



PROJECT DOCUMENT
[LAO PDR]

Project Title: LAO PDR EFFICIENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES (LEAP) PROJECT

Project Number: 01002985

Implementing Partner: UNDP – Direct Implementation Modality (DIM)

Start Date: 01.10.2024 **End Date:** 30.10.2028 **PAC Meeting date:** 01.10.2024

Brief Description (appreciate a revision of this description, can cut half)

The LAO PDR Efficiency and Accessibility of Public Services (LEAP) Project aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, and inclusivity of public services, ultimately improving the quality of service delivery and development outcomes for the public. The project is delivered in a context characterised by societal change, including rapid digital transformation, and various challenges, including macroeconomic instability and ongoing recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall aim of the project is to improve governance outcomes and people's involvement and satisfaction with them. This will be done by partnering with the Ministry of Home Affairs to strengthen public service delivery, and with Lao PDR citizens and their organisations.

The project will strengthen the One Door Service Centers (ODSCs), a modality of delivering different public services in one place at the local level, including supporting the standardization of operational procedures and the digital transformation of ODSC functions. ODSCs face sustainability challenges, such as closures and resource shortages, thus the project will also focus on supporting local authorities to improve ODSCs' financial stability. Well-functioning local government is pivotal in ensuring effective and equitable service access, particularly in remote areas. However, ODSCs' effectiveness is currently impacted by high regulatory burdens, excessive fees, and limited government capacity. Thus, the implementation of this strategy presents a key opportunity for modernizing, improving, and making more inclusive service delivery nationwide.

Non-profit organisations have played a vital role in contributing to the development of the government's public services agenda, promoting citizen participation, and helping improve clarity of national and local governance. The project will also work with some non-profit organisations in promoting improved and more equitable public service delivery.

Contributing Outcome (UNSDCF, CPD, RPD):

- The 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDPlan)
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF)
- The UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD)

Indicative Output(s) with gender marker¹:

- Gender Marker: GEN 2

Total resources required:

USD 6,000,000

Total resources allocated:

UNDP TRAC:	
Donor:	USD 4,070,000
Government:	
In-Kind:	

Unfunded:

USD 1,930,000

Agreed by (signatures)²:

UNDP

Print Name: MARTINE THERER

Date: 25/10/2024

¹ The Gender Marker measures how much a project invests in gender equality and women's empowerment. Select one for each output: GEN3 (Gender equality as a principle objective); GEN2 (Gender equality as a significant objective); GEN1 (Limited contribution to gender equality); GEN0 (No contribution to gender quality)

² Note: Adjust signatures as needed

I. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

The project is delivered in a context marked by both challenges and opportunities. The country faces persistent economic challenges, with existing structural weaknesses deepened by rising public debt and inadequate revenue generation. In 2023, the kip experienced significant depreciation, and inflation is expected to remain above 20% for the third year running. Lao PDR is also recovering from the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation particularly impacts the most vulnerable populations, hampering progress in reducing poverty³. Even so, the country has recently experienced opportunities coming through the digital transformation, which will open new economic prospects and enable more efficient and effective public services delivery.

In this context, Lao PDR is actively advancing its Digital Transformation Strategy to modernize its public sector and drive economic growth. This strategy emphasizes specifically the integration of digital technologies into government operations, aiming to improve efficiency, openness, and citizen engagement. Central to this strategy, the Digital Government Masterplan, prioritizes infrastructure readiness, technology development, digital literacy, and regulatory improvements to support a robust digital environment and aims to boost efficiency and clarity in public administration by refining government systems and service delivery.

Public service provision in the country faces several barriers, including high regulatory burden, excessive fees and charges associated with public services, and government's limited capacity to provide services. Subsequent efforts from the government were invested in improving the situation and initiatives such as One-Door Service Centers (ODSCs) have been introduced, but their implementation has been hindered by various challenges. These include limited citizen awareness of ODSCs, insufficient capacity of ODSC officials to provide services with a customer-centric approach, constrained physical space that limits the inclusion of additional government departments, inadequate technological infrastructure, and weak coordination both within and between departments regarding service application approvals. Additionally, several ODSCs had to face difficulties in their strategic management and financial planning, leading to closures. Addressing these issues necessitates urgent action to enhance the effectiveness of these service centres. The government's commitment to upgrading ODSCs through digitalization and raising service standards, as outlined in the National Strategy on Public Services for 2030 (2023), presents a strategic opportunity to modernize public service delivery and improve accessibility across the country. The project therefore aims to help **streamline processes and provide digital solutions to alleviate the burdens faced by citizens in accessing essential public services**.

Providing quality public services and ensuring that essential services are accessible to all, without leaving anyone behind, is a measure of local government effectiveness. Local governments in Lao PDR operate at various levels, including provincial, district, and village levels, and are tasked with implementing decentralization reforms aimed at redistributing administrative and financial responsibilities from central authorities to lower tiers to enable better regional development and governance. A significant component of decentralization efforts is the establishment of One-Door Service Centers (ODSCs), which serve as hubs for delivering a range of public services. These centers are designed to streamline service delivery by integrating services from various line ministries, such as health, education, and land administration, into a single, accessible location. Despite the efforts undertaken so far, local governments face considerable challenges, including limited financial resources, insufficient capacity, and difficulties in effectively managing ODSCs at provincial and district levels. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, weak inter-departmental coordination, and insufficient funding impede the ability of ODSCs to fully realize their potential. By addressing these challenges and focusing on improving the sustainability of ODSCs, local governments can better serve their communities and ensure that public services meet the needs of all citizens.

The focus should be on supporting all communities and their members, including vulnerable groups and ethnic minority populations in rural areas who encounter significant barriers due to their remote

³<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lao/overview#:~:text=The%20Lao%20PDR's%20macroeconomic%20situation,for%20a%20third%20consecutive%20year.>

village locations, which result in limited-service availability in their proximity, poor road conditions, inadequate transport options, and language-related communication challenges. According to a research study conducted by MOHA and UNDP in July 2023, these barriers are compounded by economic hardship and socioeconomic inequalities within these communities. Ethnic minority women face additional disadvantages due to cultural norms that often prioritize men as responsible for seeking public services. The study also highlighted gender-specific utilisation of public services, with women more frequently seeking health and childcare services while men tend to use administrative and land-related services more frequently. Furthermore, the research revealed a limited number of representation of ethnic minority women in public service roles, emphasizing the need for targeted improvements. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of ODSCs. While the government's commitment to enhancing ODSCs through digitalization and improved standards presents a strategic opportunity to take concrete actions to improve accessibility and reduce the burdens faced by the underserved populations, civil society can play a dynamic role in addressing the lack of citizen awareness and participation. Targeted actions by non-profit organizations are essential to bridge the current gap, ensuring that communities are properly informed about the services available and can effectively utilize them.

In addition, **non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Lao PDR play a pivotal role** in advocating for effective, inclusive, and accountable public services and support the demand for good governance. Their involvement in capacity-building initiatives, advocacy efforts, and policy dialogues contributes to fostering openness, promoting citizen participation (including in the design of citizen-centric and inclusive services), and listening to the needs of marginalized groups. By strengthening partnerships between the government and NPOs and leveraging their collective expertise, the LEAP project seeks to facilitate meaningful public engagement in national-level policy discussions and drive positive change in policy implementation and public service delivery. Additionally, the project endeavours to address the specific needs of women and vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTQI+⁴ individuals, ensuring that their rights are protected, and their voices are heard in the process of shaping inclusive and equitable public services.

In response to the development challenge outlined above, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and UNDP LAO PDR, which have extensive experience in improving public service delivery in the country, jointly propose this project that seeks to achieve more efficient, effective, accessible, and inclusive public services.

ODSCs' SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN LAO PDR

UNDP Lao PDR aims to strengthen good governance through improving the efficiency, effectiveness and accessibility of public administration and public services. Since the completion of the Governance for Inclusive Development Programme (GIDP) in 2021, UNDP has been working extensively with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to help improve public service delivery in Lao PDR, supporting elaboration of research studies, addressing citizen needs, and strengthening of the legal framework.

UNDP support has been provided in a context in which over the last decade, the Asia-Pacific region has been experiencing a **polycrisis characterised by major economic and social crises** which have intensified economic shocks and social stresses, with currency depreciation and a persistent inflation. In Lao PDR too, livelihoods have been severely disrupted by the pandemic, and the situation has been exacerbated by high inflation and cost of living. These conditions highlight the critical need for developing systemic resilience, which involves strengthening the economy's ability to withstand and recover from such shocks. This includes enhancing the adaptability of economic policies,

⁴ LGBTQI+ is listed as a vulnerable group as part of the "Lao PDR – United Nations Sustainable Development cooperation Framework 2022-2026", page 29

improving the flexibility of public services, and building robust support systems to better meet the evolving needs of citizens. Local governments, being at the forefront of citizen-state interaction, have a critical role in providing public services and bringing them closer to citizens, improving access and leaving no one behind.

In Lao PDR, **enhancing public service provision involves tackling several challenges**, including high regulatory burden, excessive fees and charges associated with public services, and government's limited capacity to provide services in remote and rural areas. Provincial and district government offices provide several services, ranging from issuance of personal documents (e.g., birth certificates, family book registration, ID cards, marriage certificates) to issuance of business registration license and building permits, and tax collection. These are crucial services. For example, an ID card is essential for a person to access social benefits programs, while a business registration license allows an entrepreneur to produce goods and services and/or export products. In many cases, however, obtaining a certificate or license requires visiting several government offices located long distances from each other. The applicants are also required to fill in different application forms that solicit the same information.

Lengthy procedures of documentation preparations and approvals coupled with high transportation costs **discourage citizens from obtaining or renewing their personal documents**. This disproportionately impacts persons who are illiterate (15.3% of population aged 15 years old and above) and those living in rural areas (67.1% of population) – percentages according to the Lao Population and Housing Census from 2015. In addition, a research study conducted by MOHA with the support of UNDP in 2023 showed that men and women often utilize different services, with women using mainly health and reproductive services and frequently unaware of or unable to access certain public services, such as for land administration, particularly at the district and village levels. Meanwhile, lengthy business registration procedures reduce firms' incentives to register their businesses. The 2021 Economic Census of 133,997 enterprises in Lao PDR, revealed that 69.6% of surveyed enterprises did not have business registration certificates, while 78.0% of surveyed enterprises did not have business operating licenses. More than 70% of these were micro enterprises. This situation creates unfair competition between the registered and unregistered enterprises. For example, the lack of legal status of unregistered enterprises resulted in firms not receiving grants from the government when businesses faced disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis.

ONE DOOR SERVICE CENTERS (ODSC)

As acknowledged by the *National Strategy on Public Services through One Door Service Mechanism* 2030 endorsed and promulgated by the Prime Minister Decree 302/PM dated 01 November 2023, the **implementation of One Door Service Centres** has experienced challenges that require urgent actions, including regarding the standardisation of services, clarifying ministry responsibilities, and improving public accessibility and understanding of services. As a key priority to enhance local service delivery, the Government of Lao PDR has committed to improve ODSCs through digitalization and improvement of service standards. This is reflected in the Prime Minister Agreement on ODSC Implementation No.86/PM (2007) and No.09/PM (2013), and the endorsement of the National Strategy on Public Services through One Door Service Mechanism in October 2023. As of June 2024, a total of **63 ODSCs** were in operation across Lao PDR to provide administration procedures to citizens, businesses, and the Lao population. These include 46 district ODSCs and 17 provincial ODSCs. The Saysetta ODSC in Vientiane Capital, for example, has consolidated seven offices (e.g., Official Cabinet, Home Affairs, Public Works and Transport, Natural Resources and Environment, Information and Culture, Industry and Commerce, and Finance) with 32 tasks that require permits or approvals by the district authorities. In accordance with the Ninth Socio-Economic Development Plan (9th NSEDP), Lao PDR has attained its target ODSC number of 60 by 2025, from a baseline of 49 in 2021. One out of 46 district ODSCs is referred to as a 'smart ODSC', allowing users to track the status of their applications through a mobile application.

Established ODSCs are at **different stages of development**. The project will seek to strengthen ODSCs at different stages and develop 'best models' to be replicated, using best practices and lessons learned from centers that work well such as in Luang Prabang, Champasak, Bolikhamxai, Saysetta or Vientiane Capital. The project will also pilot mobile ODSCs and scale up smart ODSCs in selected provinces. The approach adopted will ensure the sustainability of ODSCs, and that capacity building and scaling up of ODSCs can continue upon project completion. Currently, the available data on ODSC staff includes approximately 1,200 members throughout the country, with no indication of gender or ethnicity.

DIGITALIZATION MATURITY IN LAO PDR

Efforts to digitalize public services in Lao PDR are progressing but remain slow and fragmented. In 2022, Lao PDR ranked 159th in the world for e-government,⁵ and rates low for service provision and technology. In 2022, to assess the digitalization readiness of Lao PDR, a Digital Maturity Assessment was conducted by UNDP and the Ministry of Technology and Communications. This assessment identified that primary services, specifically civil registrations, are managed manually and less than 20% of public officials and ministry employees have sufficient expertise to utilise digital tools and applications.

In addition, **inadequate ICT infrastructure** further complicates efforts, particularly in remote areas where connectivity and access to technology are limited. Assessments have not fully captured the digital literacy of ODSC staff or the population, raising concerns about their ability to effectively use new digital tools. There is also uncertainty about public willingness to engage with government-developed applications, and doubts persist regarding the accessibility of these services in isolated regions. Other identified challenges include the potential resistance to change, limited resources for training and support, and the need for robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data in a developing digital landscape. **Limited access to digital tools by women and vulnerable groups**, including ethnic minorities and those with low literacy, further complicates the situation. Many women in Lao PDR face barriers such as limited digital literacy, lack of access to technology, and gender social norms that restrict their use of digital tools.

