

HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE MEETING
WORKSTREAM 3 – DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

3.1 Review of the Development Cooperation

Led by the Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan (VDCAP) Secretariat

Background

- ***National context***

Lao PDR is at an important stage of the national development planning process. 2021 marks the conclusion of the implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (8th 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 pandemic, sustainability and climate change, quality and inclusive growth, financing constraints, human capital, infrastructure development, and the planning for transition from Least Developed Country status, which Lao PDR hopes to achieve in 2026.

- **2021 High-Level Roundtable Meeting**

The High-Level Round Table Meeting (HL-RTM) should provide an important platform to (1) discuss development progress (2) reinforce the coherence and cohesiveness of national policymaking, (3) present the 9th NSEDP and discuss national strategies on LDC graduation and COVID-19 response and recovery, (4) introduce the means of implementation of the national plan, and (5) discuss efficiency and quality of ODA and coordination mechanisms. The HL-RTM should consist of a series of technical level dialogues, whose results and recommendations will feed into a one-day high-level event. The exact format, structure and scale of the HL-RTM will ultimately depend on the COVID-19 situation in Lao PDR. Three workstreams are on the agenda:

- (1) *Taking stock*, a review of development progress, to better understand achievements and challenges to inform national priorities;
- (2) *Looking forward*, a deep-dive into national planning, anchored around the 9th NSEDP, its implementation arrangements, and topics of national relevance, such as COVID-19 and LDC Graduation against the backdrop of committed measures to address the triple planetary crisis: climate change, nature and pollution;
- (3) *Thinking about how*, a review of ways of working and potential improvements of development coordination and cooperation.

- ***Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan***

Lao PDR transitioned its aid effectiveness agenda covering five principles (ownership, harmonization, alignment, managing for results and mutual accountability) (Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2006) to a new partnership for effective development cooperation in 2015 by a formal adoption of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (the Vientiane Declaration II or the Vientiane Partnership Declaration 2015-2025).

The Declaration, signed by the Government and more than 30 development partners after the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation's first high-level meeting in 2015. The Declaration as well as the design and implementation of subsequent national development plans and processes, such as 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2016-2020 and 9th NSEDP 2021-2025, 10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2016-2025) and the National Vision 2030, form a broad development framework to guide an inclusive dialogue mechanism, the Round Table Process. This structured partnership mechanism between the

Government and development partners, coupled with Laos' 10 Sector Working Groups, has streamlined development effectiveness.

In 2016, the VD Country Action Plan (CAP) was developed to guide the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration. The VDCAP identifies 14 concrete time-bound actions that will be reviewed and reported in line with that of the global monitoring survey on global partnership for effective development (monitoring against 10 global indicators) which is carried out every two years.

Objectives

The review of development cooperation under the VDCAP framework and principles is one of the agenda items at the HL-RTM. It fits under the third workstream on development cooperation and coordination. It aims to:

- Taking stock, summarise the achievements and the lessons learnt against the 14 key actions since the introduction of the VD and the VDCAP;
- Provide policy recommendations to further enhance effective development cooperation in the country in light of the new national socio-economic development plan (9th NSEDP 2021-2025) structuration.

Deliverables

Expected deliverables include:

- VDCAP review report; and
- A short brief highlighting main policy recommendations based on the analytical review of development cooperation and coordination.

Approach

- The VDCAP review will be a desk review. The key findings for the review are based on various monitoring and survey reports produced during the course of implementation, including the 2018 global survey on effective development cooperation, 2019 mutual accountability survey, and other relevant reports such as the Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey 2008, Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey 2011, a snapshot of the Implementation of the VDCAP (2012-2015) and series of annual Foreign Aid Reports prepared by DIC/MPI. Consultation with key stakeholders particularly Sector Working Groups will further inform the key findings of the VDCAP report.

In line with the anticipated overall approach to the RTM, made up of more detailed events to address specific issues, followed by shorter formal sessions as part of the High-Level RTM itself, preparations for the financing strategy agenda item will lead to two complementary outputs:

- A panel discussion as a side event to the RTM will be organised a few weeks before the RTM, to review the main findings of the desk review. Additional consultations with the SWGs will be organised as required;
- At a high-level, a brief presentation on the main findings of the report and main policy recommendations, and opportunities for high-level statements.

Leadership

The review of development cooperation agenda item is led by the Department of International Cooperation (DIC) of MPI, which acts as the secretariat of the HL-RTM, and the VDCAP Secretariat consisting of focal points from line ministries. UN RCO, UNDP, ADB, WB, Japan and Korea will provide technical support for the VDCAP review.