

2ND LAO NATIONAL URBAN FORUM



The 2nd LAO NATIONAL URBAN FORUM

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Oct 2023

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Proceedings of the
2nd Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF)
under the theme of
**“Resilient Urban Economies:
Cities as Drivers of Growth and Recovery.”**

jointly organized by
**Ministry of Public Works and Transport
(MPWT)**
and
**United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-HABITAT)**

02-08 October 2023

Vientiane, Lao PDR



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ACRONYM LIST

Acronym	Expansion
AASCTF	ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ALACE	Association of Lao Architects and Civil Engineers
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BORDA	Bremen Overseas Research and Development Association
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CDUDCP	Project for Capacity Development on Urban Development Control and Promotion
DCC	Department of Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)
DHHP	Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion
DHUP	Department of Housing and Urban Planning (MPWT)
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EbS	Ecosystem-based Solutions
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEWE	Gender equality and women empowerment
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITECC	Lao International Trade Exhibition and Convention Center
JAM	Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LASES	Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences
LNOB	Leave no one behind
LNUF	Lao National Urban Forum
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPCI	National Payments Corporation of India
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCU	Project Coordination Unit

Acronym	Expansion
PDR	People's Democratic Republic (as in Lao People's Democratic Republic)
PMJDY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SEATCA	Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UPI	Unified Payments Interface
VWYC	Vientiane Women and Youth Center for Health and Development
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHD	World Habitat Day
WHO	World Health Organization



SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

In the preparatory meeting of the Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF), the objectives of the Forum have been presented, priority actions have been identified, and issues as well as probable future pathways have been discussed. The meeting built upon the successes and lessons learned from the First Lao National Urban Forum held a year prior and focused on collaboration between all levels of government, UN agencies, regional

organizations, and private stakeholders to encourage partnerships to address current issues, derive recommendations, and promote mutual learning. The discussion focused on identifying challenges and opportunities as well as considering key strategies and actions for the future.

OVERVIEW

Background of the Lao National Urban Forum

Lao PDR is at a decisive stage in its urban development. It is experiencing the fastest rate of urbanization in Southeast Asia and thus has a window of opportunity to set the course for a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future. The potential impact of sustainable urban development and management is far-reaching. Both were highlighted as crucial to quality of life in 2015 when UN (United Nations) Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030).

In October 2016, the key contribution of sustainable urbanization was further cemented by the historic adoption of the New Urban Agenda at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador.



Building from this, the First Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF) was held in October 2022 and acted as a linchpin for participatory sustainable urbanization in Lao PDR. With its thematic focus on "Resilient and Inclusive Urbanization," the first forum provided a critical multi-stakeholder platform to address the complex challenges of rapid urban growth in Lao PDR while emphasizing the need for broad collaboration in urban decision-making.

The First LNUF broke free from traditional infrastructure-focused perspectives by advocating for a human-centric urbanization model that acknowledges the impacts of health, education, environmental well-being, and other social equity factors. These discussions highlighted the intersectionality of urbanization and culminated in the establishment of an annual forum cycle with a permanent platform for sustained dialogue and collaborative action.

Building upon the foundational success of the First forum, the Second LNUF took place in October 2023 to coincide with World Habitat Day (WHD)¹2023 and its theme of

"Resilient Urban Economies: Cities as Drivers of Growth and Recovery." It was spearheaded by the Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP) and received technical assistance from UN-Habitat.

The forum served as a collaborative platform for a diverse array of urban stakeholders in Lao PDR to identify innovative and practical solutions for urban development through the sharing domestic and international experiences. It featured thematic sessions led by various agencies and covered a broad spectrum of topics from urban development to climate change. Presenters included government officials, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), academia, and private sector representatives, as well as international experts.

Unlike the First LNUF in 2022, the second LNUF was held at the Lao international Trade Exhibition and Convention Center (Lao ITECC). By doing so, all dialogues in 19 of thematic sessions, opening ceremony, and progress sharing session were open to the public. This contributed to raise awareness of citizens on urbanization challenges and opportunities.

