks will be enhanced to ensure best planning of resources against results.
- Ensuring better alignment of international development cooperation and other development finance and empowering the private sector to participate more fully in the sustainable development agenda.
- Developing and adapting SDG financing strategies/a national integrated financing strategy to the country context under the framework of the 9th NSEDP implementation arrangement in particular the financing strategy. The Government will continue exploring the possibility for issuing green bond, debt swap, and creating SDG investment portfolio and other SDG financing solution. This will help develop strategies and make decisions about which types of finance are best suited for which type of investments in the context of the SDGs. It is important to tap into new forms of finance, and use existing financial flows as effectively as possible. Transparency on financing and revenues will then be increased.
- There is a need to think about transforming national budgeting processes to support the results-based nature of the SDGs, for instance, considering all sources of financing, enhancing domestic resource mobilization including through improvement of private sector environment, strengthening of public financial management and reform of tax and revenue collection, applying outcome-based and participatory budgeting, promoting the integration of specific issue areas into fiscal budgets.
- Prioritizing domestic resource mobilization, including tax revenue, which will be essential to mobilize resources required to achieve the NSEDP, as well as make significant progress towards the SDGs. A stable macro-economic environment and strengthening of Public Financial Management, with credible budgets that can be executed, are important prerequisites, and
- Making financing for SDGs/ NSEDP a regular part of the Round Table dialogue. It is important to have strong links between discussion on different types of partnerships, and discussions on different types of finance. Having an overview of the overall resource envelope and the characteristics of different flows is crucial for formulating long-term

strategies on the best and most catalytic use of ODA and other types of international public finance.

5. Partnerships with Private Sector

- Prioritizing measures that ensure macroeconomic stability. The NSEDP has a financing gap that is expected to be filled by investments and loans. This will only happen if Lao PDR has macroeconomic stability and offers a safe place for investment.
- Improving the business environment in line with WTO and ASEAN.
- Strengthening private sector participation and improving the business environment needs to be based on rule or law and international commitments, including the ILO conventions. Stability of Lao PDR is major asset to attract investments.
- Accelerating measures to market Lao PDR as a place for investment and actively search for investors from abroad. These could use Lao PDR and its Special Economic Zones as hubs to access ASEAN markets. The Lao Chambers of Commerce, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce will cooperate in marketing Lao PDR to potential investors, and
- Linking the Round Table Process and the Trade Sector Working Group to the Lao Business Forum.

6. Partnerships with civil society and citizens

- Translating SDGs into province, district, and local context, and ensure convergence on the same districts and villages through effective horizontal and vertical coordination. Build capacity at province, district and village level to understand and implement SDGs. Engagement of Lao citizens and civil society will help ensure no one is left behind.
- Promoting participation at the village level and actively involve people in the SDG mobilization process. People need to be engaged as partners. Rather than being done to people, or for people, development needs to take place with people, involving people at every stage. The Lao citizens have the best sense of what their needs are, have resources to help achieve the SDGs, and can help monitor progress, and
- Continuing to include civil society representatives in consultations and institutional arrangements for SDG implementation and monitoring. Key recommendations from civil society as highlighted in the introduction provide solid foundations for the Government's efforts toward achievement of SDG goals and targets by 2030.
- Involvement of youth and volunteers in a systematic way to implement and monitor the progress of SDGs will ensure the participation and contribution of all partners in the society to achieve the SDGs.

7. Advocacy and awareness-raising

- Public awareness and communication strategy for SDG implementation are important for ensuring greater support and partnerships which are essential for the SDG realization. Therefore, it is important to promote common awareness of the 2030 Agenda and national priorities not only at national level but also local level.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

Achieving goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is a challenging task taking into account all challenges that Lao PDR is currently encountering. However, as highlighted in this VNR, the country has made important progress in each SDG. If Lao PDR can continue this development trajectory, there is a good chance that the country can reach the overarching aim of meeting SDG goals and targets by 2030.

The 9th NSEDP is the framework around which the Government aims to accomplish the national development goals including SDGs, LDC graduation, and green growth. The NSEDP outlines a strategy that supports further growth in employment across different sectors, agricultural production, trade, and resource mobilization. The Government is committed to social policies to support creating a healthy and educated population. Important efforts are also being undertaken to build the resilience of institutions, communities and households to economic and natural shocks. But as there have been achievements, there have also been challenges related to SDG implementation that will need critical attention within the timeframe of 9th NSEDP.

- **Economic transformation.** The economy is still based principally mostly on natural resources, yet there is significant space for growth in the productive sectors with increasing competitiveness and diversification. The policy on rural development and non-resource sector development needs to be more fully realized and implemented. Labour productivity needs to be further improved to link agriculture with processing industry. Manufacturing is relatively small and the economy is vulnerable to external factors such as changes in commodity prices and international market competition which will need further reform in order to gain benefits from regional integration. The economic transformation will take into consideration of the digitalization and innovation. With the impact of COVID-19, the country will put greater efforts to connect citizen with technology and information, like never before. This is an opportunity to introduce digital advancements that can help the country tackle the pandemic itself and other complex development challenges.
- **SDG localization.** Despite significant progress, a number of SDG indicators need special attention, including those related to hunger, education outcomes, child mortality, deforestation and UXO. The nutrition of children and women of reproductive age is an issue of particular importance. Sufficient, predictable and sustained investment is required to improve the quality and access to basic social services.
- **Business environment.** Although private sector and enterprise development have improved and been promoted, further efforts are needed to improve and upgrade the investment climate and promote private investment in the non-resource industries. Lao PDR was ranked 154 out of 189 countries worldwide in the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators in 2019. Hence, there is ample opportunity and appetite to wish to improve the Lao PDR position.
- **Implementation capacity.** Governance improvements are still needed to ensure the effectiveness of legislative and judicial institutions. Coordination within each ministry and coordination between ministries and central and local level agencies also need to be further harmonized. Implementation of plan priorities and the translation of various resolutions into programs and implementation of detailed projects will need to be improved. Resource mobilization from all sources at the central and local level will need further enhancement to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Strengthening human resources.** As human resource development has been promoted by both the private and public sector, it is important to pay great attention to overall

quality. Moreover, human resource development will need to be fully linked to labour market demands, especially for SMEs. Ultimately, developing the human resources of the country holds the key for the long-term prosperity of Lao PDR. This will need to go along with efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity. Investment in quality of education will be on the top agenda of the Government with an emphasis on primary and Early Child Education (ECE) which is vital to realise the national human capital goals and realise sustainable economic growth. In addition, improving the overall well-being of the population will be a key to strengthen human resources. Therefore, an emphasis by the Government is on overall social sectors including social welfare and inclusive.