A core component of the LEAP project is to support **digitalization of public services** by upgrading, developing, and standardizing a 'SMART ODSC Model' to be replicated across Lao PDR. In parallel, the project will deliver essential information, communication, and technology (ICT) infrastructure and enhance the digital skills of public servants in target locations. The approach taken in the digitalization component is to identify the most frequently used administrative procedures for targeted development and optimization, allowing to concentrate efforts on the most utilized services for process optimization and guide strategic advertising efforts for effective outreach. The system will be designed to be inclusive and to be both data-efficient and capable of offline operation to address connectivity challenges, especially for population living in remote areas. For ethnic groups and people with visual impairment, particularly those who are illiterate, the app could include an option where all text is read aloud in Lao or other ethnic languages to ensure inclusivity.

NPO COMPONENT's SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Different organizations, including NPOs play a crucial role in Lao PDR society, including by contributing to the delivery of public services. One of the primary ways NPOs can contribute to improving public service delivery is through capacity-building initiatives aimed at empowering marginalized communities and enhancing their access to and feedback on essential services. The legal framework for national NPOs in Lao PDR is regulated by the Decrees No. 238 on Non-Profit

⁵ [UN E-Government Survey 2022](#)

Associations and No. 149 on Foundations.⁶ Currently, attempts have been undertaken to reduce the reporting and registration requirements for national NPOs and provide them more flexibility for their operations. More concretely, aspirations have been raised to expand the registration period from one to three years and increase the funding ceiling that would not require formal approval by MOHA to USD 100,000.⁷

National NPOs often focus on complementing governmental service delivery to better serve vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, additionally, national NPOs can also play a vital role in promoting clarity and public accountability within the public sector. They can function as a platform for enhancing service users' participation in the design of services, fostering bottom-up feedback mechanisms, and promoting the meaningful engagement of vulnerable groups in decision-making processes related to public service delivery. By facilitating dialogue between service users, communities, and government authorities, NPOs contribute to public services that are more inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of the population. UNDP has been working extensively with different NPOs across various thematic areas, through technical assistance and Low Value Grants (LVG) in enhancing their capacity, data-collection efforts, and organizing drafting workshops to support preparation of advocacy papers on human rights. This support has resulted in the submission of three Parallel Reports: (i) on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), (ii) on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and (iii) on International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ICESCR. Moreover, UNDP has been heavily involved in providing technical assistance to the government and working with the civic space, throughout 2023 to develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the Concluding Observations received by the CRPD Committee.

As part of the current project, UNDP will provide technical assistance only to national NPOs which are referred to as Non-Profit Associations (NPOs) and/or Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). (It is important to note that the terminology of NPOs, NPOs, and OPDs are used interchangeably in the context of Lao PDR while recognizing the specific thematic focus of OPDs).

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Vulnerable groups in Lao PDR include persons with disabilities, persons representing diverse ethnic groups, women and children, and persons representing the LGBTQI+⁸ community. Those groups are at higher risk of being discriminated against or excluded from accessing essential public services. Despite efforts to improve the position of these groups, harmful social norms and discriminatory policies against marginalized groups persist, as shown by the most recent data:

- **Persons with disabilities** in Lao PDR, comprising 2.8% of the population per a 2015 Census⁹, face significant barriers despite legal protections like the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2019); implementation challenges hinder their equal access to public services and employment, with a notable 14% unemployment rate.
- **Ethnic groups**, in rural and remote areas¹⁰, still experience exacerbated poverty¹¹ and health disparities compared to Lao-Tai ethnicities, further exacerbated by lower birth registration rates and early marriages among girls¹². In addition, their limited capacity to speak the Lao language limits them from accessing and engaging with public administration and services.

⁶https://www.giz.de/en/downloads_els/2021_Improved%20Environment%20and%20Capacities%20for%20Civil%20Society%20Engagement%20in%20Lao%20PDR.pdf

⁷ <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/laos/>

⁸ LGBTQI+ is listed as a vulnerable group as part of the "Lao PDR – United Nations Sustainable Development cooperation Framework 2022-2026", page 29

⁹ United Nations: Common Country Analysis Lao PDR.

¹⁰ LSB; World Bank, Poverty Profile in Lao PDR: Poverty Report for the Lao Expenditure and Consumption Survey 2018-2019 (2020)

¹¹ World Bank, Lao Poverty Policy Brief: Why are Ethnic Minorities Poor? (December 2017)

¹² LSB; MoH; MoES; UNFPA; UNICEF, LSIS II- Survey Findings Report (2017)

- **Women and girls**, while benefiting from legal frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), still face underrepresentation in decision-making and leadership roles and persistent issues like early marriage.
- **LGBTQI+¹³ individuals** encounter growing social acceptance¹⁴, but lack legal protections and face discrimination in critical areas like education, employment, and healthcare, with civil partnership remaining unrecognized under current laws, according to the Civil Code¹⁵.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GPAR-GIDP PROJECT

The lessons learned from the Governance for Inclusive Development Programme (GIDP) (2017-2021) have been essential in shaping the new LEAP project to avoid previous challenges and enhance effectiveness. The joint UN project (UNDP and UNCDF), funded mostly by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), was formulated under the framework of the national Governance and Public Administration Reform Programme (GPAP) of the Government of Lao PDR (GoL) and implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). With the aim of supporting the Government to achieve inclusive governance that would improve public service delivery and local development, whilst making it sustainable, the GIDP aimed to achieve three main outcomes: (i) Inclusive local service delivery and development, (ii) Accountability framework and citizens' feedback, and (iii) Expanding partnerships and policy dialogue, with civil society engagement, for development effectiveness.

Overall, the GIDP revealed the need for a more integrated approach to governance, highlighting the importance of synergizing various activities and programs.

The financial constraints and institutional barriers encountered under the GPAR-GIDP highlighted the need for a more robust and sustainable model for district-level service delivery. Specifically, the lack of a formal inter-governmental fiscal transfer mechanism and insufficient advocacy for scaling the District Development Fund (DDF) model underscored the necessity for clear financial planning and resource allocation strategies.

- ⇒ The LEAP project addresses these issues by incorporating a comprehensive approach to financial sustainability after project completion, including capacity building for senior management in Provincial and District authorities in financial planning, management, and fundraising techniques. Additionally, the LEAP project emphasizes the importance of establishing strong partnerships with private sector stakeholders to support continuous training and infrastructure maintenance, ensuring long-term viability of investments.

The new LEAP project also incorporates lessons learned from challenges related to the implementation of the ODSC model and citizen feedback mechanisms. The previous project's difficulties with low awareness, coordination among agencies, and gender and language barriers uncovered through surveys have informed the development of targeted strategies in LEAP. The following measures are designed to avoid the shortcomings of past initiatives and enhance the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of public services:

- ⇒ To improve coordination and buy-in, LEAP will implement structured advocacy and awareness campaigns and conduct regular inter-ministerial meetings.
- ⇒ Addressing gender and language issues, LEAP will tailor training programs and survey methodologies to better support diverse groups, ensuring inclusive and effective engagement.
- ⇒ LEAP project will institutionalize feedback mechanisms and integrate public inputs into policy discussions, ensuring that citizen concerns are systematically addressed and reflected in service improvements efforts.

¹³ LGBTQI+ is listed as a vulnerable group as part of the "Lao PDR – United Nations Sustainable Development cooperation Framework 2022-2026", page 29

¹⁴ Such as the event on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (17 May) organized by Proud to Be Us Laos and the only LGBTQI organization in Lao PDR. The event was aired on the national television. Proud to be Us Laos is in the process of acquiring legal status.

¹⁵ Lao PDR, Article 151, Civil Code, № 55/NA, enacted 2020, (6 December 2018)

The GIDP also highlighted key areas for improvement in digital governance and flexibility. While MOHA successfully implemented digital tools and online training during the pandemic, the need for greater digital capacity and private sector partnerships became apparent.

- ⇒ LEAP builds on this by prioritizing digital skills training for officials and fostering public-private partnerships to support technological advancements.
- ⇒ LEAP embraces the flexibility demonstrated during the GIDP, allowing for adaptive responses to emerging needs and challenges.
- ⇒ The project also incorporates strategies to ensure sustainability by advocating for high-level support and exploring alternative funding mechanisms to sustain and scale governance reforms beyond the GIDP's lifecycle.

Another challenge consists in the absence of a formal mechanism for sustained collaboration between civil society and government beyond the GIDP project.

- ⇒ The second outcome of this project is specially targeting non-profit organisations to play a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions.

II. STRATEGY

THEORY OF CHANGE

The project proposes the following Theory of Change (TOC):

IF different line ministries collaborate effectively at central and local levels in their efforts for a sustainable ODSC model...

...**AND IF** a financially sustainable model is implemented in ODSCs ensuring long-term funding and resource allocation...

...**AND IF** the regulations and procedures on public services are streamlined, standardized, and published for easy and inclusive access to information by citizens, and their implementation is regularly monitored and evaluated...

...**AND IF** capacity building is provided, on utilization of digital tools and on the implementation of the new methodologies, regulations, and procedures, that will be developed and agreed...

...**AND IF** public services are brought to citizens through an ODSC digital platform and mobile ODSC services...

... **AND IF** national non-profit organizations can effectively help giving voice to vulnerable target communities so that the local realities regarding inclusive access to and utilization of services most required through ODSCs are fully taken into consideration...

...**AND IF** national civil society actors can effectively engage with public service providers and the wider public...

THEN citizens, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, will have better access to the basic personal documents needed in a variety of life situations and to basic public services...

...**AND** the establishment and operationalization of the ODSC will lead to reduction in transaction costs, increased transparency of the processes and reduced corruption and use of intermediaries...

...**AND** the quality of public service delivery will be improved, and public administration will be strengthened...

...**AND** citizens, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, will have better access to high quality public services...

...**AND** the relationship and engagement between vulnerable groups, civil society, and the government will become more robust, open, and dynamic...

...**AND all** citizens will be treated equally.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT OF THE PROJECT

GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR

Ninth National Socio-Economic Development Plan (9th NSEDP): As the Government of Lao PDR has a high political commitment to improve ODSCs at provincial and district levels under Outcome 6 of the 9th NSEDP, the project will support the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) to scale up and modernize ODSCs. In November 2023, the National ODSC Strategy was formally endorsed by the Prime Minister's Office following multiple consultations with all ministries at the central and local levels. UNDP financially supported the consultation process in 2022 and 2023 through core UNDP funding. In 2023 UNDP also supported research on factors affecting ethnic groups' access to public services, with a focus on ODSCs.

National Strategy on Public Services through One Door Service Mechanism 2030: The government, particularly MOHA developed and formulated the National Strategy with financial support from UNDP, and the strategy was endorsed by the government's meeting in October 2023 and promulgated by the Prime Minister's Decree No. 302/PM, dated 01 November 2023. This document outlines the strategic vision for improving public services across Lao PDR, which is reflected in the following line: "Public services for serving the citizens; transform to modern technology; convenient; timely; clear; and just." The project compliments and facilitates the implementation of key areas of the

National Strategy, specifically focusing on coordinating different sectors, supporting high-level ministerial ownership, and understanding of ODSC implementation requirements, streamlining services, developing SMART ODSCs and ODSC standardized implementation, and raising citizens' awareness of service provision modalities.

DECREE 238: This decree sets the rules and regulations governing the establishment, operation, and management of national associations (NPOs/OPDs) as legal entities in Lao PDR. It is expected that the decree will be amended in Q2/Q3 of 2024. As of writing this project proposal, consultations with NPOs/OPDs have already taken place, with the main consultation held from 28-30 November 2023. The main demands of the NPOs/OPDs have been to extend the period of their operation permit. Currently, they must re-register each year which causes various problems, especially when it comes to multi-year fund granting. In addition, the NPOs/OPDs communicated to the government during the consultations the need to have better registration procedures for organizational assets, such as separate car plates. Although the timeline of the project does not allow further consultations on decree 238 to be included as an explicit project component, UNDP continues to monitor the amendment process and will adjust the project design as needed in close cooperation with the NPOs/OPDs to which UNDP maintains a strong trusted relationship.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2024-2027 (CRPD NAP): The draft CRPD NAP with expected adoption in Q4 of 2024 sets the direction for the implementation of the government's commitments under the CRPD, including the responsibilities of the 10 line ministries involved, key activities and detailed indicators. The involvement of OPDs has been a priority in the NAP drafting process. The LEAD Project aims to carry forward meaningful participation of OPDs under Output 2 into the implementation phase of the NAP by supporting them to actively become engaged in key service delivery components of the NAP.

UNITED NATIONS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2015-2030 (SDGs): The overarching objectives of the project align with several key targets under SDG 16, SDG 9, and SDG 10. This includes Target 16.6 "to develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels" which reflects the project's effort to improve the ODSCs. Under target 16.7 "ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels," the project aims to increase the involvement of marginalized and vulnerable groups in decision-making and will conduct public awareness campaigns. As ICT and digital infrastructure provide the means to deliver high-quality goods and services in commerce, governance, agriculture, and other vital areas, the project will directly contribute towards SDG 9 in building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. Specifically, under Target 9.C to "significantly increase access to information and communications technology" and foster digital inclusion. Finally, under SDG 10, the project will help reduce inequalities, aligning with Target 10.3 "to ensure equality of opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action..."

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2022-2026) for Lao PDR: The project aligns with the strategic priority 3: Governance and Rule of Law of the cooperation framework: "by 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will be better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld". In terms of indicators, the project makes an explicit contribution to Output 3.5: Public administration reform and data driven governance indicators. In addition, through the NPO component, the project makes an explicit contribution to Output 3.1: Enhance civic space and participation. UNDP is together with WHO co-leading the results group on governance. This puts UNDP in a strong position to make sure that the project will be well aligned with the work of other UN agencies, funds, and programs.

UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD, 2022-2026) for Lao PDR: The project is directly aligned with Outcome 3 of the CPD and provides a strong contribution to Outputs 3.2 and 3.3. While Output 3.2 focuses on how "government bodies have enhanced capacities for more transparent and

effective law design, implementation, and monitoring”, Output 3.3 puts the end users in focus and aims to ensure that “people, including vulnerable groups, have greater access to basic and accountable services”. These two outputs accurately reflect the approach of the project, as it aims to strengthen the capacity of public service and enhance inclusive accessibility for citizens. The project directly contributes to measuring the number of people accessing public services online (Indicators 3.2.1.), the number and utilization rates of One Door Service Centres (ODSCs) by women and ethnic groups (Indicator 3.2.3.) and the percentage of citizens who are surveyed and are satisfied with the public services received (Indicator 3.3.2.). As a result, this project leads to increased accountability and access to public services for all.