¹ WHD is celebrated annually on the first Monday of October to raise awareness of the need for adequate shelter for all.





This comprehensive gathering facilitated in-depth discussions on urban issues and built on the human-centric urbanization model advocated by the First LNUF.

Objectives of the Lao National Urban Forum

The overall objective of the Second Lao PDR National Urban Forum (LNUF) was to provide a national multi-stakeholder platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly urbanizing economy and engage in the planning and management of urban growth. This platform should facilitate dialogue and collaboration among urban stakeholders while identifying innovative and practical solutions for urban development. The LNUF should also raise awareness of the importance of resilient urban economies in driving growth and recovery in Lao PDR to align with this year's theme and World Habitat Day 2023.

Outcomes Achieved

- Provided a national platform for the second year in a row that promoted dialogue between urban sector stakeholders to help with the planning and management of urban growth;
- Built upon the successes and lessons learned from the First Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF), held on October 31, 2022, to continue the forum annually;
- Raised and increased awareness about issues pertaining to sustainable urbanization, the intersectionality of these issues, and the deep uncertainty surrounding them;
- Amplified the intrinsic connection between human and environmental well-being, and the necessity of addressing the Triple Planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, within and beyond our cities, for prosperous urban communities;

- Identified other thematic areas which would benefit from increased advocacy among stakeholders to help address urban challenges via human-centric, inclusive, and collaborative approaches for building more resilient and sustainable cities in Lao PDR;
- Fostered strong cross-sectoral coordination and Government-Development partner dialogue on defining strategic areas of support for appropriate policy adjustment during the implementation process of development and investment programs and for applying new techniques in urban development and management;
- Initiated coordination among local and international bodies and development partners for purposes of research and information sharing to strengthen the institutional framework in urban sectors;
- Promoted integrated participatory planning, development, decision-making, and management of the natural and built environment amongst urban actors in urban areas;

- Successfully served as a stakeholder forum to effectively support and complement other Government work requiring a coherent and integrated approach; and
- Contributed to positioning Lao PDR as part of the broader international knowledge-sharing platform in Urban Planning by facilitating partnerships with other governments to highlight best practices from Lao PDR and from around the world.



OPENING CEREMONY

Opening Remarks

LNUF Proceedings Opening Ceremony		
09:00 – 11:20	Welcome and introduction	Mr. Nalongxai Myvapidith, Deputy Director General, DHUP, MPWT
	Opening Remarks	H.E. Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath, Vice Minister, MPWT
	Video Message	Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat
	Remarks	Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, UN Resident Coordinator ad interim
	Introduction of the Second Lao National Urban Forum	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, DHUP, MPWT



Her Excellency, Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath, Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport officially opened the LNUF by focusing on the significance of inclusivity, strategic planning, and multi-stakeholder

participation in urban planning. He underscored the commitment to equity and social justice through the principle of "leaving no one behind." The Vice Minister commended Lao PDR for being the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to submit a National Report on implementing the New Urban Agenda. He encouraged attendees to engage actively in the forum in its extended 7-day capacity, reflecting the commitment to examining all facets of resilient urbanization.

Mr. Nalongxay Myvapidith, Deputy Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning, Ministry of Public Works and Transport welcomed attendees to the Second Annual Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF).



In her video message, **Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**, praised Lao PDR for its leadership in urban development, citing its status as the first Asia-Pacific country to submit a national report on implementing the New Urban Agenda. She mentioned the country's active participation in international platforms, such as the High-Level Meeting on the New Urban Agenda in New York. She noted the significance of the Second Lao National Urban Forum coinciding with World Habitat Day, both focusing on "Resilient Urban Economies." Ms. Sharif emphasized the urgency of confronting multiple challenges like climate change, biodiversity crises, and economic difficulties, especially as Lao PDR is experiencing rapid urbanization.

She called for inclusive dialogues involving women, youth, and vulnerable populations, in line with the "leave no one behind" principle. She congratulated Lao PDR for extending the forum to a 7-day event, reflecting its commitment to meaningful discussions and comprehensive solutions. She ended by expressing optimism and looking forward to witnessing the results of Lao PDR's continued urban development journey.