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Statistical Annex

SDG 1: No Poverty - End poverty in all its forms everywhere

SDG Reporting Owner (SDGr owner) – Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)				
Implementation (SDGi Owners)				
MAF	BOL	MOF	MOLSW	MONRE
5 indicators 1.1.1 1.2.1 1.2.2 1.2.3 1.4.1	2 Indicators 1.4.4 1.4.5	1 Indicator 1.a.2.a	3 Indicators 1.3.1 1.5.1 1.a.2.b	3 Indicators 1.4.3 1.5.2 1.5.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 13. - However, sequence no.13 is divided into two indicators. - Therefore, as an easy reference for the SDGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 14. 				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25/day	1	1	1.1.1% of population living below the international poverty line (US\$1.90/day)	MAF	2013	15.6	Survey - LSB (LECS)	Every 5 years			8.6	
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.	2	2	1.2.1% of population living below the national poverty line	MAF	2013	24.6	Survey - LSB (LECS)	Every 5 years			18.3	
	3	3	1.2.2% of children who are multi-dimensionally deprived according to national definitions	MAF	2013	33.1	Survey - LSB (LECS)	Every 5 years			22.0	
	4	4	1.2.3*% families defined as poor by National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (NCRDPE), Lao PDR	MAF	2015	6.5	Admin - MAF	Yearly	6.5	5.9	5.3	5.1
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.	5	5	1.3.1% Population covered by Social Protection Schemes:	MOLSW	2015		Admin - MOLSW	Yearly				
			- Social State Enterprise			2.7			2.9	3.3	4.9	3.5
			- Social State			12.6			15.5	13.0	13.2	10.7
			- Health			15.2			18.8	79.1	72.8	73.8
			- Insurance			1.0			1.2	1.0	0.9	1.0
1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the	6	6	1.4.1% of population living in households with access to basic services:	MAF	2017		Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators				SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr				Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.			- Access to secondary education				83.1			83.1			
			- Access to health service				74.3			74.3			
			- Access to improved water				78.1			78.1			
			- Access to micro-finance services										
			- Access to electricity				93.4			93.4			
			- Access to roads in all seasons				83.4			83.4			
	7	7	1.4.3* Number of certificates for tenure rights to land issued per year		MONRE	2016	76,847	Admin - MONRE	Yearly	117,751	42,904		
	8	8	1.4.4* Ratio of (a) bank accounts and (b) financial institution/micro finance account held by adult population (18 years old and above) as compared to total population		BOL	2015		Admin - BOL	Yearly				
			(a) Bank accounts				33.4			36.8	40.0	39.9	50.5
			(b) Financial institution/micro-finance account				2.4			2.6	0.03	2.9	3.5
	9	9	1.4.5* % of (a) villages and (b) districts having:		BOL	2016		Admin - BOL	Yearly				
			(a) Villages										
			- Bank branches or service units										
			- Microfinance institutions (All types)				1.5			-	1.7	1.6	1.6
			(b) Districts										
			- Bank branches or service units										
			- Microfinance institutions (All types)				28.4				31.7	32.4	31.1
1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.	10	10	1.5.1 Persons per 100,000 population directly affected (dead, missing, homeless/displaced) by natural disasters		MOLSW	2015	996.75	Admin - MOLSW	Yearly	358.10	3,805.69	9,270.11	10,795.47
			- Dead				0.1			0.07	0.14	0.91	0.37
			- Injury				0.38			0	0	0.02	0.22
			- Missing				0			0	0	0.37	0.09
			- Homeless				1.37			0	0	0.05	0
	11	11	1.5.2% of damages affected from natural disaster to GDP	MONRE									

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
	12	12	1.5.6* The number of national advance warning centers and the number of meteorological and hydrological parameters measuring institutions that have been improved and activated.	MONRE								
1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimension.	13	13	1.a.2.a General government expenditure on	MOF	2016		Admin - MOF	Yearly				
			(a) Health									
			- % of total government expenditure			6.12						
			- % of GDP			1.51						
			(b) Education									
			- % of total government expenditure			12.59						
			- % of GDP			4.24						2.94
	14		1.a.2.b General government expenditure on social protection	MOLSW	2015		Admin - MOLSW	Yearly				
			- % of total government expenditure			2.24						2.46
			- % of GDP			0.68						0.69

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr owner)– Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Ministry of Health (MOH)		
SDGi Owners (Implementation)		
MAF	MOH	MOIC
5 indicators 2.1.2 2.1.4 2.3.1 2.a.1 2.a.2	6 Indicators 2.1.1 2.1.3 2.2.1 2.2.1.a 2.2.3 2.2.4	1 Indicator 2.c.1

- Number of SDG indicators in total = 11.
- However, SDGi sequence no.18 is divided into two indicators.
- Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, **total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 12.**

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	14	15	2.1.1% of prevalence of undernourishment in the population	MOH	2015	16.8	FAO estimate	Yearly	16.7	16.5	16.5	
	15	16	2.1.2% of prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population, based on Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	MAF			FAO estimate					
	16	17	2.1.3*% of population consuming less than the minimum dietary energy requirement of 2100 cal/day/person according to the Food Poverty Line defined by the Government	MOH	2013	20.1	Survey - LSB (LECS)	Every 5 years				
	17	18	2.1.4* Food production (in tons): - Rice - Sweet corn - Vegetable - Meat and fish	MAF	2015	4,102,000 282,185 384,712 1,683,405 1,361,065	MAF	Admin	4,148,800 284,500 387,185 1,690,900 1,383,455	4,055,409 236,825 264,245 1,436,545 1,537,735	3,279,110 168,875 185,665 1,310,035 1,145,690	3,534,499 277,450 289,190 1,862,290 1,323,185

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	18	19	2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviations from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age	MOH	2015	35.5	Note 1	Every 5 years (LSIS)			33	
			2.2.1.a* Prevalence of stunting among under 2 years old (for Lao PDR's commitment to SUN 1000 days programme)								25.4	
	19	21	2.2.3* Prevalence of wasting (weight for height >+2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5, disaggregated by sex, province, ethnicity	MOH	2012	5.1	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years			9.0	
			2.2.4* Prevalence of overweight (weight for height >+2 standard deviations from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5, disaggregated by sex, province, ethnicity								3.5	
2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	21	23	2.3.1 Agricultural value added per labour unit in US\$	MAF			Admin					
2.a Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries	22	24	2.a.1 Share of agricultural spending in government expenditures, where agriculture includes crops, livestock, fisheries, productive forestry, and hunting sectors	MAF	2015	158.56	Admin - MAF (Amount in Billion Lao Kip)	Yearly	188.77	271.19	244.43	178.56
			2.a.2 Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) distributed to the agriculture sector in US\$									

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
2.c Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility	24	26	2.c.1 Availability of food price list	MOIC	2015	39	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	-	39	39	39

Note 1 – Based line - Lao Child Anthropometry Assessment Survey: Add-On to the 2015 National Immunization Survey, Final Report, February 2016 and updated data is based on LSIS II

SDG 3 - Good Health - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr owner) – Ministry of Health							
SDGi Owners (Implementation)							
MOH		MOPS					
29 indicators		1 Indicator 3.6.1					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 27. - However, SDGi sequence no.41 is divided into three indicators and SDGi no.42 is divided into two indicators. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SDGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 30. 							

Global Targets	Local Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	25	27	3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 population	MOH	2015	206	Survey - LSB (PHC)	Every 10 years	196	185	72	70
	26	28	3.1.2 Proportion of birth attended by skilled health personnel		2013	41.5	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years		64.4		
3.2 By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under- 5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	27	29	3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate per 100,000 population	MOH	2013	79	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years			46	
							Estimate - WHO	Yearly		63	47	46
							Admin - MOH	Yearly	15.1	17.8	18	
	28	30	3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate (28 days old) per 100,000 population	MOH	2013	32	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years			18	
							Admin - MOH	Yearly	6.8	7.4	7.4	6.9
	29	31	3.2.3* Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	MOH	2013	68	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years			40	
3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne	30	32	3.3.1 Estimated number of new HIV infection, number/per 1000 by sex, age and key populations group	MOH	2015	500-600 (0.08 per 1,000 pop)	Admin - MOH	Yearly	870	830	810	780
	31	33	3.3.1.a% of people with diagnosed HIV sustained ART	MOH	2015	32	Admin - MOH	Yearly	39	47	50	56