UNDP CO: This project aligns closely with several key initiatives from the UNDP Country Office, enhancing its overall impact. The STEPS project (Strengthening Capacity and Effectiveness of the People’s Assemblies System in Laos) emphasizes ICT and digitalization to enhance citizen engagement and representation—an objective that resonates with this project’s goals. Additionally, leveraging insights from the digital legal aid platform and the Gov-X application, developed in collaboration with MTC, provides access to various public services via smartphones, which complements the project’s focus on improving service delivery, can serve as a valuable example for launching digital tools, benefiting from established best practices and lessons learned. Collectively, these synergies will support a cohesive strategy for advancing governance, sustainability, and citizen engagement.

UN AGENCIES: This project strategically aligns with several UN agencies’ initiatives, significantly enhancing its overall impact. UNICEF is supporting the government in the design and implementation of the digital strategy for the education sector, while WHO supports the Ministry of Health on digital solutions to improve health services. The World Bank is modernizing and enhancing land administration processes, in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and supporting the elaboration of a unique ID after birth registration with MOHA. This project complements those efforts, as the World Bank is engaged in similar activities but on different topics, making knowledge sharing and coordination crucial. Additionally, the ILO’s use of mobile ODSCs to raise social protection awareness in remote areas supports our objective to implement similar models in underserved regions. Consultations with all these agencies have been organized to ensure effective collaboration and maximize the impact of our combined efforts, leveraging established frameworks and promoting comprehensive public service improvements.

NATIONAL PLANNING AND FINANCING FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT 2023-2025 (NPFID): NPFID is an initiative of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and UNDP which aims to strengthen national capacity in the areas of financing and planning. A key priority is to mainstream social inclusion in the planning cycle. This UNDP project will build on NPFID efforts by implementing activities on mainstreaming disability inclusion, as a vital component of social inclusion, in the national planning process. The project team will closely coordinate with the UNDP Inclusive Growth Unit under which the NPFID is implemented. This allows the two projects to be complementary and reinforcing while maintaining the thematic focus of each project to maximize the impact of UNDPs overall engagement and impact in Lao PDR.

[USAID](#)

LAOS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023-2028: The proposed project is fully aligned with the USAID strategy for Lao PDR, particularly regarding the strengthening of inclusive and responsive governance. The project aligns with USAID’s emphasis on empowering local stakeholders, advancing people-centered dialogue, and partnering with the government to improve governance services and outcomes for Lao PDR people. The project’s objectives directly address USAID’s goal of enhancing citizen engagement and well-being, as outlined in IR 4.3. Moreover, it directly addresses USAID’s objectives of improving development policy and planning, enhancing public sector accountability, and promoting citizen engagement and well-being, as outlined in IRs 4.1 and 4.2. Through these efforts, the project contributes to USAID’s overarching goal of strengthening governance and promoting inclusive development in Laos.

OKARD (PROJECT): OKARD aims to support persons with disabilities with access to health and social services via implementation by partners, World Education, Inc., and Humanity and Inclusion. Key focus areas include economic empowerment, stakeholder engagement, and community-based inclusive development to contribute to the full participation of persons with disability. The UNDP project is fully aligned with OKARD and complements pre-existing efforts as it aims to foster the capacity of OPDs to engage actively in support of quality public service delivery as well as national planning processes. UNDP is committed to establishing a practical coordination mechanism with the OKARD organizations to ensure annual work plans and field activities complement one another and feed into a wider change in the lives of people with disabilities.

GENDER

Gender is of cross-cutting strategic importance to the government of Lao PDR, the United Nations, and USAID. There is no explicit gender output because gender equality is recognized to be of cross-cutting importance for both outcomes and related outputs and, thus, integrated across all activity areas. More concrete, the following can be noted:

- Under **Outcome 1**, a gender-sensitive approach will be prioritized in enhancing existing ODSCs. This approach includes, but is not exclusively focused on or limited to, addressing existing gender social norms (as evidenced by surveys indicating that men are more likely to handle administrative matters while women primarily access services for health and reproductive issues). Specifically, efforts will focus on ensuring equitable access to digital tools, acknowledging women as a marginalized group with limited digital literacy and access, thus promoting inclusivity and empowerment across Lao PDR. This will be primarily realized during the first part of the project, which will focus mainly on the needs' assessment and the digital literacy of citizens. The data will be segregated by gender and allow to target actions for the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups.
- Under **Outcome 2**, as detailed in subsequent sections of this document, the project will prioritize proposals from Non-Profit organisations: associations and foundations (NPO) focused on gender equality, ensuring that Low Value Grants (LVGs) effectively contribute to reducing gender inequalities. Gender equality will also be prioritized with consideration of intersecting disabilities and other vulnerabilities. It will be reflected in the design of disability-sensitive services which will be delivered by ODPs (Organisations for Persons with Disabilities). The selected project approach aims not only to acknowledge existing disparities among women, men, and non-binary individuals but also to implement transformative initiatives in ways that effectively address gender imbalances, with UNDP providing technical assistance in these efforts.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

The LEAP project will be divided into 2 components:

Component #1: The One Door Service Centers component

The "One Door Service Centers" builds upon the previous GPAR-GIDP Project to further elevate the efficiency, accessibility, and effectiveness of local service delivery in Lao PDR. Through a multifaceted approach, the project prioritizes strengthening established ODSCs while simultaneously expanding service provision, through piloting and scaling up mobile and smart ODSCs. By doing so, the project aims to strengthen the accountability and transparency of local governance and enhance public administration to meet the needs of citizens and improve service delivery efficiency and effectiveness in Lao PDR. Through targeted interventions, such as enhancing inter-ministerial coordination, deploying digital solutions, and institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the project seeks to optimize public administration practices and elevate service delivery standards across administrative levels. Emphasizing sustainability, the project strives to lay down robust frameworks and practices that ensure the enduring viability and impact of ODSCs at the local level in facilitating citizen-centric governance in both the short and long term.

OUTCOME: Public administration meets the needs of citizens through a more efficient and effective service delivery in Lao PDR and local governance is more accountable and transparent



Output 1: Existing ODSCs are more effective and strengthened through improved inter-ministerial coordination, optimized procedures, and an institutionalized monitoring and evaluation system.

Output 2: Public Services are more efficient and accessible to citizens by scaling up digitalized and mobile ODSCs.

Component #2: Civil Society Engagement component

The “Civil Society Engagement” aims to strengthen the role of national non-profit organizations in promoting inclusive and accountable public services in Lao PDR. Through NPO capacity building, participatory action research, and governmental dialogues, NPO fairs, NPOs will be enabled to support service delivery initiatives for vulnerable groups, especially for women, young people, ethnic groups and persons with disabilities, by bringing in voices from local communities, identifying barriers and solutions in close cooperation with governmental stakeholders and collaboratively developing action plans to tackle barriers. Meanwhile, OPDs will enhance disability-sensitive services and engage in national policy discussions to support the implementation of the National Action Plan on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). By providing practical training and fostering collaboration with government stakeholders, the project ensures that the needs of vulnerable populations are recognized and addressed, leading to tangible improvements in public service delivery and more inclusion in strategic policy processes.

OUTCOME: Civil society plays a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions



Output 1: NPOs’ effective contribution to the government’s efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups is supported.

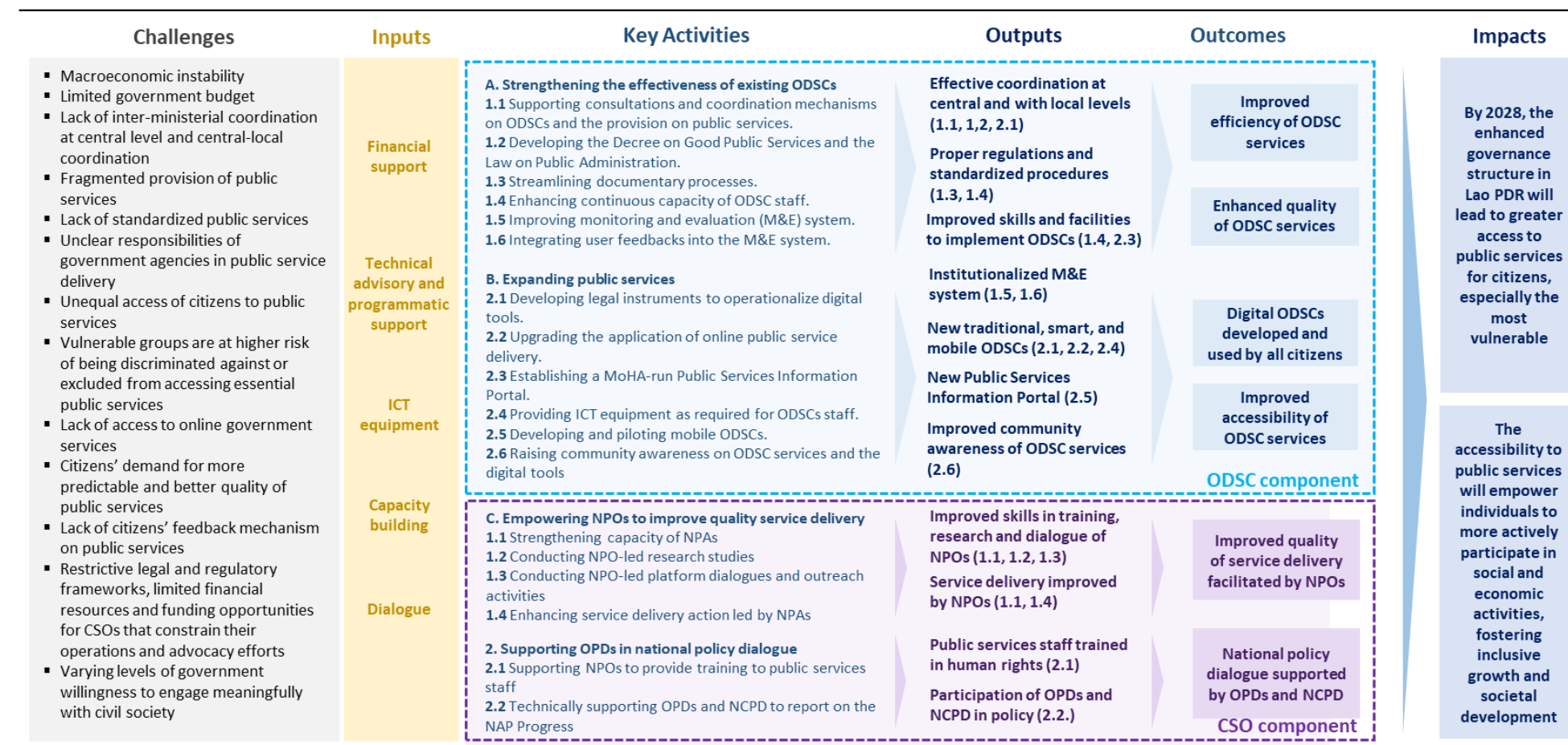
Output 2: NPOs’ effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle is supported.

PROJECT DOCUMENT

[LAO PDR]

III. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

EXPECTED RESULTS

Expected results

PROJECT DOCUMENT

[LAO PDR]

IMPACT

- **By 2028, strengthened citizen-centric governance will ensure more efficient, transparent, and accessible public services in Lao PDR. This will enhance participation of all citizens, including women, vulnerable groups, and those in rural areas, in social and economic activities.**

The project outcomes aim to in the long-term establish a citizen-centric governance structure in Lao PDR, where public administration becomes not only more efficient and effective but also significantly more accountable and open. By enhancing service delivery through streamlined procedures and digital innovations, Outcome 1 ensures that essential public services are accessible to all citizens, including those in remote areas who will be reached through mobile ODSCs. Improved data accuracy and timeliness within governmental institutions will enhance their effectiveness and accountability, contributing to more open and responsive regulatory frameworks and national development strategies.

Simultaneously, Outcome 2 engages Lao PDR civil society as a pivotal actor in advocating for inclusive and accountable public services. Through their engagement in policy discussions, non-profit organizations (NPOs) can understand the needs of marginalized groups and support the government in identifying the proper response mechanisms. This collaboration not only strengthens the linkages between government and citizens but also fosters a culture of mutual accountability and responsiveness in public service provision.

This holistic approach not only improves service accessibility and quality but also builds trust between citizens and the government, laying a foundation for sustainable development and equitable growth across Lao PDR.

OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1: Public administration meets the needs of citizens through a more efficient and effective service delivery in Lao PDR and local governance is more accountable and transparent.

The outcome reflects a transformative shift in public administration within Lao PDR, characterized by the need to have enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery that address the diverse and evolving requirements of its citizens. By streamlining procedures and processes, the outcome foresees an increased efficiency in service delivery, which will directly impact the quality of life for individuals and communities, ensuring that essential services are accessible, and readily available when needed at provincial and district levels. By upgrading digital infrastructure, providing comprehensive training, and deploying digital applications, the outcome will ensure the effective delivery of public services to citizens across target provinces. In tandem, the outcome commits to increase service accessibility through the piloting of mobile services to ensure that populations in the most remote areas have access to essential services.

Furthermore, the outcome fosters greater openness and accountability within local governance structures. This collaborative approach between the government and project initiatives highlights a shared commitment to improving service delivery and governance practices, ultimately ensuring that public administration meets the diverse needs of citizens while upholding principles of accountability and transparency throughout Lao PDR.

OUTCOME 2: Civil society of Lao PDR plays a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions.

This outcome reflects the multi-dimensional character of what it means to have an active civil society. Firstly, the outcome positions NPOs as essential representatives of the Lao civil society, who can contribute to effective services by ensuring public resources are utilized efficiently to serve the people in need. Secondly, they can contribute to inclusive services by amplifying the needs of the most

vulnerable in policy spaces and promoting their rights towards the government as the ultimate duty bearer. Thirdly, they can contribute to accountable services by promoting clarity and strengthening the linkages between the governmental service providers and the everyday recipients.