In her opening remarks, **Dr. Pia Rebello Britto, UN Resident Coordinator a.i. to Lao PDR**, focused on the crucial aspects of urbanization. She commended the efforts in organizing the week-long forum, a testament to the commitment under the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and UN-Habitat's leadership. Dr. Britto highlighted Lao PDR's unique urbanization profile, where rapid urban growth coexists with rural environments. She identified three critical challenges: planning difficulties, the necessity of inclusivity in urban planning, and the imperative of not leaving anyone behind, especially vulnerable groups. Dr. Britto also emphasized the global challenges, like climate change, facing urban economies and the alignment of urbanization efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She concluded by encouraging planned, inclusive, environmentally friendly, and climate-resilient urbanization.



Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, DHUP, MPWT introduced the Second Annual Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF) with a focus on World Habitat Day and the Forum's joint theme of "Resilient Urban Economies." He discussed the importance of cities as engines of growth and recovery, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Myvpadith highlighted Lao PDR's resilience and adaptation to new realities in urban development, with economic sustainability as a key factor. He acknowledged international support, particularly from UN-Habitat, in achieving Lao PDR's urban development goals. He also addressed the ongoing challenges, such as the need for affordable housing and sustainable growth, while emphasizing the role of digital transformation in modernizing Lao cities.

Keynote Speeches

LNUF Proceedings Opening Ceremony		
09:45 - 11:20	Keynote Remarks	H.E. Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao PDR
		Mr. Noriyuki Ito, Senior Representative, JICA (on behalf of Mr Toshio Nagase, Chief Resident Representative, JICA Laos Office)
		Ms. Carol Anne Mortensen, Country Director, Plan International Laos
		Dr. Phosy Thipdavanh, Vice President of the National University of Laos (on behalf of Dr. Sinthavone Daravong, the Vice President)
		Mr. Amr J. Qari, Principal Portfolio Management Specialist/Officer-in-charge, ADB, Lao PDR Resident Mission
		Ms. Martine Thérér, Resident Representative, UNDP Lao PDR
		Dr. Ying-Ru Jacqueline Lo, Representative to Lao People's Democratic, WHO
		Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR



In the first keynote remark, **His Excellency, Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao PDR,** emphasized the importance of the

Forum's theme and highlighted the rapid urbanization occurring in developing countries. Invoking Mahatma Gandhi, he emphasized the need for equitable opportunities for people moving from rural to urban areas. The Ambassador discussed the evolution of cities from "brick and mortar" to "brick and click," underscoring the role of digital infrastructure in modern urban areas.



He lauded India's achievements in e-governance and invited attendees to his future presentation on the subject. Agrawal commended Laos for its strides in building digital infrastructure and offered India's partnership for further development. He closed his address by wishing the forum success in achieving its goals.



Mr. Noriyuki Ito, Senior Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency Laos Office, detailed JICA's long-standing collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP) in Laos, particularly in Vientiane. He outlined three key phases of their partnership: the first focused on master planning (2008-2011), the second on development control (2013-2017), and the current phase aims to enhance urban management and finalize the national Building Code for safer cities. A significant outcome of the current project is a Geographic Information System (GIS) platform

named "VirGO." Ito emphasized that this digital innovation would strengthen urban management, facilitate knowledge sharing, and stimulate public understanding of urban development. He invited attendees to visit JICA and DHUP's special booth to experience VirGO's capabilities and concluded by expressing hopes that the platform would invigorate discussions on urban development.



In her speech, **Ms. Carol Anne Mortensen, Country Director, Plan International Laos,** underscored the importance of the Lao National Urban Forum as a platform for inclusive and comprehensive discussions on urbanization in Laos. She noted that the forum brings together stakeholders from various sectors, including government, international agencies, NGOs, academia, and the private sector, to address pressing issues.

Ms. Mortensen highlighted key discussion topics for the upcoming week such as disaster response, gender-based violence, labour migration flow towards Thailand, and national climate change vulnerability. On behalf of Plan International Laos, she elaborated on their initiatives since 2007 to improve the lives of children, young people, and vulnerable populations. This includes programs aimed at enhancing access to education, health, nutrition, and economic empowerment, as well as efforts to combat violence and exploitation in both rural and urban areas.