Global Targets	Local Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
diseases and other communicable diseases	32	34	3.3.2 Incident of TB (all forms) per 100,000 population per year	MOH	2015	182	Admin - MOH	Yearly	175	168	162	155
	33	35	3.3.3 Malaria incident rate per 1,000 in Lao PDR and among the population living in areas where malaria transmission occurs	MOH	2015	4.9	Admin - MOH with support from WHO	Yearly	7.8	5.6	4.2	
	34	36	3.3.4% of infants receiving three doses of hepatitis B vaccine	MOH	2017	60.8	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years		60.8		
	35	37	3.3.5 Number of people requiring treatment and care for any one of the NTDs targeted by the WHO NTD Roadmap and World Health Assembly resolutions, and reported to WHO	MOH	2015	2,183,066	Admin - WHO	Yearly	2,206,011	1,953,002	2,031,804	
3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	36	38	3.4.1 Mortality of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease for 30-70 years old	MOH	2015	27.1	Admin - WHO		27			
3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	37	39	3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol	MOH	2015	10.1	Admin - WHO				10.7	
3.6 By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	38	40	3.6.1 Number of death from road traffic accidents a year per 100,000 population	MOH	2015	14.2	Admin - MOPS	Yearly	15.5	15	14.12	
3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	39	41	3.7.1% of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	MOH	2013	61.3	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years			71.7	
	40	42	3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14; aged 15-19) per 1,000 women in that age group:	MOH	2018		Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
			- Aged 10-14			-						
			- Aged 15-19			83						
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to	41	43	3.8.1.a Coverage of essential health services:	MOH	2015	52	Admin - MOH	Yearly	56.1	62.2	68.1	70.4
			Prevention:									
			- % Antenatal care coverage (at least 4 visits)									

Global Targets	Local Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	44	3.8.1.b Coverage of essential health services: Prevention: - % Measles & rubella (MR) coverage (%) among 9-12 months old children	MOH	2015	80	Admin - MOH	Yearly	59.7	86	89		
	45	3.8.1.c Coverage of essential health services: Treatment: - % of tuberculosis cases detected under DOTS - % of tuberculosis cases cured under DOTS	MOH	2015	88	Admin - MOH	Yearly		25.3	28.3	27.7	
	42	46	3.8.2.a Out of pocket health expenditure as% of total health expenditure	MOH	2014	39.0	Admin - WHO			42.9		
		47	3.8.2.b Out of pocket health expenditure per capita (US\$)	MOH	2015	23.8	Admin - WHO	Yearly	25.3	28.3	27.7	
	43	48	3.9.2 Estimated deaths/year attributable to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (diarrhea only)	MOH	2016	11	Admin - WHO	Yearly		72	72	
	44	49	3.9.3 Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning	MOH	2015	2.9	Admin - WHO					
3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	45	50	3.a.1% of age standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 and above (Total) - Female - Male	MOH	2018	12.5	Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
	46	51	3.a.2*% of prevalence of current tobacco use among adolescent age 13-15 years (Total) - Female - Male	MOH		65.7						
3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential	47	52	3.b.2 Total net official development assistance disbursed to the basic health sectors	MOH	2015	57.6 million	Admin - OECD	Yearly	49 million			
	48	53	3.b.3% age of health facilities with essential medicines available based on MOH essential drug list	MOH								

Global Targets	Local Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	49	54	3.b.4* Total net official development assistance for health as% of total health expenditure	MOH								
3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States	50	55	3.c.1 Health workers per 1,000 population by:	MOH	2015	2.9	NHSR 2014-2015	Admin			3.0	
			- Urban								7.8	
			- Rural								2.4	
			- Doctors								0.8	
			- Nurses								1.2	
			- Midwives									
3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks	51	56	3.d.1 Lao PDR adopts International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness: Yes/No	MOH			Admin - MOH					

SDG 4 - Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) – Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)	
Implementation (SDGi Owners)	
MOES	MPT
20 Indicators	1 Indicator 4.4.1
- Number of SDG indicators in total = 19.	
- However, SDGi sequence no 65 and 66 is divided into two indicators, respectively.	
- Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 21.	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.	52	57	4.1.1% of students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics by sex, ethnicity, disability status and province as available	MOES			Admin-MOES		NA	NA	NA	NA
			i. in grades 2 and 3 primary education									
			ii. at the end of primary education (grade 5)									
			iii. at the end of lower secondary education									
	53	58	4.1.2* Administration of a national representative learning assessment	MOES			Admin-MOES		NA	NA	NA	NA
			i. in grades 2 and 3 primary education									
			ii. at the end of primary education (grade 5)									
	54	59	4.1.3* Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary education and lower secondary education	MOES			Admin-MOES		NA	NA	NA	NA
			4.1.4* Completion rate (Primary education, lower secondary education, and upper secondary education) by sex									
	55	60	- Primary	MOES	2017	105.4	Admin-MOES	Yearly				
			- Male						105.4			
			- Female						105.4			
			- Lower						72.6			
			- Male						70.3			
									70.3			

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones				
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	
4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.			- Female			74.9				74.9			
			- Upper Secondary			45.2				45.2			
			- Male			47.4				47.4			
			- Female			42.9				42.9			
	56	61	4.1.5* Out of school rate for children of primary school age, lower secondary school age, and upper secondary school age, by sex		MOES				Admin-MOES	Yearly			
	57	62	4.1.6*% of children over-age for grade		MOES	2015		Admin-MOES	Yearly				
			- Primary education			16.7	14.2			12.7	10.6		
			- Lower secondary education			26.2	28.4			24.1	9.2		
	58	63	4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) by sex		MOES	2015	66	Admin-MOES	Yearly	70.9	74.4	77.1	
	59	64	4.2.3* Gross early childhood enrolment ratio in pre-primary education and early childhood education development by sex		MOES	2015							
			- 0-2 years old			3.7	4.1			4.4	4.7		
			- 3-4 years old			31.5	37.3			41.4	45		
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.	60	65	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal education, Non-formal education and training in the last 12 months by sex		MOES			Admin-MOES	Yearly				
	61	66	4.3.2* Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education		MOES								
	62	67	4.3.3* Participation rate in technical-vocational education programmes (15-24 years-old)		MOES	2017	84,450				84,450		
			- Male				49,682				49,682		
			- Female				34,768				34,768		
	63	68	4.3.4*% lower secondary/upper secondary school graduates enrolled in vocational & training school, by sex		MOES	2017		Admin-MOES	Yearly				
			- Lower secondary school enrolled				0.5				0.5		
			- Upper secondary school enrolled				6.5				6.5		
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for	64	69	4.4.1% of youth (15-24) having used the computer/internet by type (level) of ICT skill, by sex and by residence:		MPT			Survey - LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
			- Computer users (Female)			2018	7.3			-	7.3	-	
			- Internet users (Female)				-			-	-	-	
										-	-	-	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones					
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019		
			-		-	-			-	-	-	-		
employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.			- Computer users (Male) - Internet users (Male)		2018	11.8			-	11.8	-	-		
4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.	65	70	4.5.1.a Female/Male Gender parity indices for gross enrolment:	MOES	2015		Admin-MOES	Yearly						
			- Primary			0.97			0.97	0.98	0.98			
			- Lower			0.95			0.95	0.95	0.96			
			- Upper Secondary			0.88			0.91	0.91	0.91			
			4.5.1.b Female/Male Gender parity indices for completion:		MOES	2017								
			- Primary			1				1				
			- Lower			0.939				0.939				
			- Upper Secondary			0.905				0.905				
			4.6.1.a% of adult (15 years old and above) population reporting ability to read and write by sex	MOES	2015	84.7	Survey - LSB (PHC)	Every 10 years						
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.	66	72	- Male			90								
			- Female			79.4								
			4.6.1.b% of youth 15-24 years old reporting ability to read and write	MOES	2015		Survey - LSB (PHC)	Every 10 years						
			- Age 15-19 years			93.3								
			- Male			94.8								
			- Female			90.5								
			- Age 20-24 years			91.6								
			- Male			94								
			- Female			89.2								
4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's	67	74	4.7.2*% of universities, TVET and teacher education institutions with sustainable campus	MOES										