Furthermore, the notion of playing a strong role indicates the need for civil society to establish and maintain a constructive relationship with the government and to highlight how they can effectively work together. This relationship must be based on the NPOs' specific expertise and independent position within the sphere of public service delivery. In practice, this means that the NPOs need to be empowered to contribute to the implementation of services that can enable them to engage effectively in national-level policy discussions. This dual approach is reflected below where planning dialogues and coordinated service delivery actions are interlinked within the same result area.

OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1.1: Existing ODSCs are more effective and strengthened through improved inter-ministerial coordination, optimized procedures, and an institutionalized monitoring and evaluation system.

This output will be achieved through a multifaceted approach, focusing on enhancing and optimizing operational procedures, institutionalizing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and improving inter-ministerial coordination.

Firstly, by facilitating inter-ministerial consultations and supporting legal framework development, the project fosters cooperation at both national and local levels, among ministries, with their line agencies, and among the local administrations. The project also ensures that ODSCs operate within established regulatory parameters, promoting accountability and openness. By establishing a **National Committee on ODSCs**, the project will centralize oversight and streamline coordination efforts. Each line ministry will be required to appoint a designated focal point, ensuring that every center operates within established regulatory parameters:

- The National Committee on ODSCs, including high-level actors, including MOHA and all line ministries at central level and all Province Governor and Vice-Governor authorities, will meet once a year to provide guidance and make strategic decisions, review progress, address challenges, and share lessons learned and best practices.
- The Secretariat of the National Committee on ODSC will act as a coordination platform to connect local with central, i.e. Governor's Office with MOHA and convene twice a year to discuss monitoring outcomes, address emerging issues, and work collaboratively to identify and implement effective solutions. The LEAP Project will support MOHA in the Secretariat function of the National Committee.
- The Governance Sector Working Group will be used as a platform to improve coordination effort and effectiveness of public administration. Specific issues and results of the LEAP project will be discussed opening space for improvement.
- Inter-ministerial and technical consultations will be organised, and technical/drafting support provided for the finalisation of the Good Public Services Decree, operationalizing the Prime Minister's Order 09 on ODSCs and the drafting of the Law on Public Administration.

Secondly, by conducting comprehensive assessments and providing capacity building activities, ODSCs will optimize and thus improve ICT infrastructure and workflow processes, leading to enhanced operational efficiency.

The methodological approach for ICT assessment and workflow processes is designed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of ODSC operations and technology infrastructure. The approach will be informed by a strong endorsement from the Ministerial level and supported by political commitment through a formal Decree. Capacity-building efforts will include both management and ICT training, with lessons drawn from established models in Luang Prabang, Champasak, Saysetta, and Vientiane Capital.

A thorough **ICT assessment** will be conducted at all administrative levels—provincial, district, and village. This will involve evaluating the current ICT infrastructure, including hardware, software, networks, and security measures, to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Initial scoping will set clear goals and scope for the assessment, followed by data collection through surveys, interviews, and observations of existing ICT systems. The collected data

will be analysed to pinpoint gaps and optimization opportunities, with benchmarking against best practices and industry standards informing recommendations and an action plan.

Simultaneously, a **detailed workflow assessment** will be carried out to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of ODSC processes and procedures. This will include mapping out current workflows to understand each step and task, analysing data to identify bottlenecks, redundancies, and areas for improvement, and designing optimized workflows. The goal is to **streamline operations, enhance productivity, and identify processes that can be digitalized**. The methodology will also incorporate a survey distributed to all ODSC staff to assess training needs, process knowledge, and digital literacy. Additionally, a **survey (online and in-person) will be used to gather citizen input on their needs**, aiming to get feedback from the populations of the main cities and rural areas. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews with various staff categories will provide further insights. Equal gender representation will be ensured in all surveys and assessments that will be conducted with both citizens and ODSC staff. MOHA will support in drafting, submitting, and collecting the questionnaire data, while UNDP will handle questionnaire drafting, data collection, and analysis, culminating in recommendations for improvements. This comprehensive approach aims to enable the identification and implementation of optimized standards and procedures, ultimately enhancing the overall functionality of ODSCs. The objective will be to draft Standards of Procedures (SOPs) and update the operational manual for ODSC staff.

Customized **training programs** will be delivered to targeted government officials through a mix of traditional and modern training methods to cater to diverse learning preferences. This can include workshops and seminars to allow for hands-on learning and real-time feedback; e-learning platforms with online courses and webinars that provide flexibility and can be accessed at any time; simulation exercises with practical scenarios that mimic real-life challenges, allowing officials to practice problem-solving in a controlled environment of ODSCs; and mentorship programs to pair less experienced officials with seasoned mentors for guidance and knowledge transfer.

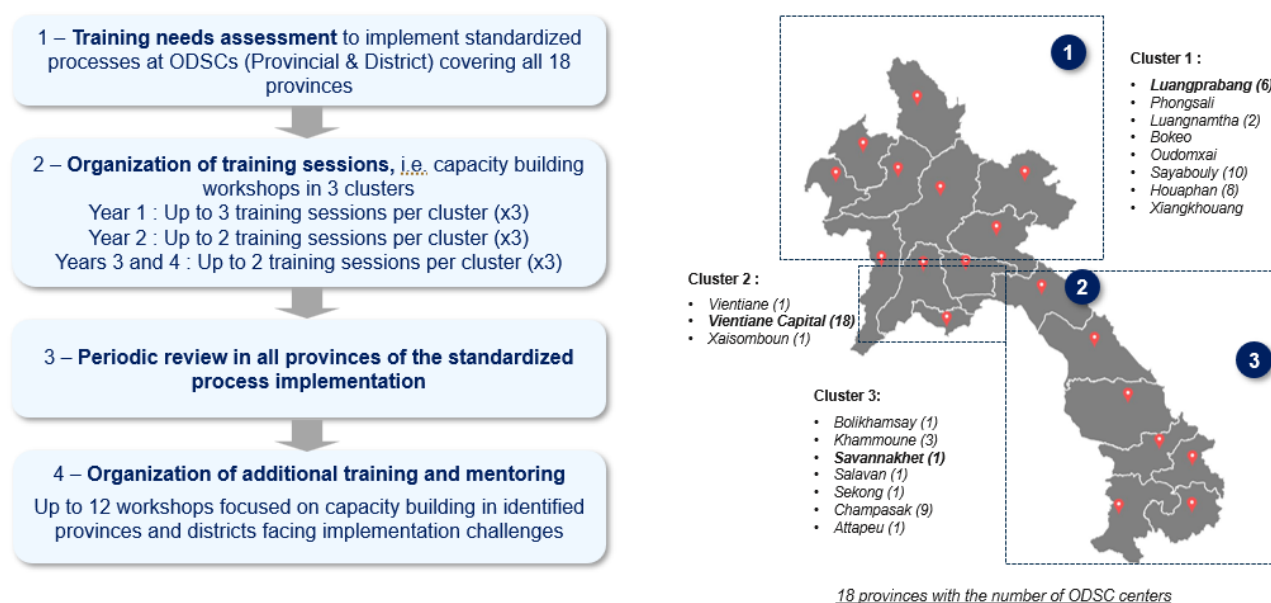


Figure 1: Capacity building strategy

To ensure that the specific needs of women and other vulnerable groups are adequately addressed, the assessment phase will focus on the collection and analysis of gender-segregated data, as well as data on persons with disabilities and ethnic groups. This targeted approach will help identify distinct challenges and barriers faced by these groups in accessing and utilizing digital services. For example, data will be gathered on the digital literacy levels, access to technology, and service usage patterns among women and marginalized communities.

To effectively meet these identified needs, training programs for ODSC staff will be specifically designed to build their capacity in addressing the challenges of women, person with disabilities and ethnic groups. These programs will incorporate strategies and resources to enhance digital access and support for these groups. By equipping ODSC staff with the necessary skills and knowledge, this tailored approach will ensure that the digital tools and services developed are inclusive and effectively

meet the diverse needs of all users, thereby enhancing overall service delivery and equity within the public sector.

Thirdly, the project focuses on institutionalizing robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, integrating service user feedback mechanisms, which will enable ODSCs to continuously assess their performance and adapt their service delivery processes to better meet the needs of citizens for continuous improvement. In addition, following the model of the baseline survey, the project will conduct periodic assessments on the needs of citizens. The LEAP project will support MOHA and line ministries in 3 key areas to establish robust M&E practices:

- LEAP will strengthen the legal and institutional framework for M&E by supporting the establishment of clear service objectives and performance indicators. This includes creating a comprehensive legal and policy framework to mandate M&E, developing standardized policies and operational guidelines for public agencies, and setting up dedicated M&E units within these agencies to oversee monitoring and evaluation activities.
- LEAP will also assist in the development of a robust M&E system by piloting and scaling up reliable data collection tools and methods to ensure accurate and regular data gathering. This will involve adopting M&E software and digital tools to streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting, as well as supporting continuous monitoring through site visits and periodic reviews. The project will also enhance stakeholder engagement and feedback mechanisms and provide training and capacity-building for M&E staff and relevant personnel.
- LEAP will focus on utilizing M&E information to improve the quality of public services by producing regular reports that summarize findings and recommendations, disseminating these reports to the public, and using the insights to inform policy decisions and action plans.

Additionally, LEAP will periodically assess the effectiveness of the M&E system itself to ensure its ongoing relevance and impact.

To ensure the **long-term sustainability of One Door Service Centers (ODSCs)**, a comprehensive approach involving collaboration and strategic planning is essential. This includes developing financial sustainability strategies such as diversifying funding sources, optimizing resource allocation, and implementing measures to improve operational efficiency. For example, partnerships with private sector stakeholders can be explored, as well as cost-sharing models and revenue-generating services where applicable.

A key action to support these efforts would be to **commission a study on funding models for ODSCs**, conducted by an external consultant. This study would explore potential funding streams, including public-private partnerships, fee-based services, and government-to-citizen (G2C) services. It would also examine successful models from similar initiatives globally, tailoring them to the Lao context. The consultant could provide recommendations on integrating nominal fees for services, creating a self-sufficient revenue model while ensuring accessibility for citizens.

In addition, the study could suggest ways to diversify service offerings at the ODSC level—such as providing secondary services like photocopying, printing, or ticketing—which would generate additional income while meeting community needs. The findings of this study would guide the ODSCs toward financial sustainability and operational efficiency, ensuring that they continue to offer quality public services in the long term.

Capacity-building sessions would also be offered to senior-level management at the provincial level, focusing on financial planning, management, and fundraising techniques. These initiatives, combined with the forthcoming Decree on Good Public Services, would comprehensively address financial sustainability, and ensure the ODSCs achieve long-term sustainability.

OUTPUT 1.2: Public Services are more efficient and accessible to citizens by scaling up digitalized and mobile ODSCs.

This output will be focused on the accessibility of the public services, through the strengthening of the SMART ODSC online application, upgrading digital services, piloting mobile ODSCs in targeted districts, and implementing an awareness-raising campaign. Through these activities, the project aims

to optimize public service delivery, promote transparency, and strengthen governance structures in Lao PDR, ultimately enhancing the overall well-being of its citizens. A **Systems thinking approach** shall be applied to ensure 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of society' lens is adopted for redesigning and digitalizing public services. This will help tackle the siloed culture of operations and unify services based on their nature and categories. This approach respects the Lao PDR Digital Transformation Strategy, led by the Ministry of Technology and Communications, which promotes 3 pillars: digital government, digital economy, and digital society¹⁶.

The **functionality and utilization of digital platforms** will be possible to boost by supporting the development of the SMART ODSC online application and providing comprehensive training to ODSC staff. The methodological approach will be to prioritize the most demanded services by mapping authorization processes and data registry requirements across various information systems. Focusing on an user centric approach, comprehensive interviews with citizens and administrators will be conducted to understand their needs for service improvements within ODSCs, complemented by surveys to gather broader community input. A pilot phase will be implemented to assess user adoption and effectiveness, thereby minimizing financial risks before full deployment. The decision will be made whether to utilize the existing Smart ODSC platform or develop a new application, with a focus on minimalist user interfaces to ensure ease of use and reduce textual clutter. Additionally, the system will be designed to be both data-efficient and capable of offline operation to address connectivity challenges. This will be supported by lessons learned from the Gov-X platform project, conducted by the Ministry of Technology and Communications in collaboration with UNDP, especially in the outreach activities and the identification of citizens needs.

To ensure a **legal framework for the SMART ODSC online application**, comprehensive legal tools will be prepared, including the drafting of specific regulations tailored to the application. This process involves creating regulatory frameworks that define the operational, security, and data privacy standards for the application. Ensuring these regulations are in place will formalize the application's use and integration into existing public service systems, providing a solid legal foundation for its deployment and management.

The new initiative will include **an online portal** designed to facilitate the management of workflow processes to be digitalized. This portal will be integrated with the SMART ODSC app, creating a unified platform for streamlined operations and enhanced efficiency. The deployment of essential ICT equipment will be critical to supporting this integration and ensuring the portal's functionality. Properly equipping the system will be key to optimizing digital workflows and improving service delivery.

The **piloting of mobile ODSCs in hard-to-reach communities** will play a crucial role in reaching underserved populations and enhancing accessibility to public services. Drawing from successful models in countries like Indonesia and Mongolia, which have demonstrated the effectiveness of mobile service units in remote areas, this initiative aims to replicate similar successes in Lao PDR. Coordination with relevant line ministries, which have already mobiles services (health, education services, and mobile legal aid services), will be essential to build upon existing successful mobile models and avoid duplication of efforts. The strategy involves conducting field missions to perform detailed needs assessments and design tailored pilot programs for two target provinces, ensuring that mobile ODSCs are effectively introduced into targeted districts. The piloting phase will be implemented in these provinces, with a goal of establishing a Mobile ODSC Model that can be expanded to five provinces, thereby addressing accessibility challenges, and improving service delivery in the most remote areas.