The Vice President of the National University of Laos, Dr. Phosy Thipdavanh, on behalf of Dr. Sinthavone Daravong, the Vice President, addressed the rapid transformations that cities are undergoing due to climate change, technology, and globalization. He pointed out the vulnerability of cities to climate impacts and the role of

nature-based solutions in building resilience. He emphasized the role of cities as hubs of technological innovation and their importance in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Dr. Thipdavanh also spoke about the increasing importance of quality urban life and how cities must adapt to serve diverse populations. He highlighted the role of universities in fostering innovation and technological development, stating that they can be critical platforms for nurturing talent and incubating start-ups. In conclusion, he called for collective action to build cities that are resilient, sustainable, and inclusive.



Mr. Amr J. Qari, Principal Portfolio Management Specialist/Officer-in-charge, Asian Development Bank, Lao PDR Resident Mission, began by congratulating the Ministry of Public Works and Transport for organizing the forum and thanked development partners, particularly UN-Habitat.



Mr. Qari detailed the ADB's long-standing support for urban development in Laos, noting a cumulative commitment of approximately \$430 million for improving urban services like water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, and urban transport.

Mr. Qari highlighted ADB's evolving approach to urban development, from initially focusing on Vientiane Capital in the 1990s to later expanding their efforts to secondary cities and adopting a more integrated, holistic strategy. He said that future ADB projects would support inclusive growth, climate and disaster resilience, financial sustainability, and involve more cross-cutting themes, including gender and private sector development. Mr. Qari concluded by reaffirming ADB's commitment to creating a resilient and inclusive urban sector in Lao PDR.



Ms. Martine Thérér, UNDP. Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme Lao PDR,

first congratulated the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and UN-Habitat for their roles in organizing the forum and advancing urban development. Ms. Thérér then discussed the opportunities and challenges presented by rapid urbanization, especially in Lao PDR with its urbanization rate of 4.9%. She stated that poorly managed urban growth can exacerbate inequalities and vulnerability among marginalized communities. She also emphasized that poverty is becoming more concentrated in urban areas, a trend that UNDP is focusing on. Urban centres also face multiple sustainable development challenges, such as access to energy, climate impacts, and social exclusion.



Ms. Thérér elaborated on UNDP's integrated approach to urban challenges, mentioning projects in Lao PDR that focus on waste management, circular economy, air pollution, digital readiness, water resource management, and youth employment. She expressed eagerness for the forum as a platform for sharing experiences and forging new partnerships for sustainable urban development. Ms. Thérér concluded by urging collective efforts to make cities better and more prosperous for everyone with a quote from American author and urbanist Jane Jacobs who, in 1961, wrote "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody".



Dr Ying-Ru Jacqueline Lo, WHO Representative to Lao People's Democratic Republic, World Health Organization, focused on the intersection of urbanization and public health, specifically concerning smoke-free environments.

She praised the Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport, Mrs. Vilaykham Phosalath, for organizing the forum and acknowledged its importance as a platform for discussing the benefits and challenges of urbanization.

Dr. Lo highlighted that proper urban planning could maximize the benefits of urban living, such as access to better housing and healthcare, while also mitigating health risks. She emphasized the significant issue of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Lao PDR, which were responsible for 65% of total deaths in 2019. Among these, tobacco use is a leading contributor, causing more than 6,700 deaths annually and costing the national economy 3.6 trillion LAK. She stressed the importance of smoke-free environments for public health and promoted the National Tobacco Control Law as a step in the right direction. Dr. Lo called for collaborative efforts from various sectors to implement and enforce tobacco control measures effectively. She concluded by expressing WHO's eagerness to work with multiple ministries and development partners to promote smoke-free environments.





Dr. Avi Sarkar

In the final keynote remark, **Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR** expressed his honour in participating and commended the theme "Resilient Urban Economies:

Cities as Drivers of Growth and Recovery," saying it aligns well with the urbanization challenges and opportunities facing Lao PDR.