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
contribution to sustainable development.												
4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.	68	75	4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to a. Electricity b. The Internet for pedagogical purposes c. Computers for pedagogical purposes d. With adequate sanitation facilities (toilets) segregated by sex e. With hand washing facilities, as per national standard f. With adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disability g. Primary schools that have WASH facilities meeting national standards	MOES	2018		Admin-MOES	Yearly	NA	NA	NA	NA
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.	69	76	4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	MOES	2015	11.7	OECD		11	7.5	18	
4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.	70	77	4.c.1% of teachers having completed teacher-education programme “trained teachers” - Primary - Male - Female - Lower Secondary - Male - Female - Upper Secondary - Male	MOES	2015		Admin-MOES	Yearly				
						98.4			97.5	97.0	97.0	
						98.7			97.8	97.4	97.4	
						98.1			97.2	96.7	96.7	
						99.5			96.5	94.7	94.8	
						99.4			96.2	94.2	94.2	
						99.6			96.7	95.2	95.2	
						99.0			98.8	98.4	98.4	
						-			98.7	98.7	98.7	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones				
	SDGi	SDGr	-		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	
						-				98.1	98.1		
			- Female			-							

SDG 5 - Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr)– Lao Women Union (LWU)	
Implementation (SDGi Owners)	
LWU	MPT
18 Indicators	1 Indicator 5.b.1

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	71	78	5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex	LWU	2016	3	Admin-LWU	Every 5 years	3			
	72	79	5.1.2* Whether mechanisms are operational in 'enforcing and monitoring' the implementation of legal frameworks for each area of law	LWU	2015	3	Admin-LWU	Yearly	3			
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	73	80	5.2.1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 years subject to physical and/or sexual violence by any partner in the last 12 months by type and five-year age group	LWU	2014	6.4%	Admin-LWU	Yearly				
	74	81	5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subject to physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence by someone else who is not their partner have access to services (health, social services and justice)	LWU			Admin-LWU	Yearly				
	75	82	5.2.3* Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subject to physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence by someone else who is not their partner have access to services (health, social services and justice)	LWU			Admin-LWU	Yearly				
	76	83	5.2.4*% of women and girls aged 15 years and older subject to GVB by any partner satisfied with the services (health, social services and justice)	LWU			Admin-LWU	Yearly				
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	77	84	5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18	LWU	2018	7.1	Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
			- Before age 15								7.1	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
			- Before age 18			32.7					32.7	
	78	85	5.3.3* Adolescent pregnancy as% of total pregnancy (18 years and below)	LWU								
	79	86	5.3.4* % of women aged 15-49 years who gave birth:	LWU	2018		Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
			- By age 15			3.0				3.0		
			- By age 18			18.2				18.2		
			% of women aged 20-24 years who gave birth:									
			- By age 15			2.3				2.3		
			- By age 18			18.4				18.4		
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	80	87	5.4.1 % of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work:									
			- Female	LWU	2018		Survey-LSB (LFS)	Every 5 years				
			- Male			5.5				5.5		
						5.9				5.9		
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	81	88	5.5.1 % of women in National Assembly:	LWU			Admin-MoHA	Yearly				
			- National		2016	27.5			27.5	27.5		
			- Provincial		2016	31.3			31.3	31.3		
	82	89	5.5.2 % of women in decision making positions /leadership positions in government sector by central, province and district in the following positions:	LWU			Admin-MoHA	Yearly				
			- Deputy Division Head		2016	22.9			22.9	24.0	25.2	
			- Division Head		2016	17.7			17.7	18.5	18.9	
			- Deputy Department General		2016	16.0			16.0	16.5	17.5	
			- Department General		2016	15.2			15.2	14.8	15.2	
			- Deputy Minister									
			- Minister									
	83	90	5.5.3* % of women being: (1) the village chief and (2) the deputy village chief	LWU			Admin-MoHA	Yearly				
			- The village chief		2016	2.6			2.6		2.3	
			- The deputy village chief		2016	11.6			11.6		11.8	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	84	91	5.6.2 Existing laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education	LWU			Admin-LWU	Every 5 years				
	85	92	5.6.3*% of women at reproductive age (15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with appropriate methods	LWU								
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	86	93	5.a.1% of women where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	LWU								
	87	94	5.a.2 The legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control	LWU								
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	88	95	5.b.1% of population registered females as mobile phone users per 100 population	MPT	2018	73.1	Admin-MoPT	Yearly	73.1			
5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	89	96	5.c.1 Existing systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment	LWU			Admin-LWU	Yearly				

SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr)– Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE)		
Implementation (SDGi Owners)		
MONRE	MOH	MPWT
7 indicators 6.3.2 6.4.3 6.4.4 6.5.1 6.5.2 6.6.2 6.a.2	4 Indicators 6.1.1 6.2.1 6.2.2 6.3.1	2 Indicators 6.1.1.b 6.a.1.a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 12. - However, SDGi sequence no.90 is divided into two indicators. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SDGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 13. 		

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.	90	97	6.1.1.a Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (well and stream – Nam Lin and Nam Badan)	MOH	2015	71	JMP (WHO & UNICEF)	Every 5 years		71 (LSIS)		
			- Rural			56						
			- Urban			94						
		98	6.1.1.b Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source (pipe water – Nam Pa Pa)		2017		Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years				
6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.	91	99	6.2.1 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility:	MOH	2017	73.8	Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years		73.8		
			- Rural									
			- Urban									
	92	100	6.2.2* Proportion of population practicing open defecation:		2015	23			JMP (WHO & UNICEF)			
			- Rural			37						

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
			- Urban			1						
6.3 By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.	93	101	6.3.1.a% of population using water for drinking (well and stream – Nam Lin and Nam Badan) free from zero e-coli sources	MOH	2017	18.9	Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years		18.9		
	94	102	6.3.2 Quality of water in the bodies of water	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
6.4 By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.	95	103	6.4.3*% of water use from bodies of water	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
	96	104	6.4.4* Data on drought area	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through trans boundary cooperation as appropriate.	97	105	6.5.1 Number of river basins with water resource management plan	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
	98	106	6.5.2 Number of trans-boundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.	99	107	6.6.2* Two water areas boundary management plan: Beung Kietngong and Xechamphone	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
6.a By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.	100	108	6.a.1.a Net official development assistance and official aid from all sources for the water & sanitation sector (million US\$): - Total - Water (pipe water – Nam Pa Pa) - Total expenditure for the water sector (Nam Pa Pa)	MPWT			Admin-MPT	Yearly				
	101	109	6.a.2* Number of projects and value on water resources	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

SDG Reporting Owner (SDGr) and implementation (SDGi owner) – Ministry of Energy and Mine (MEM)

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.	102	110	7.1.1% of households with access to electricity from overall sources: - Rural - Urban	MEM	2017	93	Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years	NA	93	NA	NA
	103	111	7.1.2% of households with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology	MEM	2017	0.2	Survey-LSB (LSIS)	Every 5 years	NA	0.2	NA	NA
	104	112	7.1.3*% of households connected to the national electricity grid: - Total - Rural without road - Rural with road - Urban	MEM	2017	92.5	Admin-MEM	Yearly				
7.2 By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.	105	113	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	MEM			Admin-MEM	Yearly				
7.3.1 Energy intensity level of primary energy (ratio between energy supply and gross domestic product) (MJ/US\$2005 PPP)	106	114	7.3.1 Energy intensity level of primary energy (ratio between energy supply and gross domestic product) (MJ/US\$2005 PPP)	MEM			Admin-MEM	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
7.b By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support.	107	115	7.b.1 Investments in energy efficiency as a% of GDP and the amount of foreign direct investment in financial transfer for infrastructure and technology to sustainable development services	MEM			Admin-MEM	Yearly				

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

SDG Reporting Owner – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfares (MOLSW)				
SWGi Owners				
MOLSW	BOL	MOIC	MOICT	MPI
8 indicators	2 Indicators	4 Indicators	3 Indicators	2 Indicator
8.3.1 8.5.1 8.5.2 8.5.4 8.6.1 8.7.1 8.7.2 8.8.1	8.10.1 8.10.2	8.3.2 8.3.3 8.5.3 8.a.1	8.9.1 8.9.2 8.9.3	8.1.1 8.2.1