An **awareness-raising campaign** will be implemented to inform service users about ODSC services, online applications, and the new Mobile ODSCs, fostering a deeper understanding of their role in improving service delivery. The Communication & Outreach Strategy will utilize multimedia content such as videos, radio spots, websites, social media, and other means to ensure widespread reach and engagement. Key sub-activities will include organizing workshops to educate stakeholders on ODSCs, online application processes, and Mobile ODSCs, as well as creating and launching a MoHA-run Public Services Information Portal to provide comprehensive service information. Additionally, a national communications expert or enterprise will be contracted to design and execute a series of advertisements, videos, social media posts, and radio content to promote ODSC services in target

¹⁶ Lao PDR Digital Government Strategic Plan (2025-2030), Digital Government Center, Ministry of Technology and Communications

provinces. Coordination with the Ministry of Technology and Communications, as well as other relevant line ministries, will be essential to leverage their experience in advertising digital applications, such as Gov-X, to enhance the campaign's effectiveness. A strategic marketing campaign will then be deployed to effectively raise community awareness and encourage the utilization of these services.

OUTPUT 2.1: NPOs' effective contribution to the government's efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups supported.

This output will be achieved by strengthening the capacity of NPOs to conduct participatory action research at the level of their target communities to conceive and implement evidence-based interventions in close cooperation with governmental stakeholders, including local authorities. This collaboration is crucial for improving public service delivery, as it ensures that both NPOs and local authorities work together effectively, with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) involved in key processes. This involvement will help the government understand the importance of the work being done and ensure that local authorities also develop the necessary skills to carry out similar activities independently.

More concretely, it will support them in translating research outcomes into 'dialogue products' that can effectively inform evidence-based engagements with governmental service providers. Initial training sessions provided by UNDP will be followed by the provision of Low Value Grants (LVG) which allow selected NPOs to conduct their own research and inform service delivery interventions. By involving local authorities in these training sessions, the project aims to foster a deeper understanding and collaboration between NPOs and government entities at all levels.

After the successful completion of the research studies, platform dialogues will be held with the government, including local authorities, and a dedicated budget will be made available to support tangible support actions to improve existing service delivery practices, with an emphasis on joint efforts between NPOs and local authorities. This approach ensures that the work is not only government-informed but also government-supported, facilitating a smoother implementation of solutions at the local level. The choice of research topics or focus on key sectors will be decided through further discussions with the NPOs and the LVG grant-making process.

This UNDP-led training aims to achieve three key outcomes: First, it will enhance NPOs' understanding of their potential role in improving public service delivery. Currently, NPOs in Lao PDR, despite their extensive experience in service provision, often see themselves merely as assistance providers. The training will shift this perspective by increasing awareness of the critical role NPOs can play within the institutional and cultural context of Lao PDR.

NPOs have a significant role in rural and remote areas due to their ability to engage local authorities and raise awareness about public services. Their close connections with the community allow them to effectively communicate local needs and advocate for improved services. By raising awareness and building the capacity of local authorities, NPOs help ensure that residents in underserved regions are informed about and can access essential public services.

Second, the training will focus on teaching NPOs participatory action research methodologies. Unlike conventional research where respondents are involved only in data collection, participatory action research engages communities, including local authorities, throughout the entire process—from defining problems to developing solutions. This approach ensures that beneficiaries' perspectives are integrated from the start, fostering a bottom-up approach that enhances public service delivery.

Third, the training will facilitate NPOs' feedback on the public service delivery landscape and help identify three priority service areas for focus during the Activities 2.1.2, 2.1.3, and 2.1.4, as identified in the expected results table provided in the project document. This flexible approach allows for priorities to be set based on real needs identified during the training rather than predefined.

The training will also include a gender component, emphasizing how participatory action research can address gender inequalities and transform harmful gender norms, providing a small contribution in line of the GEN-2 quality requirement. In addition, women-led non-profit organizations, who target their activities in supporting women accessing public services will be supported. UNDP will collaborate as applicable with academic institutions, such as the National University of Laos, to contribute to the

training and encourage NPOs to partner with academia through Low Value Grants, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange on community-level development challenges. Involving MOHA and local authorities in these collaborations will further ensure that government bodies are actively engaged and equipped to continue similar activities independently.

After the training, NPOs will gain a clearer understanding of their role in public service delivery and be equipped to **conduct participatory action research**. They will use Low Value Grants to fund an estimated three research projects, each focused on a priority area identified during the training, aiming to uncover and address obstacles in accessing public services. UNDP will support this process with technical assistance and peer feedback workshops, ultimately producing practical advocacy products to facilitate evidence-based dialogue with government and the public.

Equipped with evidence on existing challenges and practical solutions, NPOs will leverage their established relationships with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and relevant line ministries, as well as local authorities, to engage in **dialogue with government counterparts**. They will organize an estimated three platform briefings to present their findings and recommendations, and further their engagement through participation in NPO Fairs, including the main annual event in Vientiane and additional regional fairs in Luang Prabang and Savannakhet. We are aware that the CEGGA programme is conducting similar activities, and coordination between the two projects has already begun to ensure that both projects do not serve the same NPOs. These fairs will provide a platform for NPOs to present their work, receive feedback, and refine their actions for improved public service delivery.

To ensure that engagement translates into actionable outcomes, a dedicated budget within **the Low Value Grants (LVGs)** will support joint actions between NPOs and their governmental counterparts, with the option for NPOs to coordinate closely with government stakeholders where joint actions are unfeasible. The actions, driven by research outcomes and dialogues, will focus on tangible implementation of recommendations rather than complex action plans, with the majority of the LVG funds allocated to these implementations and only a small portion reserved for research and dialogue activities. This approach prioritizes achieving meaningful impact through application of NPO findings.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE LOW VALUE GRANTS (LVGs)

The LVG is a funding modality by UNDP that aims to strengthen the capacities of local organizations while producing meaningful project results. Grantees will be selected based on a call for proposals, applicable selection criteria, and a diverse UNDP selection committee with members of different programme units. In the context of Output 2.1, it is anticipated that there will be a total of three LVGs will be provided based on a competitive call for applications. This means that an estimated total budget of around USD 72,000 is allocated and divided among an estimated three different grants of USD 24,000 each. It may also be possible to slightly alter the allocation per grant to fund more grantees. These LVGs will provide the NPOs with the needed budget to cover the main activities under the following activities: Research (2.1.2), Dialogue (2.1.3), and Action (2.1.4). Should it be determined that the implementation of those activities surpasses the minimum duration allowed for LVGs, UNDP may determine to split the grant allocation into two separate grants. While the precise evaluation criteria will be decided as part of the grant preparation process, it can be indicated that the following criteria will be of critical importance.

- Previous experience and track record in research, dialogue making, and service delivery action.
- Access to selected communities based on a strong trust relationship.
- Access and relationship with relevant key ministries.
- Organizational, financial, logistical, and administrative capacity.
- Prioritization of applications that include cooperation with academia.
- At least 5 years of continuous operations in Lao PDR as a national NPO with formal registration.

The NPOs will be managing the financial resources independently and in line with the signed LVG Agreement. UNDP will provide quality assurance and make sure that the funds are appropriately utilized in line with all relevant policies, regulations, and procedures. This is important to make sure the available resources are allocated as efficiently as possible to maximize the project's impact.

OUTPUT 2.2: NPOs effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle supported.

This output will be achieved by building upon previous projects in which UNDP has strengthened the capacity of NPOs to contribute to the CRPD process. Under this output, NPOs will provide trainings to selected public service providers to provide more disability-sensitive services in line with the CRPD NAP (Activity 2.2.1). The engagement at the level of service delivery is combined with the strategic involvement of NPOs at the national policy level when it comes to planning and reporting for the upcoming CRPD cycle (Activity 2.2.2).

This approach underlines the fact that the engagement at the practical level of service delivery will be closely interlinked with the NPO engagement at the national policy level, leading to improved quality of service provision. By working together with governmental service providers, NPOs can strengthen their reputation and further enhance their relationship with key government partners. By linking up the practical engagement at the level of service delivery with dialogue at the policy level, it can be ensured that the priorities and perspectives of vulnerable populations are better fed into decision-making processes and inform more inclusive services towards the population.

LOGFRAME

OUTCOME 1: Public administration meets the needs of citizens through a more efficient and effective service delivery in Lao PDR and local governance is more accountable and transparent.	
EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
Output 1.1: The effectiveness of existing ODSCs is strengthened through institutionalizing Monitoring and Evaluation, improving inter-ministerial coordination, and enhancing procedures.	1.1.1: IMPROVING COORDINATION MECHANISMS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS: the focus lies on facilitating inter-ministerial consultations to enhance understanding and cooperation among ODSCs. Efforts are directed towards supporting strategic initiatives at various administrative levels (both national and local) and supporting the governance sector working group to improve coordination in public administration and service delivery. Additionally, the project will support the efforts to develop and disseminate laws and decrees relevant to public administration, ensuring a favourable legal environment for ODSC operations.
	1.1.2: ICT AND WORKFLOW OPTIMIZATION: Comprehensive assessments will be conducted to evaluate the efficiency of ICT infrastructure and the workflow processes. Document processes will be streamlined based on the assessment findings and analysis and the staff capacity will be built through training sessions, on-the-job trainings, and peer-to-peer learning sessions within the country, with policymakers at the regional level (Asia Pacific) and global level shall be organized. Study tours will be organized to gather insights from international best practices in public service delivery and digitalization, to countries which face the same challenges.
	1.1.3: MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Improve monitoring and evaluation system and integrate service user feedback into existing and new ODSCs. Institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation systems within ODSCs will be a priority, alongside the engagement of M&E experts to refine existing practices and establish more effective systems. Similarly, Service user feedback mechanisms will be piloted and integrated into the overall M&E framework, ensuring continuous improvement and responsiveness to user needs.
	1.1.4: ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY: Efforts will be directed towards developing sustainable ODSC models, including financial sustainability, through a series of consultations and initiatives. The overarching goal is to ensure the long-term financial and operational viability of ODSCs through collaborative planning and action, ultimately enabling them to effectively serve the citizens in the mid- and long-term.
Output 1.2: Citizen access to efficient and responsive Public Services is enhanced via scaling up the use of Smart ODSCs and piloting new Mobile ODSCs	1.2.1: SMART ODSC REVIEW: Focus will be on strengthening the SMART ODSC online application through collaborative efforts. This will involve engaging in consultations with government and stakeholders to collect insights and perspectives aimed at enhancing the application's functionality and effectiveness. In addition, basic legal analysis will be provided to ensure the formalization and legalization of the SMART ODSC online application, including the drafting of necessary regulations and policies to support its operation within the legal framework.
	1.2.2: DIGITAL SERVICE DEPLOYMENT: Based on the assessment's findings, digital services will be upgraded and deployed to optimize service delivery, including upgrading the application (SMART ODSC) and providing comprehensive training to both Ministry of Home Affairs and ODSC staff to ensure proficient utilization. Essential ICT equipment will be provisioned to support the digitalization process in the designated target provinces.

	1.2.3: INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY: One of the main challenges will be to enhance the accessibility of public services in hard-to-reach communities through piloting mobile ODSCs in select districts. This involves extensive coordination with authorities to facilitate the new mobile ODSC access and conducting thorough needs assessments to design suitable pilot programs.
	1.2.4: AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN: Efforts will be put to raise public awareness about ODSC services and their benefits. A comprehensive marketing campaign strategy will be designed and deployed to effectively communicate ODSC services to the community, ensuring widespread awareness and utilization of available services. This will include organizing workshops to educate stakeholders about ODSCs, online applications, and Mobile ODSCs, fostering a deeper understanding of their role in improving service delivery. In addition, a Public Services Information Portal will be created and launched to provide comprehensive information about available services, enhancing transparency and accessibility.
OUTCOME 2: Lao PDR civil society plays a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions.	
EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES
OUTPUT 2.1: NPOs' effective contribution to the government's efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups supported.	2.1.1 TRAINING: Implement UNDP-led training(s) to strengthen the capacity of NPOs for participatory action research and priority setting to effectively implement evidence-based service delivery initiatives.
	2.1.2 RESEARCH: Conduct NPO-led studies to develop evidence-based products for engaging in governmental dialogues and public outreach while implementing peer-support workshop(s) during the research process.
	2.1.3 DIALOGUE: Conduct NPO-led platform dialogues as well as outreach activities to the wider public (NPO Fairs) about research findings and outlining the ideas on how to improve quality service delivery.
	2.1.4 ACTION: Implement enhanced service delivery action led by the NPOs in coordination with governmental key stakeholders based on the research and dialogues.
OUTPUT 2.2: NPOs effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle supported.	2.2.1 NAP – DISABILITY SENSITIVE SERVICES: Provide the NPO-led training "Disability Inclusive Development (DID)" to selected public service providers.
	2.2.2 INCLUSIVE PLANNING: Provide UNDP-led technical assistance to both the NCPD as well as the NPOs to report on the NAP progress to the CRPD Committee to enhance inclusive national level planning processes.

RESOURCES REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE EXPECTED RESULTS

Results of the first months will be used to adjust the implementation methodologies, leverage lessons learned, and use preliminary results to mobilize additional resources for activities in the later months of the programmatic timeframe. Including the resource mobilization strategy directly within the project design is vital to ensure that a bigger impact and more sustainability can be achieved by expanding the scope of the engagement.

The LEAP project will provide the staffing for the specific needs of the project, as follows:

- 1 Project Manager to provide project supervision, management, and quality assurance,
 - NPSA9/10 (100%) for the duration of the whole project
- 1 Field Support Officer to support the project manager in the implementation of subnational activities, especially in coordinating at the provincial levels,
 - NPSA 9 (100%) for the duration of the whole project
- 1 Project Associate to ensure budget planning, manage procurement and invoices, and oversee financial aspects to keep the project on track.
 - NPSA 7 (100%) for the duration of the whole project
- 1 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Officer to ensure a continuous and robust monitoring and evaluation system for the whole duration of the project, especially as foreseen in Activity 1.1.3.
 - UNV Specialist/Expert (70%) for the duration of the whole project
- 1 National Communications Officer, to ensure the implementation of a comprehensive communication strategy
 - National UNV / NPSA 8 (100%) for the duration of the whole project

PARTNERSHIPS

GOVERNMENT: The project's main partner is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). In addition, the project fosters cooperation at both national and local levels, among ministries, with their line agencies, and among the local administrations. In particular, the ODSC component of the project will work closely with the Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC), which will support the team in the digitalization activities foreseen by the project. The NPO component of the project will work closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW), which oversees the work done by the National Committee of People with Disabilities (NCPD). This project will directly contribute towards enhancing national ownership of the Governance Sector Working Group, ensuring development objectives are being effectively achieved and promote better coordination in the sector and wider development sectors.