Global Targets	Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, on the average 7% per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.	108	116	8.1.1 Real GDP growth rate	MPI	2010-2015	5.7	Survey-LSB	Yearly	5.4	5.2	4.6	NA
8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.	109	117	8.2.1% of growth in labour productivity (GDP/per person employed)	MPI	2015	4.9	ILO		4.8	4.7	4.4	4.4
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and	110	118	8.3.1 Proportion of own-account workers and contributing family workers in total employment, by sex	MOLSW	2015	80.8	Survey-LSB(PHC)	Every 10 years	66.5 (LFS 2017)			
			- Male			0.754			19.97			
			- Female			0.866			46.53			

Global Targets	Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.	111	119	8.3.2* % of financing and loans issued to SMEs	MOIC	2015	30,9	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	23.4	22.3	20.2	18.1
	112	120	8.3.3* Number of SMEs owned by Lao citizens (with Lao citizens as the majority shareholders)	MOIC	2015	2,235	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	2,537	2,667	2,829	3,966
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.	113	121	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female/male employees, by sector, age group and persons with disabilities	MOLSW	2015		Admin-MOLSW	Yearly				
			Agriculture			5,208			5,729	8,677	14,579	15,813
			- Male			2,005			2,206	5,342	8,966	9,735
			- Female			3,203			3,523	3,335	5,613	6,078
			Industry			5,859			6,250	16,713	14,271	16,979
			- Male			3,592			3,831	6,469	5,523	6,571
			- Female			2,267			2,419	10,244	8,748	10,407
			Services			11,979			13,021	18,194	15,616	17,088
			- Male			3,929			4,271	12,230	10,493	11,487
			- Female			8,050			8,750	5,964	5,123	5,601
	114	122	8.5.2 Unemployment rate (% of labour force):	MOLSW	2010	2.1	Survey-LSB(PHC)	Every 10 years	-	9.4 (LF 2017)	-	-
			- Female			2.1				10.7		
			- Male			2.1				7.8		
	115	123	8.5.3* % of businesses owned by females	MOIC	2015	10,592	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	11,586	11,855	11,572	15,061
	116	124	8.5.4* Share of employed persons in the informal sector:	MOLSW	2015	83.8%	Survey-LSB(PHC)	Every 5 years	-	82.7 (LFS 2017)	-	-
			- Female			88.8			-	85.9	-	-
			- Male			78.8			-	79.9	-	-
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.	117	125	8.6.1 % of youth (aged 15-24) not in education, employment or training	MOLSW	2015	18.5	Survey-LSB(PHC)	Every 10 years	-	16.1 (LFS 2017)	-	-
			- Female			8.5			-	7.8	-	-
			- Male			10.0			-	8.3	-	-
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern	118	126	8.7.1% of children aged 5-17 in employment (“Working Children”):	MOLSW	2010	15	Survey-LSB(LFS)	Every 5 years		42.8 (LSIS 2017)		
			- Female			17				43.2		

Global Targets	Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.			- Male			13				42.4		
	119	127	8.7.2* Number of children aged 5-17 engaged in prohibited hazardous occupations and tasks, by sex and age	MOLSW	2010	130,137	Survey-LSB Child Labor Survey	Every 5 years		3,671 (LSIS 2017)		
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.	120	128	8.8.1 Number of cases of fatal and non-fatal occupational injury reported during the reference year	MOLSW	2015	40	Admin-MOLSW	Yearly	53	20	39	50
8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.	121	129	8.9.1 Revenue from tourism (million US\$)	MOICT	2015	725	Admin-MOICT	Yearly	724	648	811	934
	122	130	8.9.2 Employment in tourism industries as a proportion of total employment and growth rate of employment:	MOICT								
			- Female									
			- Male									
	123	131	8.9.3* Establishment of Tourism standards (1=to be adopted and implemented)	MOICT	2015	0	Admin-MOICT	Yearly	0	0	0	1
			- Lao PDR clean tourist city standard			0			0	0	0	1
			- Lao PDR tourist attraction rating standard			0			0	0	0	1
			- Lao PDR homestay standard			0			0	0	0	1
			- Lao PDR community-based tourism standard			0			0	0	0	1
8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.	124	132	8.10.1 Number of per 100,000 adults	BOL	2015		Admin-BOL	.				
			(a) Automated teller machines (ATMs);			25.6			26.6	27.9	28.4	29.5
			(b) Commercial bank branches			2.2			2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5
			(c) bank service units			11.7			12	12.5	12.3	12.2
			(d) Microfinance Institutions (all types)			-			4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1
	125	133	8.10.2 % of adults (18 years old and above) (Total/ Female/ Male):	BOL	2015		Amin-BOL	Yearly				

Global Targets	Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.	126	134	8.a.1 Mean number of days to clear imports	MOIC	2015	26	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	60.7	65.4	64.8	81.5
									3.4	3.4	3.5	3.2
									2.4	2.2	2.6	4.7
												3

SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

SDG Reporting Owner – Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC)					
Implementation (SWGi Owners)					
MOIC	BOL	MOST	MPI	MPT	MPWT
4 indicators 9.2.1 9.2.2 9.2.3 9.3.1	1 Indicator 9.3.2	3 Indicator 9.5.1 9.5.2 9.b.1	2 Indicators 9.a.1.a 9.a.1.b	1 Indicator 9.c.1	4 Indicators 9.1.1.a 9.1.1.b 9.1.2 9.1.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 13. - However, SDGi sequence no.127 and 137 are divided into two indicators, respectively. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 15. 					

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.	127	135	9.1.1.a Share of the rural population who live in villages with all-weather road access	MPWT	2015	To be calculated	Admin-MPWT	Yearly				
			- Total road network (Km) – Not key indicator – information for record			56,331						
			- Paved road network (Km) – Not key indicator – information for record			8,830						
			- % of paved road network – not key indicator – information or record			16%						
			9.1.1.b Share of the villages with and without all-weather road access:		MPWT							
			- Urban									
			- Rural									
	128	137	9.1.2 Passenger volumes (million passenger-km) ⁴⁴	MPWT MPWT	2015		Admin-MPWT	Yearly				
			- Road (Head count - Thousand)			59,106.4						
			- Rail (Head count - Thousand)			38.4						
			- Air (Head count - Thousand)			1,817						
			- Waterways (Head count - Thousand)			2,965.5						

⁴⁴ There might be a need to revise the measure since the volume for Laos might be too small – Thousand-km might be appropriate.

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.	129	138	9.1.3* Freight/goods volumes (million ton-km) ⁴⁵			5,127.3						
			- Road (thousand ton –total)									
			- Rail (thousand ton –total)									
			- Air (thousand ton –total)									
			- Waterways (thousand ton –total)									
	130	139	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as % of GDP	MOIC	2016	8.87 (7)	World Bank and PHC (MOIC)	Yearly				
			Per capital						(6.64)	(6.35)	(6.74)	(7.4)
131	140	9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a% of total employment										
132	141	9.2.3* Growth rate of new enterprises registered	Every 5 years						-	6.28	-	
133	142	9.3.1% share of SMEs in total industry value added	MOIC		112.3	Survey-LSB (LFS)	Yearly		10.5	0.9	(0.4)	
	134	143						9.3.2% of small-medium enterprises (SMEs) with a loan or line of credit				
9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.	135	144	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a% of GDP (Increase government budget on investment in development science and technology to 2% by 2025)	MOST	2015	NA			NA	NA	NA	0.09
	136	145	9.5.2 Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants (Increase number of researchers to 120.1 per million inhabitants by 2020)	MOST	2015	NA			NA	NA	NA	1,692
9.a Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure	137	146	9.a.1.a Total value of ODA earmarked for infrastructure projects	MPI	2015	-						

⁴⁵ There might be a need to revise the measure since the volume for Lao might be too small – Thousand-km might be appropriate.