The project will strengthen the public administration of Lao PDR by improving inter-ministerial coordination, digitalization service delivery, developing national capacities to deliver high quality public services at community level and address long term development challenges. The provision of technical advisors to undertake all aspects of planning, implementation, quality assurance and financial management will enable institutional capacities to be strengthened and ensure a coordinated national response to service delivery and longer-term sustainable development.

CIVIL SOCIETY: The project foresees close collaboration with a range of NPOs, building on UNDP's established partnerships while also creating opportunities for additional organizations to engage through capacity building and participation in various project activities. UNDP will facilitate these relationships, providing technical assistance to NPOs to enhance their training capabilities for selected public service providers, particularly ODSCs. This collaboration aims to strengthen service user feedback mechanisms in targeted areas, showcasing the pivotal role civil society can play in supporting the implementation of national strategies and enhancing public service delivery.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS: UNDP will continue to facilitate cooperation between the GoL and Development Partners as co-chair of the Governance Sector Working Group and Public Service Improvement and Citizen Engagement (PSI & CE) sub-sector working groups. In addition, the project will aim at establishing new and strategic partnerships with international and national organizations that have ongoing projects or plans to initiate new public administration programs. Close collaboration between partners would facilitate exchanges and ensure programming is targeted and avoids replication.

PRIVATE SECTOR: Potential partnerships with the private sector can be done with the private sector for ensuring continuous training in digital literacy and maintaining the digital skills throughout the project timeframe and beyond. This collaboration can potentially involve the establishment of training hubs or digital learning centers in key locations, enhancing accessibility and reach across different regions. In addition, partnerships with tech firms can help maintain and upgrade digital infrastructure over time. Private sector entities can provide ongoing technical support, software updates, and hardware maintenance to ensure that digital systems remain functional and secure.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (IGOs): UNDP will create synergies across wider UNDP programming to capitalize on governance, environment and climate change and inclusive growth experiences to better integrate public administration reforms into the wider development agenda. To strengthen UN cooperation, the project will engage with other UN partners (WHO for health, World Bank for Civil Registrations, UNICEF for digitalization etc.) and strive to engage with provincial, district and community authorities to deliver as one UN.

ACADEMIA: UNDP will also leverage its network in the country, at the regional and global level to collaborate with the Academia and Think Tanks to strengthen the research and development interventions for timely feedback loops and syncing with the changing needs of the citizens

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

ASSUMPTIONS

GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT: The assumption is that the Government of Lao PDR will actively engage in and support the LEAP Project. Government buy-in is essential for implementing institutional reforms, allocating resources, and sustaining project initiatives beyond the project duration. Recent experiences by UNDP in the context of Public Administration indicate a strong engagement from the government. In addition, the assumption is that the governmental service providers are willing to actively participate in constructive dialogues and coordinated actions with NPOs. This assumption relies on the government's recognition of civil society as legitimate partners in public service delivery and their willingness to collaborate in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. Recent experiences by UNDP in the context of human rights treaty reporting, namely ICESCR, CEDAW, and CRPD, indicate indeed that such basic willingness is currently given. The project will however provide additional incentives to further ensure government engagement.

POLITICAL STABILITY: The assumption is that the country experiences political stability and continuity, which enables sustained engagement of the government throughout the project duration, especially with civil society. This assumption is essential for maintaining a conducive environment for collaboration and preventing disruptions to planned activities. Current monitoring by UNDP indeed indicates that the required level of stability will endure throughout the project implementation phase.

CONTINUOUS DIGITALIZATION PROGRESS: The assumption is that the digitalization progress in the country will continue to improve, and the government digital masterplan will continue to be implemented, in alignment with the project's foreseen activities. Sufficient efforts will be made to address the barriers to digitalization, including low digital literacy among ODSC and MoHA staff.

CAPACITY BUILDING IMPACT: The assumption is that the training provided by UNDP effectively enhances the skills, knowledge, and capabilities of all the persons trained in the framework of this project. The capacity building methodological approach should ensure that: (i) ODSCs staff needs throughout the country are properly identified and that the capacities are progressively enhanced through various training techniques; and (ii) NPOs engage with governmental stakeholders. To make sure this assumption is appropriately considered, UNDP will continue to leverage its experience from previous engagements with civil society and make sure the specific activity engagements are deep enough to sustainably strengthen capacity.

POLICY FRAMEWORK SUPPORT: National policy frameworks provide adequate opportunities and mechanisms for the expected results of this project. Regarding the functioning of ODSCs, but also the development of digital tools, a proper regulatory framework is essential to ensure coherence, scalability, and sustainability. Several drafting committees have been established by MOHA and MTC in this sense. Regarding the participation of NPOs in decision-making processes, the assumption relies on the alignment of national policies with principles of inclusivity, transparency, and human rights, facilitating civil society engagement at various levels of governance. Given recent experiences by UNDP, especially in the development of the CRPD NAP, it is considered likely that this assumption will hold true.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: Local communities, including vulnerable target populations, actively participate in the research, dialogue, and service delivery processes facilitated by NPOs. This assumption emphasizes the importance of grassroots involvement in shaping public service delivery initiatives and ensuring their relevance and effectiveness at the local level. To appropriately consider

this assumption, the Low Value Grants (LVGs) provided by UNDP will make it an evaluation criterion for NPOs to have strong trust relationships with selected communities.

RISKS

LIMITED GOVERNMENT ENGAGEMENT: the government's level of engagement may fluctuate due to changes in political leadership, competing priorities, or bureaucratic resistance. Insufficient government support could result in delays in decision-making, limited resource allocation, or lack of enforcement of project outcomes, such as fully cooperating or engaging with civil society initiatives. The project will prioritize building strong partnerships with key government stakeholders at different levels, including at the national, provincial and district levels. Regular communication and stakeholder meetings will be organized to ensure continued government commitment to the project, fostering open communication channels, and demonstrating the tangible benefits of collaboration through successful pilot initiatives. The project will also make sure to align itself with national development priorities, enhancing government ownership and engagement. *Likelihood: Low. Impact: Medium.*

EXTERNAL DISRUPTIONS: The project's success may be threatened by external shocks, such as economic crises, natural disasters, or political instability, which can disrupt implementation activities and undermine progress. Uncertainty in the operating environment could lead to funding constraints, delays in project timelines, or changes in government priorities. To avoid this, a flexible approach has been integrated in the project design to respond effectively to external shocks. Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established to track progress and identify early warning signs of potential disruptions. *Likelihood: Low. Impact: Low.*

CHALLENGES DUE TO DIGITALIZATION PROGRESS: Slow and fragmented progress in digitalizing public services in the country might challenge the advancement of the project. Some challenges might occur such as around integrating digital tools and applications due to low digital literacy among ODSC and MoHA staff. Comprehensive training programs will aim at improving digital literacy among targeted staff, including tailored training sessions, workshops, and ongoing support to ensure effective utilization of digital tools. In addition, the LEAP project entails a component with NPOs that allows collaboration with local partners to provide specialized training in digital skills. *Likelihood: Medium. Impact: High.*

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM: Implementing institutional reforms, such as creating ODSC standards and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, may face resistance from existing bureaucratic structures or stakeholders comfortable with the status quo. An extensive stakeholder consultations and engagement activities will be conducted to build consensus and ownership. The project will engage with key stakeholders, including ODSC staff members from the early stages of the project, which can help address concerns and gather support for necessary changes. Clear communication about the benefits of these improvements and demonstrating successful pilot initiatives will help alleviate resistance. *Likelihood: Medium. Impact: High.*

SUSTAINABILITY OF DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SKILLS: Building ICT infrastructure and enhancing digital skills among public servants are crucial components of the project. However, ensuring the sustainability of these investments beyond the project duration is essential for long-term success. The project will develop a sustainability plan that outlines strategies for maintaining and updating ICT infrastructure beyond the project's lifespan. Partnerships with the MTC responsible for ICT maintenance will be established. Digital skills development will be integrated into existing training programs for public servants, which will ensure continuous capacity building even after the project concludes. *Likelihood: Medium. Impact: Low*

LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY IN REMOTE AREAS: Logistical challenges and inadequate infrastructure may hinder the establishment and operation of ODSCs in these areas. Limited accessibility could exacerbate existing inequalities and leave marginalized communities underserved. The project will conduct thorough ICT assessments to identify the most effective strategies for reaching remote areas. Alternative solutions, such as mobile ODSCs or partnering with local community organizations to overcome logistical barriers will be established. In addition, the project will ensure the assessment of the existing infrastructure and the improvements required, such as road networks or telecommunications, that can enhance accessibility and ensure equitable service delivery. The ODSC Project will utilize connections with the UNDP Lao PDR STEPS Project, working with the National

Assembly and Provincial People's Assemblies, to support oversight of regional development plans and budget allocations to help prioritize such infrastructure. *Likelihood: Low. Impact: Medium.*

CAPACITY LIMITATIONS: NPOs may face capacity limitations in effectively implementing project activities, particularly in research, advocacy, and partnership building. To mitigate this risk, we will invest in capacity development initiatives tailored to the needs of NPOs, including training workshops and peer learning workshops. *Likelihood: Medium. Impact: Low.*

COMMUNITY RESISTANCE: Resistance or skepticism from local communities towards project interventions may hinder implementation and community acceptance. To address this risk, the NPOs will conduct extensive community consultations, employ culturally sensitive approaches, and promote inclusive decision-making processes. Engaging local leaders as project champions and leveraging existing social networks will help overcome resistance and foster community ownership of interventions. *Likelihood: Low. Impact: Medium.*

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In the stakeholder engagement strategy for this project in Lao PDR, various stakeholders are identified and engaged to ensure comprehensive participation and effective outcomes. Target groups include:

- National stakeholders, particularly from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), who play a pivotal role in policy formulation and oversight. Local authorities, especially at the provincial level, are essential for their role in implementing and coordinating project activities at the grassroots level. ODSC staff members are crucial stakeholders tasked with delivering improved services directly to citizens across the country.
- Citizens of Lao PDR are core beneficiaries, whose needs and perspectives shape the project's objectives and outcomes.
- NPOs play a crucial role in bringing expertise in advocacy, research, and community mobilization, serving as intermediaries to amplify the voices of marginalized groups and promote inclusive service delivery. NPOs facilitate community-level engagement, ensuring that vulnerable populations, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and ethnic groups, are included in decision-making processes and benefit equitably from enhanced service delivery and governance practices.
- Other affected groups include rural communities and marginalized populations such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities, which are prioritized due to their specific vulnerabilities and needs in accessing public services and participating in governance processes. Engaging these groups ensures that their voices are heard, their concerns are addressed, and they benefit equitably from improved service delivery and governance practices.

SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION (SSC/TRC)

South-South cooperation plays a pivotal role in the project's strategy to enhance public service delivery and governance in Lao PDR. To achieve Outcome 1, which focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of ODSCs, the project plans to organize study visits to countries like Malaysia, South Korea, Vietnam, China, and/or Azerbaijan. These visits will provide valuable insights into decentralized governance models, digitalization strategies in modern contexts, and legislative frameworks relevant to public administration. Malaysia's expertise in decentralization will offer lessons on local governance structures, while South Korea's advanced digitalization efforts will inform strategies for upgrading digital services. Vietnam and China will contribute insights into effective decree processes and legal frameworks, essential for enhancing the regulatory environment supporting ODSC operations. These exchanges aim to foster knowledge sharing and capacity building among stakeholders, facilitating the adoption of best practices tailored to Lao PDR's context and needs. In addition, MOHA staff will be encouraged to participate in international seminars and workshops on public services.

Additionally, the project will draw inspiration from innovative models of mobile ODSCs already implemented in countries such as Indonesia and Mongolia. These models have demonstrated

successful strategies for reaching remote and underserved communities, providing insights into effective deployment strategies and operational frameworks that can be adapted to enhance service accessibility in Lao PDR. By comparing these case studies, the project aims to tailor mobile ODSC initiatives to Lao PDR, ensuring they effectively address the unique challenges and needs of rural and vulnerable populations.

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

The project will leverage digital technologies to enhance both the experiences of target beneficiaries and the operational efficiency of partners involved. These digital solutions are integral to overcoming development challenges related to accessibility, efficiency, and inclusivity in public service provision across Lao PDR.

- The project will ensure upgrading and scaling up the SMART ODSC online application, by streamlining access to public services for citizens across Lao PDR. This includes enhancing the functionality of the application through stakeholder consultations, ensuring it meets the diverse needs of users effectively.
- Comprehensive training programs will also be provided to Ministry of Home Affairs and ODSC staff to build their capacity in utilizing digital tools proficiently, thereby improving service delivery and responsiveness.
- The deployment of essential ICT equipment and the piloting of mobile ODSCs in remote areas will extend service accessibility to underserved populations, addressing geographical barriers.
- An awareness-raising campaign will be conducted to educate the public about ODSC services, digital applications, and the benefits of mobile ODSCs, fostering widespread utilization and enhancing transparency in service delivery.

KNOWLEDGE

- Lessons learned will be captured in Annual Project Reports and presented to the Project Board.
- Various technical reports will be produced, including a Capacity Needs Assessment (including a Digital and Workflow Assessment) of the One Door Service Centers in Lao PDR.
- The project will facilitate the production of research papers from Non-profit Organizations.

SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALING UP

UNDP will support MoHA as a coordinating institution to implement the ODSC mechanism, institutionalize a monitoring and evaluation system and service user feedback. The capacity building element of this project will be delivered through the deployment of technical assistance to the target Ministry of Home Affairs staff, ODSC staff and NPO personnel. A Capacity Needs Assessment conducted early in the project cycle will detail the scope of capacity building required, specifically pertaining to digital literacy skills.