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.		147	9.a.1.b Total value of Foreign direct investment (FDI) earmarked for infrastructure projects	MPI	2015	-						
9.b Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.	138	148	9.b.1% of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added (Increase value added from technology and revolution to 1% of total value added)	MOST								
9.c Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.	139	149	9.c.1% of population covered by a mobile network, regardless of use, disaggregated by technology: - Total - 2G - 3G - 4G	MPT			Admin-MPT	Yearly	NA	94	94	95

SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries

SDG Reporting Owner (SDGr) – Ministry of Planning and Investment (Lao Statistic Bureau-LSB)						
Implementation (SDGi Owners)						
BOL	MOF	MAF	MOLSW	MOPS	MOHA	MPI
1 Indicator 10.5.1	1 Indicator 10.a.1	2 Indicators 10.2.1 10.2.2	2 Indicators 10.4.2 10.7.1	1 Indicator 10.7.1.a	1 Indicator 10.7.1.b	1 Indicator 10.1.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total =8. - However, SDGi sequence no.146 is divided into two indicators. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SDGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 9. 						

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.	140	150	10.1.1% of annualized growth in real per capita consumption:	MPI	2015	To be added	Survey-LSB	Yearly				
			- 1st Quintile									
			- 2nd Quintile									
			- 3rd Quintile									
			- 4th Quintile									
			- 5th Quintile									
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.	141	151	10.2.1% of people living below 50% of median income	MAF			Survey-LSB	Every 5 years				
			10.2.2*% of households living below 50% of median income									
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.	143	153	10.4.2* Labour share of GDP in terms of social protection transfers (contributory unemployment insurance)	MOLSW	2015	-	Admin-MoLSW	Yearly	208	1,071	1,818	1,789
10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.	144	154	10.5.1 Number of laws and related regulations revised toward compliance with international standards by Bank of Lao PDR:	BOL	2017	4	Admin-BOL	Yearly	-	4	4	5
			- Payment System Law			Approved						

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.			- Law on Bank of Lao PDR			Started						
			- Law on Commercial Bank			Started						
			- Securities Law			-						
			- ?									
	145	155	10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a% of yearly income earned in country of destination	MOLSW	2015	0.05	Admin-MoLSW	Yearly	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
	146	156	10.7.2.a Number of well-managed international / cross-border migration policies that Lao PDR has implemented	MOPS			Admin-MOPS	Yearly	2	2	2	
		157	10.7.2.b Number of well-managed internal migration policies that Lao PDR has implemented	MOHA	2015	2	Admin-MOHA	Yearly	2	2	3	4
10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements.	147	158	10.a.1 Share of tariff lines applied to imports into Lao PDR with zero-tariff	MOF	2016	8,994 billion Kip or 50.79% of imports without zero tariff	Admin-MOF	Yearly				

SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) - Ministry of Public Work and Transportation (MPWT)		
Implementation (SDGi Owners)		
MOICT	MONRE	MPWT
3 indicators 11.4.2 11.4.3 11.4.4	6 Indicators 11.3.3 11.6.1.a 11.6.2 11.b.1 11.b.3 11.b.4	4 Indicators 11.1.1 11.1.2 11.2.1 11.5.2

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.	148	159	11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in inadequate housing	MPWT			Admin-MPWT	Yearly				
	149	160	11.1.2* Proportion of rural population living in inadequate housing									
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.	150	161	11.2.1 Number of registered public transportation vehicles disaggregated by types (eg: Tuk-Tuk, Four-wheel truck, etc.) - Province - Route	MPWT			Admin - MPWT	Yearly				
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.	151	162	11.3.3* Number of provinces with Integrated Spatial Planning (ISP)/development of green and clean guideline for villages and schools	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.	152	163	11.4.2* Number of national natural, cultural and historical sites (Total) - Natural sites	MOICT	2015	1,957	Admin - MOICT	Yearly	2,104	2,094	2,208	2,199
						1,145			1,194	1,184	1,318	1,314

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones				
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.			- Cultural sites			534		Admin - MOICT	628	632	596	591	
			- Historical sites			278			282	278	294	294	
	153	164	11.4.3* Number of natural, cultural and historical tourist attractions	MOICT	2017	817	Admin - MOICT	Yearly	-	-	809	-	
	154	165	11.4.4* Number of UNESCO World Heritage sites	MOICT	2015	2	Admin - MOICT	Yearly	2	3	3	4	
	155	166	11.5.2 Direct disaster economic loss in relation to GDP, including disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services	MPWT	2016	85.8	Admin - MPWT	Yearly					
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.	156	167	11.6.1.a% of solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge with regard to the total waste generated in Vientiane Capital	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly					
	157	168	11.6.2 Annual mean concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM 10 µg/m³)	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly					
11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	158	169	11.b.1% of district governments with local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with Sendai Framework	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly					
	159	170	11.b.3* Number and value of projects on climate change adaptation	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly					
	160	171	11.b.4* Number of provinces with disaster risk reduction strategies and action plans	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly					

SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) – Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE)				
Implementation (SDGi Owners)				
MAF	MOES	MOICT	MONRE	
1 indicator 12.3.1	1 Indicator 12.8.1	3 Indicators 12.b.1.a 12.b.1.b 12.b.2	5 Indicators 12.1.1 12.2.2 12.4.1 12.4.3 12.5.1	
- Number of SDG indicators in total = 9. - However, SDGi sequence no.168 is divided into two indicators. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SDGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 10.				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
12.1 Implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries.	161	172	12.1.1 Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) national action plans or SCP mainstreamed as a priority or target into national policies	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
12.2. By 2030, achieve the efficient and sustainable natural resource utilization and management	162	173	12.2.2 Domestic material consumption per capital and per GDP	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.	163	174	12.3.1 Food Loss index	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				
12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their	164	175	12.4.1 Volume of hazardous waste produced in Vientiane Capital	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
	165	176	12.4.3* Volume of general waste generated in 12 provinces	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Data Availability			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
adverse impacts on human health and the environment.												
12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.	166	177	12.5.1% of waste reuse compare to total waste in Vientiane capital	MONRE			Admin-MONRE	Yearly				
12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.	167	178	12.8.1 Primary and secondary curricula integrated sustainable development in:	MOES			Admin-MOES	Yearly				
			- Primary Teacher Education Programmes									
			- Secondary Teacher Education Programmes									
12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.	168	179	12.b.1.a Lao PDR Action Plan for Pakse Declaration on ASEAN Roadmap for Strategic Development of Ecotourism Clusters & Tourism Corridors: - Adopted - Implemented <i>(Note - Recommended by MOICT to drop this indicator)</i>	MOICT			Admin-MOICT	Yearly				
			12.b.1.b Develop national sustainable tourism assessment tools - Adopted - Implemented		MOICT	2015	0	Admin-MOICT	Yearly	0	0	0
			12.b.2* Disseminate and raise awareness on saving power, reducing and repurposing of using plastic for stakeholders in tourism sector		MOICT	2015	0	Admin-MOICT	Yearly	0	0	1

SDG 13 - Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) and implementation (SDGi owner) – Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE)

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Baseline Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.	170	182	13.1.1 Number the injured and fatalities from disaster	MONRE	2015		Admin-MoLSW	Yearly				
			- Affected			66,500			24,301	262,499	649,493	767,771
			- Male			38,335			11,300	150,780	391,373	714,356
			- Female			28,165			13,001	111,719	258,120	53,415
			- Death			7			5	10	64	27
			- Injury			26			-	-	2	16
			- Missing			-			-	-	26	7
			- Homeless			92			-	56	3,717	-
			- Male			-			-	-	1,915	-
			- Female			-			-	-	1,802	-
	171	183	13.1.3 Number of districts with disaster risk reduction strategies and action plan	MONRE			Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.	172	184	13.2.2* Reporting on Lao PDR's National Adaptation Plan (NAP)	MONRE			Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.	173	185	13.3.1 Number of schools and villages that received information dissemination on disaster and climate change	MONRE			Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				
	174	186	13.3.3* Number of provinces with capacity to report on the situation of climate change	MONRE	2015	18	Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				
13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate	175	187	13.a.1 Number and value of the projects that apply climate change adaptation	MONRE			Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Baseline Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible.												
13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.	176	188	13.b.1 Number of provinces and districts with projects on climate change	MONRE			Admin-MoNRE	Yearly				

SDG 14 - Life below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) and implementation (SDGi owner) – Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total =3. - However, SDGi sequence no.179 is divided into three indicators. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 5.