In terms of sustainability for the project, national ownership will be ensured from the outset and technical assistance will be provided to support the Government of Lao PDR in understanding the opportunities and risks of potential courses of action. In alignment with the ODSC National Strategy (2030), the project will plan for donor diversification, resource mobilization and ensuring financial sustainability of ODSCs. All ICT equipment procured to be used by the ODSCs will be under the ownership of the Government of Lao PDR.

The activities will target specific Provinces to pilot innovative digital solutions and assess internal workflows with the intention to scale up good practices and procedures; this will lead to the improvement of ODSC effectiveness, efficiency, and accessibility. The Training of Trainer (ToT) approach that will be taken will have sustainable outcomes and contribute towards the scaling up of public administration reforms from the Provincial to District levels. In addition, support to embedding digital expertise in the Government, increasing Monitoring and Evaluation capacity, and enhancing civil society engagement at a policy level will strengthen the ability of public administration in identifying sector issues and implementing strategies to address them.

UNDP addresses the challenge of limited local capacity and expertise by providing tailored training programs and workshops to empower local stakeholders, including NPOs, OPDs, and government agencies. Our focus is on transferring knowledge, skills, and best practices to ensure that stakeholders feel confident and capable of driving change long after our project ends. Sometimes a simpler and more basic approach will be taken over a more complex option to ensure the stakeholders can carry the processes forward even after the project has ended.

IV. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

The project governance will be both cost-efficient and effective through the integration of robust internal support mechanisms provided by UNDP. Quality assurance will be upheld by leveraging the expertise of the Programme Analyst, Governance Team Lead, and the Procurement Services Unit (PSU) who will provide dedicated oversight and management. This internal backstopping ensures that resources are utilized efficiently, and project objectives are met, as these roles will facilitate timely problem-solving, strategic guidance, and continuous monitoring of project activities. By relying on in-house expertise, the project minimizes external consultancy costs while maximizing the effectiveness of governance and oversight. The overall technical expertise will be provided by an in-house Governance Analyst, justifying more than 10 years of professional experience in PAR and digital transformation projects. In addition, the project will rely on UNDP's in-house expertise regarding Human Resources to recruit the project management staff and the Procurement service to support the project's implementation.

Project Management

The project staffing reflects the different expertise and capacity that will be needed at different points in time by the project in line with the sequencing of the activities.

The UNDP project staff will be managed as follows whereby the team will be able to benefit from additional oversight within UNDP. With the initial USAID and Irish Aid funding, the project team will consist of the following:

- One 100% Project Manager who will provide project supervision, management, and quality assurance for both components. Technical backstopping will be provided by Public Administration Reform and Human Rights Specialists from the UNDP Governance Team.
- One 100% Monitoring, Evaluations and Learning Officer with a robust experience working with public administration, ensuring the proper implementation of the robust monitoring framework.
- One 100% Communications Officer who will focus her expertise in implementing the communications and marketing strategy for reaching out to the citizens and with a strong focus in the core years on product development (2026, 2027, 2028).
- One 100% Field Support Officer with expertise working with the public administration, especially at the local level and with vulnerable groups for the duration of the whole project.
- One 100% Project Associate for the duration of the whole project.

In the implementation of the project, the working modalities between the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and UNDP will be clearly defined to ensure effective collaboration. UNDP will manage the project through a dedicated team led by a project manager, who will oversee administrative procedures and recruit technical experts for specific activities, such as developing the digital transformation strategy and creating an application for SMART ODSC. UNDP will provide regular reports on project activities, through project committee meetings, with the frequency of reporting to be determined—whether weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly—detailing progress, any issues encountered, and decisions required from MOHA for remaining activities. MOHA will be responsible for implementing and following up on all activities, making necessary decisions to facilitate project implementation, and coordinating with local authorities. MOHA will also act as the primary focal point in interactions with ODSCs, ensuring alignment and coherence in the project's execution.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**[LAO PDR]**

Sequencing of activities: At project start, the activities, which will be implemented in priority will be the organization of the ICT assessment (ICT infrastructure) and workflow of existing and SMART ODSCs to strengthen and streamline procedures. Consultation meetings for the Good Public Services Decree will also be organized respecting the legislative calendar.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
Output 1: The effectiveness of existing ODSCs is strengthened through institutionalizing Monitoring and Evaluation, improving inter-ministerial coordination and enhancing procedures.					
1.1: Improve coordination mechanisms and legal frameworks	1.1.1. Inter-ministerial consultations on enhancing ODSC understanding and coordination				
	1.1.2. Strategic initiatives and support to improving inter-ministerial coordination at the central and local level in relation to service delivery				
	1.1.3. Support to governance sector working group (including sub-sector working group on Public Services Improvement and Citizen Engagement) to improve coordination and effectiveness of public administration and public services				
	1.1.4. Support development of Law on Public Administration and dissemination of law and Good Public Service Decree				
1.2: Assess ICT infrastructure and workflow of existing and SMART ODSCs to strengthen and streamline procedures	1.2.1. Capacity building of ODSC staff via peer-to-peer learning on ODSC implementation, service mechanisms and information sharing in 7 target provinces				
	1.2.2. Conduct an ICT & Workflow assessment of existing ODSCs and SMART ODSCs to streamline document processes of ODSCs in target provinces and develop roadmap				
	1.2.3. Streamline document processes at ODSCs based on the ICT & Workflow assessment				
	1.2.4. Study tours to learn about global best practices on public service delivery and digitalization				
1.3: Improve monitoring and evaluation system and integrate service user feedback into existing and new ODSCs	1.3.1. Improve the institutionalization of monitoring and evaluation systems of ODSCs				
	1.3.2. Contract National/International M&E experts to assess current M&E practices and establish a more effective M&E system for ODSCs				
	1.3.3. Pilot service user feedback mechanism and integrate it into new M&E system				
1.4: Develop ODSC Sustainability Model	1.4.1. Conduct inter-ministerial and government consultations on revenue raising, financing, and sustainability initiatives to ensure financial and operational sustainability				

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4
Output 2: Citizen access to efficient and responsive Public Services is enhanced via scaling up the use of Smart ODSCs and piloting new Mobile ODSCs					
2.1: Review the SMART ODSC Model	2.1.1. Consult with the government and other stakeholders on strengthening the SMART ODSC online application to gain consensus and buy-in from key stakeholders (based on the ICT & Workflow Assessment to process online applications)				
	2.1.2. Prepare legal tools required to legalize SMART ODSC online application (drafting of regulations related to SMART ODSC online application)				
2.2: Digitalize public service delivery in target Provinces	2.2.1. Upgrade app, train the Ministry of Home Affairs and ODSC staff, Deploy Application and Provide Maintenance for project duration				
	2.2.2. Provide ICT equipment as required for SMART ODSC Online application in target provinces				
2.3: Enhance the accessibility of public services through piloting new mobile ODSCs, in hard-to-reach communities in select provinces	2.3.1. Conduct field missions to coordinate with Provincial and District authorities to facilitate mobile ODSC access				
	2.3.2. Contract National/International consultants to conduct needs assessment for mobile ODSCs and design a mobile ODSC pilot for the 2 target provinces				
	2.3.3. Pilot mobile ODSC in 2 target provinces and establish Mobile Model in 5 Provinces				
2.4: Awareness Raising on ODSC, online application and Mobile ODSC	2.4.1. Organize awareness-raising workshops on ODSCs, online application processes, and Mobile ODSCs				
	2.4.2. Create and launch a MoHA-run Public Services Information Portal				
	2.4.3. Contract a national communications expert/enterprise to design a series of advertisements, videos, social media posts and radio content on services available at ODSCs, including the online application in target provinces				
	2.4.4. Deploy marketing campaign to raise community awareness on ODSC services				

Outcome 2: Lao PDR civil society plays a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Y1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4
Output 1: NPOs' effective contribution to the government's efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups supported					
1.1 Training	Implement a UNDP-led training to strengthen the capacity of NPAs for participatory action research and priority setting to effectively implement evidence-based service delivery initiatives.				
1.2: Research	Conduct three NPA-led studies to develop evidence-based products for engaging in governmental dialogues and public outreach while implementing a peer-support workshop during the research process.				
1.3: Dialogue	Conduct three NPA-led platform dialogues with the government as well as outreach activities to the wider public (CSO Fairs) about research findings and actions to improve quality service delivery.				
1.4: Action	Implement NPA-GOV joint actions on service delivery or NPA-led actions that closely coordinate with relevant government partners based on the research and dialogues.				
Output 2: NPOs effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle supported					
2.1: NAP: Disability-Sensitive Services	Provide the OPD-led training "Disability Inclusive Development (DID)" to two selected ODSCs as well as the Employment Opportunity Center in Vientiane Capital.				
2.2: Inclusive Planning (GOV, Expert, OPDs)	Provide UNDP-led technical assistance to both the NCPD as well as the OPDs to report on the NAP progress to the CRPD Committee to enhance inclusive national level planning processes.				

V. RESULTS FRAMEWORK¹⁷

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSDCF/Country [or Regional] Programme Results and Resource Framework:

NATIONAL PRIORITY OR GOAL Ninth NSEDP outcome 6 (Governance and the rule of law) – Public governance and administration is improved, and society is equal, fair, and protected by the rule of law.

UNSDCF Strategic Priority 3 Governance and the Rule of Law – By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will be better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld.

Indicators and targets: Corruption perception index Baseline: Index 29 (2019) Target: more than 40 (2026); Number of people using legal aid services (link to 16.3.4) Baseline: 1059 (2019) Target: 35,000 (2026); Government effectiveness index Baseline: Index -0.78 (2019) Target: <-0.5 (2026); Voice and accountability index Baseline: Index -1.8 (2019) Target: <-0.9 (2026); E-government index Baseline: Index 0.3288 (2020) Target: >0.55 (2026)

Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme [or Regional] Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets:

CPD Output 3.1. Transparent and participatory evidence-based policy and decision-making processes further strengthen human rights protection and accountability

Indicator 3.1.1. Proportion of public sector entities using digital data at central and subnational level Baseline: TBD (2022) Target: 80% (2026) Source: Ministry of Technologies and Communications (MTC) and NSEDP Frequency: Annual

Indicator 3.1.2. Multi-stakeholder engagement platform established (number of institutions using platform disaggregated by type) Baseline: 0 (2021) Target: 1 (2026) Source: Governance Sector Working Group (GSWG) Frequency: Annual

CPD Output 3.2. Government bodies have enhanced capacities for more transparent and effective law design, implementation, and monitoring.

Indicator 3.2.1. Number of people accessing essential public services online (e-service). Baseline: TBD (2022) Target: 50% of all government services (2026) Source: MCT and NSEDP Frequency: Annual

Indicator 3.2.3. Number and utilization rates of one-door service centres by women and ethnic groups at: (a) district level, and (b) province level Baseline: 44 (TBC) Target: 74 (50% of public services provided at ODSC) Source: MOHA and NSEDP Frequency: Annual

CPD Output 3.3. People, including vulnerable groups, have greater access to basic and accountable services.

Indicator 3.3.1. Number of target districts that adopt accountability framework Baseline: 4 (2020) Target: 40 Districts (2026) Source: MOHA and NSEDP Frequency:

Annual *Indicator 3.3.2.* Percentage of citizens who attended the survey satisfied with public services received Baseline: 17 (2019) Target: 80% (2026) Source: MOHA/SUFS Frequency: Annual

Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan: Outcome 2 – Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development.

Output 2.3: Responsive governance systems and local governance strengthened for socioeconomic opportunity, inclusive basic service delivery, community security, and peacebuilding

Project title and Atlas Project Number:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS ¹⁸	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Year 1	Yea r 2	Year 3	Year 4	FINAL	
Outcome 1: Public administration meets the needs of citizens through a more efficient and effective service delivery in Lao PDR and local governance is more accountable and transparent.										
Output 1.1: The effectiveness of existing ODSCs is strengthened through institutionalizing Monitoring and Evaluation, improving inter-ministerial coordination, and enhancing procedures.	1.1 Number of laws and decrees on Public Services drafted	National Assembly	0	2024	1	1	0	0	2 Legal Instruments	NA directive/press release or passed legislation
	1.2 Percentage of ODSC staff trained	Ministry of Home Affairs	0	2024	50	150	250	300	80%	Participant sheets (sex-disaggregated); post-training evaluation
	1.3 Percentage of ODSCs collecting Service User Feedback 1.3 Percentage of citizens who attended the survey satisfied with public services received	Ministry of Home Affairs	TBC 17	2024 2019	0 20%	25 40%	60 60%	100 80%	100% 80%	ODSC assessment and/or survey reports
	1.4. Number of operational ODSCs	Ministry of Home Affairs	63	2024	66	69	72	75	75 ODSCs operational	ODSC assessment and/or survey reports

¹⁷ UNDP publishes its project information (indicators, baselines, targets and results) to meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards. Make sure that indicators are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), provide accurate baselines and targets underpinned by reliable evidence and data, and avoid acronyms so that external audience clearly understand the results of the project.