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.	177	189	14.4.1 Number of fish conservation zone	MAF	2016	885	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
14.6 By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.	178	190	14.6.1 Development and implementation of national plan of action (NPOA) to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in line with the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU)	MAF	2016	No	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.	179	191	14.b.1.a Existence of instruments that specifically target or address the small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector	MAF	2016	3	Admin-MAF	Yearly	-	3	3	4
			14.b.1.b On-going specific initiatives to implement the SSF Guidelines	MAF	-		Admin-MAF	Yearly				
			14.b.1.c Existence of mechanisms enabling small-scale fishers and fish workers to contribute to decision-making processes	MAF	2015	4	Admin-MAF	Yearly	4	4	4	4

SDG 15 - Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) – Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)	
Implementation (SDGi Owners)	
MAF	MPI
12 indicators 15.1.1 15.1.2 15.2.1.a 15.2.1.b 15.3.1 15.4.1 15.5.1 15.7.1 15.8.1 15.9.1 15.b.2.b 15.c.1	3 Indicators 15.a.1.a 15.a.1.b 15.b.2.a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 12. - However, SDGi sequence no.182, 189, and 190 are divided into two indicators, respectively. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 15. 	

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones				
					Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	
	180	194	15.1.1% of forest area as a% of total land area		MAF	2015	48	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and dry lands, in line with obligations under international agreements.	181	195	15.1.2% of land area covered by National Protected Areas, provincial and district protected areas		MAF	2012	28.5	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.	182	196	15.2.1.a Production forest area with certification in hectares (e.g., FSC, FLEGT)		MAF	2015	81,600	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
		197	15.2.1.b Forest area with management plans in million hectares		MAF	2016	15.1	Admin-MAF	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.	183	198	15.3.1% of rural villages reporting land degradation:	MAF	2011?		Admin-MAF	Yearly				
			- Light			36						
			- Moderate			22						
			- Severe			5						
15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.			15.4.1 Proportion of land area under protection		2017	210						
15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.	185	200	15.5.1 Number of species threatened with extinction	MAF	2017	210	Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.7 Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.	186	201	15.7.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked (total wildlife seizures to total wildlife traded/export permits issued)	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.8 By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.	187	202	15.8.1 Adoption of national legislation relevant to the prevention or control of invasive alien species	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.9.1 Progress towards biodiversity national targets, as reported by NSEDP	188	203	15.9.1 Progress towards biodiversity national targets, as reported by NSEDP	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.a Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.	189	204	15.a.1.a Net official development assistance provided for biodiversity/ ecosystems (US\$)	MPI	2015		Admin-MPI	Yearly				
		205	15.a.1.b Public expenditure on biodiversity/ecosystems	MPI	2015		Admin-MPI	Yearly				
15.b Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and	190	206	15.b.2.a* Net official development assistance provided for forestry/forest development (US\$)	MPI	2015	Checking with MPI:DIC	Admin-MPI	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.		207	15.b.2.b* Public expenditure on forestry/forest development	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				
15.c Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.	191	208	15.c.1 Proportion of traded wildlife that was poached or illicitly trafficked	MAF			Admin-MAF	Yearly				

SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institution: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) – Ministry of Home Affairs (MOFA)					
Implementation (SDGi Owners)					
LWU	MOF	MOFA	MOHA	MOJ	MOPS
4 indicators 16.1.3 16.2.1 16.2.3 16.2.4	4 Indicators 16.6.1 16.6.3 16.6.4 16.6.5	2 Indicators 16.8.1 16.a.1	4 Indicators 16.6.2 16.7.1 16.7.3 16.9.1	3 Indicators 16.3.3 16.3.4 16.3.5	4 Indicators 16.1.1 16.2.2 16.3.2 16.10.1

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones					
	SDGi	SDGr	Indicator Description		Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019		
16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	192	209	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population	MOPS	2017	0.02	Admin-MOPS	Yearly	-	0.02	0.04			
	193	210	16.1.3 Proportion of population (aged 15 - 17) subjected to (in the previous 12 months)		LWU	2015			Survey-LSB: VACS	On-going discussion over the next survey				
			(a) physical violence											
			- Male											
			- Female											
			(b) sexual violence in the previous 12 months											
			- Male											
			- Female											
			16.2.1 % of children (1-17) who reported having been subject to physical violence over the past year (Total)		LWU	2015	6.6	Survey-LSB: VACS	On-going discussion over the next survey					
			- Male											
			- Female											
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	194	211	16.2.2 Number of victims (detected/undetected) of human trafficking per 100,000 population (Total)	MOPS	2015	6.6	Survey-LSB: VACS	On-going discussion over the next survey						
			- Male											
			- Female											
	195	212	-						Admin-MOPS	Yearly				
			- Female											

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
16.2 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.	196	213	16.2.3 % of young women and men aged 18-24 who experienced sexual abuse by age 18 (Total)	LWU	2015	9.5	Survey-LSB: VACS	On-going discussion over the next survey				
			- Male			12.0						
			- Female			7.3						
	197	214	16.2.4* % of children who reported having been subject to emotional violence over the past year (Total)	LWU	2015	9.6	Survey-LSB: VACS	On-going discussion over the next survey				
			- Male			9.8						
			- Female			10.1						
16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.	198	215	16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a% of overall prison population	MOPS	2017	34.5	Admin-MOPS	Yearly	0	34.5	54.3	
	199	216	16.3.3* Ratio of cases (disaggregated by type) successfully enforced and monitored by Ministry of Justice to total cases submitted by courts	MOJ	2015		Admin-MOJ	Yearly				
			- Criminal			13,940			14,444	17,075	21,512	
			- Civil			6,229			6,365	6,615	7,910	
	200	217	16.3.4* Number of people using the services provided by the legal aid offices nationwide	MOJ	2016	25,971	Admin-MOJ	Yearly	25,971	31,077	41,354	
16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.	201	218	16.3.5* Number of cases logged with village mediation committee nationwide	MOJ	2016	4,746	Admin-MOJ	Yearly	4,746	3,900	1,457	
	202	219	16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a% of original approved budget, disaggregated by sector (or by budget codes or similar)	MOF	2015/ 2016	84.9	Admin-MOF	Yearly				
	203	220	16.6.2 Accountability framework applied at selected district level to capture and use citizens feedback on provision of basic services	MOHA	NA	NA	Admin-MOHA	Yearly	0	0	0	0
	204	221	16.6.3* Number of days after the start of financial year when public planned budget becomes publicly available	MOF	2015/ 2016	20	Admin-MOF	Yearly				
	205	222	16.6.4* Number of months after the end of the financial year when annual budget execution report becomes publicly available	MOF	2015/ 2016	Before 30 November	Admin-MOF	Yearly				