¹⁸ It is recommended that projects use output indicators from the Strategic Plan IRRF, as relevant, in addition to project-specific results indicators. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex or for other targeted groups where relevant.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS ¹⁸	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	FINAL	
									across Lao PDR	
Output 1.2: <i>Citizen access to efficient and responsive Public Services is enhanced via scaling up the use of Smart ODSCs and piloting new Mobile ODSCs</i>	2.1 Number of Legal Instruments to legalize SMART ODSC Online Application	National Assembly	0	2024	0	0	1	0	1 Legal instrument Adopted	NA directive/press release or passed legislation
	2.2 Number of SMART ODSCs	Ministry of Home Affairs	1	2024	4	7	11	14	14 SMART ODSCs	ODSC assessment and/or survey reports Reporting will be conducted by MEL officer supported by the Field Officer
	2.3. Number of Mobile ODSCs	Ministry of Home Affairs	0	2024	0	0	2	5	5 Mobile ODSCs across 2 Provinces	ODSC assessment and/or survey reports Number of operational Mobile ODSCs
	2.4. Number people accessing essential public services online Proportion of public sector entities using digital data at central and subnational level	Ministry of Home Affairs/Ministry of Technology and Communications	0	2024	0	0	1,000	5,000	5,000 users	Website engagement report/statistics
Outcome 2: National civil society plays a strong role in promoting effective, inclusive, and accountable public services while acting as a key stakeholder in national-level policy discussions.										
Output 2.1:	Number of evidence-based dialogue	UNDP	0	2024	3		3*		6	Products developed

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS ¹⁸	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	FINAL	
<i>NPOs' effective contribution to the government's efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups supported</i>	products developed									
	Number of governmental dialogue platforms established on increasing public service access to vulnerable groups	UNDP	0	2024		3		3*	6	Dialogue activity reports
	Number of joint-actions and/or coordination actions by NPOs to enhance service delivery implemented, especially for vulnerable groups Number and utilization rates of one-stop service centres by women and ethnic groups at: (a) district level, and (b) province level	UNDP	0 44	2024 TBC	 50	 54	 64	 74	 74	 Activity reports

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS ¹⁸	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)					DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	FINAL	
Output 2.2: <i>NPOs effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle supported</i>	Number of DID trainings implemented for governmental partners	UNDP	0	2024	2	1	3*		6	Training reports
	Number of OPD parallel reports developed	UNDP	0	2024			1		1	OPD reports

* Targets with Asterisk are subject to the mobilization of unfunded budget components.

PROJECT DOCUMENT**[LAO PDR]****VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans:

Monitoring Plan:

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.		
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken. The SESP for the project will be monitored by the MEL Specialist and revised if required.		
Learn	Knowledge, good practices, and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	At least annually	Learning sessions are organized annually with key national stakeholders to showcase best practices from successful ODSCs. Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.		\$2,500 per annum
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.		\$83,543 per annum
Review and Make Course Corrections	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	At least annually	Performance data, risks, lessons, and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections.		

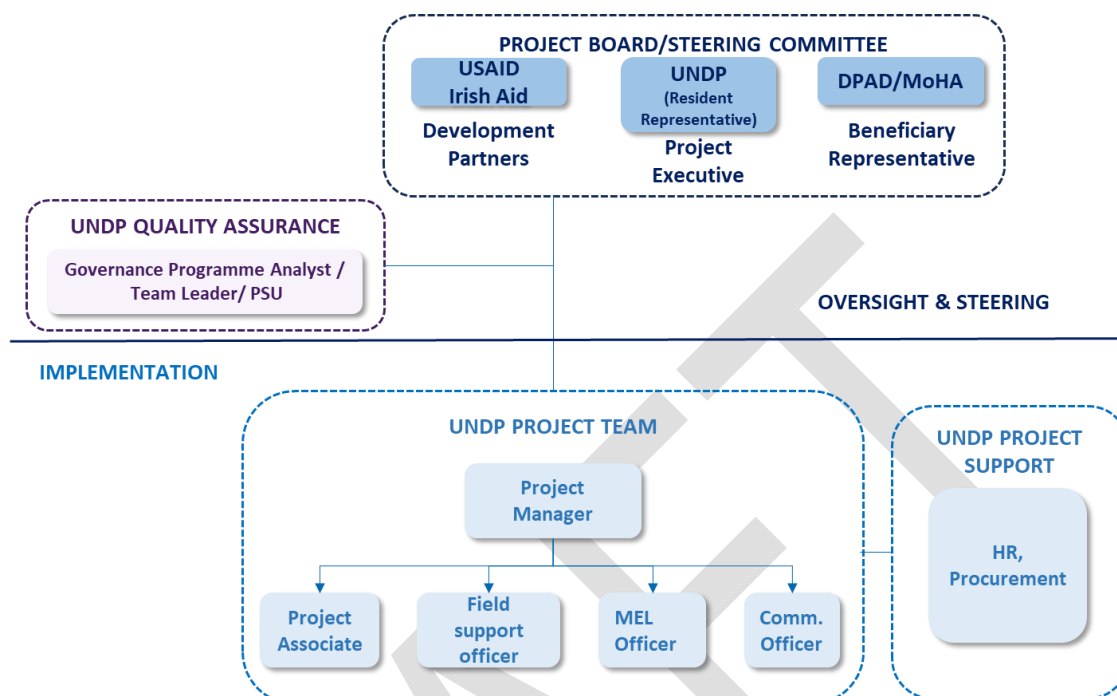
Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Project Report	A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk long with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	Annually, and at the end of the project (final report)	Progress data will be discussed by the project board and used to evaluate successes and areas of improvement		
Project Review (Project Board)	The project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.	Specify frequency (i.e., at least annually)	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.		\$16,830 per annum

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Title	Partners (if joint)	Planned Completion Date	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Mid-Term Evaluation	Ministry of Home Affairs	October 2026	UNDP, GoL	\$35,000

PROJECT DOCUMENT**[LAO PDR]****VII. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN**

PROJECT / COMPONENT	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	USAID FUNDING	IRISH AID FUNDING	UNFUNDED
Outcome 1: ODSC Component	65,000	1,245,000	1,095,000	785,500	325,000	USD 3,515,500	1,757,750	588,501	1,169,249
Output 1.1: Existing ODSCs are effective and efficient and monitoring and evaluation of ODSCs is institutionalized.	55,000	555,000	455,000	400,000	170,000	USD 1,635,000	817,500	275,737	541,763
Output 1.2: Access of citizens to Public Services via Smart ODSCs and Mobile ODSCs is enhanced.	10,000	690,000	640,000	385,500	155,000	USD 1,880,500	940,250	312,764	627,486
Outcome 2: NPO Component	0	147,914	105,700	253,499	39,313	USD 546,426	319,954	163,816	62,656
Output 2.1: NPOs' effective contribution to the government's efforts to improve the quality of services delivered to vulnerable groups supported	0	107,596	46,125	153,721	0	USD 307,442	175,123	96,000	36,319
Output 2.2: NPOs effective participation in national-level policy discussions by contributing to the implementation of the CRPD NAP as well as the next CRPD reporting and planning cycle supported	0	40,318	59,575	99,778	39,313	USD 238,984	144,831	67,816	26,337
Project Staff and Management Cost	54,976	208,082	248,382	203,382	183,037	897,859	440,941	162,840	294,078
UNDP QA and General Operation expenses	36,750	146,998	147,103	99,665	110,249	540,765	231,625	65,775	243,365
TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES	156,725	1,747,994	1,596,185	1,342,046	657,599	5,500,550	2,750,270	980,932	1,769,558
<i>General Management Support (GMS) 8%</i>	<i>12,538</i>	<i>139,848</i>	<i>127,695</i>	<i>107,364</i>	<i>52,608</i>	<i>440,044</i>	<i>220,022</i>	<i>78,475</i>	<i>141,564</i>
<i>UN Coordination Levy 1%</i>	<i>1,693</i>	<i>18,878</i>	<i>17,239</i>	<i>14,494</i>	<i>7,102</i>	<i>59,406</i>	<i>29,702</i>	<i>10,594</i>	<i>19,112</i>
GRAND TOTAL						6,000,000	USD 3,000,000	USD 1,070,000	USD 1,930,000

PROJECT DOCUMENT**[LAO PDR]****VIII. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS***Figure 2: Project Governance Structure***TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PROJECT BOARD****DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Project Board is responsible for providing overall guidance and direction to the project. Specific responsibilities include:

- Ensure that the project is implemented in line with the project documentation, applicable workplans, and budgetary estimates.
- Approve annual workplans
- Approve the terms of references of the Project Board
- Ensuring that the required resources are committed to achieve results
- Review progress reports and provide remarks as needed
- Address project issues as raised by the UNDP project management team
- Warranting a commitment to deliberate cooperation among all involved stakeholders.

COMPOSITION

The Project Board consists of representatives of MOHA, USAID, Irish Aid and UNDP which each hold their own votes and pursue the following responsibilities

UNDP - Project Executive: The primary function within the Board is to act as the chair and provide guidance to the UNDP project team.

MoHA - Beneficiary Representative: The primary function within the Board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries.

USAID and Irish Aid - Development Partner: The primary function within the Board is to ensure that the interests of the funding party are represented, and that relevant strategic guidance can be provided.

PROCEDURES

Decision-Making: Decisions are made by consensus. Only the Project Board members have decision-making rights. In case a consensus among all Project Board members cannot be reached, the Project Executive (UNDP) may take a final decision.

Frequency of meetings: The Project Board meets at least once a year. The meetings are convened and organized by UNDP. The board members are represented by one person per organization. Extraordinary meetings can be called by any co-chair when an urgent decision is required

Secretariat: The UNDP project team provides secretariat support to the Project Board.

Meeting documents: The agenda and necessary background documents for each Project Board meeting will be circulated to all members at least two days prior to the meeting. The agenda will be developed with inputs from the co-chairs. Whenever possible, documents for the meeting will be made available in both English and Lao. The English documents remain the ultimate reference documents and are the ones that are formally validated during the Project Board meetings.

Meeting minutes: Minutes of the Project Board Meeting provide only a summary of the most important points. Draft minutes will be prepared by the project team and circulated to Project Board members at most two weeks after the meeting for 'electronic approval'. This means that if no feedback is received one week after circulation, then the minutes are deemed to be approved.

APPROVAL OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference outlined above are approved during the first Project Board meeting by open vote. No signatures are required for the approval.

IX. LEGAL CONTEXT

Option a. Where the country has signed the [Standard Basic Assistance Agreement \(SBAA\)](#)

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of (country) and UNDP, signed on (date). All references in the SBAA to “Executing Agency” shall be deemed to refer to “Implementing Partner.”

X. RISK MANAGEMENT

UNDP (DIM)

1. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures, and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS.)
2. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the [project funds]¹⁹ [UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document]²⁰ are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism, that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List, and that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used for money laundering activities. The United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List can be accessed via <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.
3. Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (<http://www.undp.org/ses>) and related Accountability Mechanism (<http://www.undp.org/secu-srm>).
4. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.
5. In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP as the Implementing Partner will handle any sexual exploitation and abuse (“SEA”) and sexual harassment (“SH”) allegations in accordance with its regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.
6. All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.
7. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient:
 - a. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA *[or the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document]*, the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP’s property in such responsible party’s, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient shall:

¹⁹ To be used where UNDP is the Implementing Partner

²⁰ To be used where the UN, a UN fund/programme or a specialized agency is the Implementing Partner

- i. put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried.
 - ii. assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party's, subcontractor's and sub-recipient's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.
- b. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible party's, subcontractor's, and sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.
- c. Each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient (each a "sub-party" and together "sub-parties") acknowledges and agrees that UNDP will not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of anyone by the sub-parties, and other entities involved in Project implementation, either as contractors or subcontractors and their personnel, and any individuals performing services for them under the Project Document.
 - (a) In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall comply with the standards of conduct set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003, concerning "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ("SEA").
 - (b) Moreover, and without limitation to the application of other regulations, rules, policies, and procedures bearing upon the performance of the activities under this Project Document, in the implementation of activities, each sub-party, shall not engage in any form of sexual harassment ("SH"). SH is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. SH may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, SH may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.
- d. In the performance of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall (with respect to its own activities) and shall require from its sub-parties (with respect to their activities) that they, have minimum standards and procedures in place, or a plan to develop and/or improve such standards and procedures in order to be able to take effective preventive and investigative action. These should include policies on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; policies on whistleblowing/protection against retaliation; and complaints, disciplinary and investigative mechanisms. In line with this, sub-parties will and will require that their respective sub-parties will take all appropriate measures to:
 - (i) Prevent its employees, agents or any other persons engaged to perform any services under this Project Document, from engaging in SH or SEA;
 - (ii) Offer employees and associated personnel training on prevention and response to SH and SEA, where sub-parties have not put in place its own training regarding the prevention of SH and SEA, sub-parties may use the training material available at UNDP;
 - (iii) Report and monitor allegations of SH and SEA of which any of the sub-parties have been informed or have otherwise become aware, and status thereof;
 - (iv) Refer victims/survivors of SH and SEA to safe and confidential victim assistance; and
 - (v) Promptly and confidentially record and investigate any allegations credible enough to warrant an investigation of SH or SEA. Each sub-party shall advise UNDP of any such allegations received and investigations being conducted by itself or any of its sub-parties with respect to their activities under the Project Document, and shall keep UNDP informed during the investigation by it or any of such sub-parties, to the extent that such notification (i) does not jeopardize the conduct of the investigation, including but not limited to the safety or security of persons, and/or (ii) is not in contravention of any laws applicable to it. Following the investigation, the relevant sub-party shall advise UNDP of any actions taken by it or any of the other entities further to the investigation.
- e. Each sub-party shall establish that it has complied with the foregoing, to the satisfaction of UNDP, when requested by UNDP or any party acting on its behalf to provide such confirmation. Failure of the relevant sub-party to comply of the foregoing, as determined by UNDP, shall be considered grounds for suspension or termination of the Project.

- f. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will ensure that any project activities undertaken by them will be implemented in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and shall ensure that any incidents or issues of non-compliance shall be reported to UNDP in accordance with UNDP Social and Environmental Standards.
- g. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud, corruption, or other financial irregularities, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption, anti-fraud and anti money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.
- h. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices (b) UNDP Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy; and (c) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.
- i. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.
- j. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud, corruption other financial irregularities with due confidentiality. Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.
- k. *Choose one of the three following options:*

Option 1: UNDP will be entitled to a refund from the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud corruption, other financial irregularities or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient under this or any other agreement. Recovery of such amount by UNDP shall not diminish or curtail any responsible party's, subcontractor's or sub-recipient's obligations under this Project Document.

Option 2: Each responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that, where applicable, donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities which are the subject of the Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud corruption or other financial irregularities or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Option 3: UNDP will be entitled to a refund from the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud corruption or other financial irregularities, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient under this or any other agreement.

Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud, corruption or other financial irregularities, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Note: The term “Project Document” as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

- l. Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.
- m. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.
- n. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled “Risk Management” are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled “Risk Management Standard Clauses” are adequately reflected, *mutatis mutandis*, in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

XI. ANNEXES (SEE ATTACHED)

- **PROJECT QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**
- **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING**
- **RISK ANALYSIS**