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
	206	223	16.6.5* Number of months after the end of the financial year when audited budget execution report becomes publicly available	MOF	2015/2016	Before 30 June	Admin-MOF	Yearly				
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.	207	224	16.7.1 Share of women as a% of public institution employees	MOHA	2015	44,79	Admin-MOHA	Yearly	45,40	45,87	46,01	46,50
	208	225	16.7.3* Public institution employees disaggregated by ethnic groups	MOHA	2015	177,381	Admin-MOHA	Yearly	176,048	176,048	184,161	182,169
16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.	209	226	16.8.1 % of members and voting rights of Lao PDR in international organizations	MOFA	2015	139,249	Admin-MOFA	Yearly	135,721			
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.	210	227	16.9.1 % of children under 5 whose births have been registered with a civil authority (Total)	MOHA	2017	73	Admin-MOHA	Yearly	-	73	-	-
			- Boys			72.8			72.8			
			- Girls			73.1			73.1			
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.	211	228	16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping and disappearance in the previous 12 months	MOPS			Admin-MOPS	Yearly	-	-	-	
16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.	212	229	16.a.1 Existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles	MOFA			Admin-MOFA	Yearly				

SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) – Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)							
Implementation (SDGi Owners)							
BOL	MOF	MOFA	MOHA	MOIC	MOST	MPI	MPT
1 indicator 17.3.2	3 Indicators 17.1.1 17.1.2 17.4.1	1 Indicator 17.16.1	2 Indicators 17.19.2.b 17.19.3	1 Indicator 17.11.1	3 Indicators 17.6.1 17.6.3.a 17.6.3.b	7 Indicators 17.3.1 17.5.1 17.15.1 17.18.1 17.18.2 17.18.3 17.19.2.a	4 Indicators 17.6.2 17.8.1 17.8.2 17.8.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of SDG indicators in total = 20. - However, SDGi sequence no.221 and 231 are divided into two indicators, respectively. - Therefore, for an easy reference of the SWGr owner, total number of SDG indicators that need to be reported against is 22. 							

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.	213	230	17.1.1 Total government revenue (by source) as % of GDP (/ loans)	MOF	2015	20.2	Admin-MOF	Yearly	16.4	16.3	16.2	15.3
			- Domestic revenue			16.3			15.0	14.6	14.3	13.6
			- Grants			3.9			1.4	1.7	1.9	1.7
	214	231	17.1.2 % of expenditure financed by domestic revenue	MOF	2016	160.6	Admin-MOF	Yearly	160.6	143.3	149.4	146
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.	215	232	17.3.1 Foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance (ODA) and South-South Cooperation (SSC) as % of total domestic budget amounts:	MPI	2015	1,267,747,571	Admin-MPI	Yearly	4,515,413,212	1,695,990,817	1,046,170,477	1,046,170,477
			- (US\$) FDI/ODA/ SSC									
			- % FDI/ODA/ SSC									

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
			- Delivery on the VD-CAP: Qualitative review									
	216	233	17.3.2 Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) in US\$ (million)	BOL	2015	2.5 (362.9)	Admin-BOL	Yearly	2.4 (385.6)	2.6 (450.8)	2.4 (433.1)	2.1 (407.1)
17.4 Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress.	217	234	17.4.1 Total debt service as % of exports of goods, services and primary income	MOF								
17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries.	218	235	17.5.1 Number of investment promotion regimes that Lao PDR has adopted and implemented	MPI								
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.	219	236	17.6.1 Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation (Increase number of agreements with other countries and international organisations to 100 agreements and implementing 80% in 2020)	MOST	2015	36	Admin-MOST	Yearly	15	32	48	18
	220	237	17.6.2 Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed:	MPT	2015	2,642,693	Admin-MPT	Yearly	2,628,400	2,782,943	3,030,046	3,540,020
			- 256 kbit/s or less									
			- 2 Mbit/s to less than 10 Mbit/s									
			- 10 Mbit/s or above									
	221	238	17.6.3.a* Number of research projects/papers (increase number of research projects in national and ministerial levels to 250 projects in 2025)	MOST	2015	63	Admin-MOST	Yearly	46	16	18	18

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
		239	17.6.3.b* Number of research papers published in regional and international journals (increase number of research publications to 250 copies in national and regional levels in 2025)	MOST	2015	28	Admin-MOST	Yearly	22	23	18	24
17.8 Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.	222	240	17.8.1 % of individuals using the Internet	MPT	2015	28.1	Admin-MPT	Yearly	19	26	37	49
			- Male			28.3						
			- Female			27.9						
	223	241	17.8.2* % of population registered as internet users through landline and wireless	MPT	2015	30	Admin-MPT	Yearly	39	42	45	50
	224	242	17.8.3* % of mobile phone users with internet access.	MPT	2015	21	Admin-MPT	Yearly	30	37	47	50
17.11 Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.	225	243	17.11.1 Export growth in average	MOIC	2016	15.0	Admin-MOIC	Yearly	15.0	15.1	10.8	8.39
17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development.	226	244	17.15.1 Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation	MPI								
17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.	227	245	17.16.1 Lao PDR commits to reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals	MOFA								
	228	246	17.18.1 Proportion of SDG indicators adopted by Lao PDR that are produced with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	MPI								

Global Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data Source	Frequency	Milestones			
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019
	17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.	229	247	17.18.2 Adoption of national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	MPI	2010	Yes	Admin-LSB	Every 5 years	Yes		
14,04217.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.	230	248	17.18.3 Establishment/ Implementation of Lao PDR national statistical plan	MPI	2010	Yes	Admin-LSB	Every 5 years	Yes			
	231	249	17.19.2.a Completion of at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years	MPI	2015	Yes	Admin-MPT	Every 10 years				
	250	17.19.2.b Number of birth registration recorded: - Total - Female - Male	MOHA	2015		82,128 35,930 46,198	Admin-MoHA	Yearly	61,746	61,416	70,732	
	232								31,217	30,180	35,324	
									30,529	31,236	35,408	
									17,157	15,646	19,238	
		17.19.3* Number of death registration recorded: - Total - Female - Male	MOHA	2015		14,042 5,637 8,405	Admin-MoHA	Yearly	7,339	6,719	8,173	
									9,818	8,927	11,065	

SDG 18 - Lives Safe from UXO: Remove the UXO obstacle to national development

SDG Reporting Owners (SDGr) and implementation (SDGi) – Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

National Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data source	Frequency	Milestones						
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
	18.1 By 2030, ensure that annual casualties from UXO accidents are eliminated to the extent possible.	233	252	MOLSW	2015	42	Admin-MoLSW/NRA	Yearly	60	41	24	25	33		
						33			50	37	21	16			
						15			18	12	4	5			
						16			24	8	8	4			
						1			3	11	4	2			
						1			5	6	5	5			
						9			10	4	3	9			
						6			2	3	2	8			
						2			8	0	1	1			
						1			0	0	0	0			
						0			0	1	0	0			
					2015	0.233	Admin-MoLSW/NRA	Yearly	0.299	0.312	0.212	0.182	0.182		
						0.434			0.567	0.366	0.253	0.259			
						0.032			0.073	0.263	0.172	0.103			
						99.5			99.4	99.4	99.3	99.2	99.1		
						3,322 (543)			2,843 (543)	2,399 (543)	1,983 (543)	1,526 (543)			
18.3 By 2030, ensure that all identified UXO survivors and victims have their needs met in health, and support provided	237	256	18.3.1 Proportion of registered active age UXO survivors unable to earn sufficient income with access to basic income security	MOLSW	2015	95.8	Admin-MoLSW/NRA	Yearly	95.5	95.0	94.5	94.5	94.2		

National Targets	Localized Lao National SDG Indicators			SDGi Owner	Baseline		Data source	Frequency	Milestones				
	SDGi	SDGr			Year	Value			2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
for livelihoods/ employment to most poverty-risk survivors.	238	257	18.3.2 % of registered UXO survivors mainstreamed into health, education and employment services	MOLSW	2015	11.9	Admin-MoLSW/NRA	Yearly	15.4	18.7	19.6	20.6	20.9
Special note on UXO clearance From 1997-2015, a total of 42,991 hectares of land were cleared by all humanitarian clearance operators and commercial companies according to the NRA-IMSMA database (unit – hectare)					2015		Admin-MoLSW/NRA	Yearly	3,883	4,822	6,696	6,524	5,429



NATIONAL SDG
SECRETARIAT