Dr. Sarkar emphasized the importance of strategic planning and collective action in transforming the challenges of sustainable urbanization into opportunities for growth and recovery. He stressed that effective urban planning must be inclusive, involving all

stakeholders from governmental bodies to local communities and highlighted how the notion of "leaving no one behind" should guide urban development, ensuring that all citizens benefit irrespective of their circumstances.

Dr. Sarkar praised the extension of the forum to seven days as a sign of the government's serious commitment to exploring every aspect of resilient urbanization. He also lauded Lao PDR for being the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to submit a National Report on implementing the New Urban Agenda, saying that it is a testament to its leadership and the Vice Minister's role in this area.

Dr. Sarkar thanked all participants and organizing teams and expressed hope that the forum would catalyze transformative changes for the betterment of Lao PDR's urban future.





2ND LAO NATIONAL URBAN FORUM



Key Takeaways from the Opening Remarks

1. Commitment to Inclusivity and Social Equity

The Vice Minister, Dr. Avi Sarkar, Mr. Noriyuki Ito, Ms. Martine Th  rer, and Ms. Carol Anne Mortensen discussed the importance of policies that ensure social inclusivity. They particularly emphasized that urbanization should benefit everyone, including vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled. The theme of "leaving no one behind" was recurrent and echoes **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10: Reduced Inequalities**.

2. Strategic Urban Planning and Resilience

The Vice Minister, Dr. Avi Sarkar, Mr. Prashant Agrawal, and Mr. Noriyuki Ito spoke on the importance of resilient infrastructure and strategic urban planning. They urged the adaptation of urban spaces to cope with challenges like climate change and natural disasters, mirroring **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**.

3. Digital Transformation and Innovation

Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Mr. Noriyuki Ito, and Dr. Avi Sarkar emphasized that digital transformation should complement traditional governance systems, rather than replace them. They argued that digital technology can be harnessed for better governance and improved citizen services, contributing to **SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**.

4. Cities as Economic and Innovative Hubs

Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Mr. Sinthavone Daravong, Dr. Avi Sarkar, and Ms. Martine Th  rer emphasized the role of cities as engines of economic growth and innovation. They mentioned specific sectors like tech start-ups and creative industries as vital components for fostering economic activity in cities, supporting **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**.



Sustainable Development Goals at the LNUF

5. Climate Resilience and Sustainability

Mr. Sinthavone Daravong, Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, and Ms. Martine Thérér called for a multi-faceted approach to climate resilience, advocating for adaptive urban planning that includes green spaces and sustainable transportation systems. Their remarks relate to **SDG 13: Climate Action**.

6. Public Health Concerns in Urban Environments

Dr. Ying-Ru Jacqueline Lo, the Vice Minister, and Mr. Sinthavone Daravong addressed the complexities of public health in urban settings. They highlighted the need for accessible healthcare services, awareness programs, and sanitation facilities to ensure the well-being of urban dwellers, echoing **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being**.

7. Importance of Multilateral Partnerships

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Mr. Amr J. Qari, Ms. Martine Thérér, Dr. Avi Sarkar, and Mr. Prashant Agrawal stressed the value of collaboration among nations, international organizations, and the private sector. They urged for stronger partnerships to address shared challenges, in line with **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**.

8. Focus on Urban Infrastructure and Services

Mr. Amr J. Qari, the Vice Minister, Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, and Mr. Noriyuki Ito outlined the critical need for robust infrastructure and basic services. They particularly noted the importance of providing clean water, sanitation, and waste management systems to all urban residents, aligning with **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation**.





The global context is one of complexity and uncertainty.. Our cities must adapt, thrive, and contribute to the well-being of our nation.

Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath,
Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport, Government of Lao PDR



This forum is a testament to our commitment to shaping the urban future of the Lao PDR.. I commend the Government for its leadership in advancing the urban discourse.

Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)



THEMATIC SESSIONS

LNUF Proceedings Thematic Sessions			
Day	Session	Title	Lead Entities
1	1	Opening Ceremony	MPWT& UN-Habitat
	2	Smart Cities and Digitalization	MPWT, ESCAP, UNDP & UN-Habitat
2	1	Urban Development & SDG 11 Monitoring	MPWT& UN-Habitat
	2	Building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth: Indian experience sharing with Lao PDR	The Embassy of India in Lao PDR
	3	Health and Tobacco Control	MoH & WHO
	4	Housing, Basic Services and Transport	MPWT, UN-Habitat
3	1	Youth and UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities initiative	UNICEF
	2	Infrastructure Asset Management's role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communities	UNOPS
	3	Luang Prabang Smart Integrated Urban Strategy	ADB
	4	Lessons from Sanitary Landfill Operation and Maintenance under ADB-financed Projects	ADB
4	1	Smart Solutions for Smart Cities	MPWT
	2	Urbanisation and Climate Change Adaptation	MoNRE & UNEP
	3	Food Security	WFP & FAO
	4	Leave No-One Behind	OHCHR
5	1	Innovation, Science, and Technology: Driving Urban Development Forward	NUOL
	2	Progress of the Second Lao National Urban Forum	MPWT & UN-Habitat
	3	Safer Cities	UNFPA & UN-Habitat
	4	Collaborating for Liveable Cities: The Crucial Roles of Architects and Civil Engineers in Urban Development	ALACE
6	1	Shaping Inclusive Vientiane	Global Shapers Vientiane Hub





OPENING CEREMONY

DAY 1

Organized by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), ESCAP, UN-Habitat, and UNDP, the session focused on digital innovation and smart cities in addressing challenges associated with rapid urbanization. It underscored the growth of the digital sector in the Asia-Pacific region and the necessity of substantial infrastructure investments, data governance, and technical capacity building. The session highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure as the backbone of smart cities, and a lack of synergy between government digital master plans and smart city initiatives. Recommendations included leveraging digitalization for sustainable development, enhancing decision-making in urban planning, and adopting a people-centered approach.

SMART CITIES AND DIGITALIZATION

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Leverage digitalization for sustainable urban development.
- Enhance decision-making in urban planning.
- Adopt a people-centered approach in smart city initiatives.

Led by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao Women's Union, and the Department of Pollution Control, this session delved into urban development and SDG 11 monitoring. The MPWT highlighted urban areas' significance in economic growth and development, while addressing challenges such as population growth, traffic congestion, and pollution. The Lao Women's Union emphasized gender mainstreaming and the role of women in urban development. The Department of Pollution Control focused on environmental aspects and waste management.



URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND SDG 11 MONITORING

DAY 2

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address challenges such as population growth, traffic congestion, and pollution.
- Implement SDG 11 with a focus on financial and human resource support.
- Emphasize gender mainstreaming and the role of women in urban development.
- Focus on environmental aspects and waste management.



Building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth: Indian experience sharing with Lao PDR

by

H. E. Prashant Agrawal
Ambassador of India to Lao PDR

DAY 2

Hosted by the Embassy of India and H.E. Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao P.D.R., the session shared India's experiences in building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth. The "JAM Trinity" framework—Jan Dhan (financial inclusion), Aadhaar (biometric ID system), and Mobile Phones/Data—was presented. India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) were highlighted. Recommendations for Lao PDR included adopting a financial inclusion framework and modernizing its digital payments system.

BUILDING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND E-GOVERNANCE AS DRIVERS OF INCLUSIVE GROWTH: INDIAN EXPERIENCE SHARING WITH LAO PDR

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt a financial inclusion framework integrating financial services, identity verification, and mobile connectivity.
- Modernize Lao PDR's digital payments system, potentially emulating India's UPI.

Led by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, the session focused on health and tobacco control. It identified challenges such as limited information sharing on the impacts of tobacco use and low awareness of tobacco control's importance. Recommendations included enhancing multi-sectoral coordination for smoke-free environments, strengthening the enforcement of smoke-free regulations, and promoting the expansion of smoke-free places.



HEALTH AND TOBACCO CONTROL

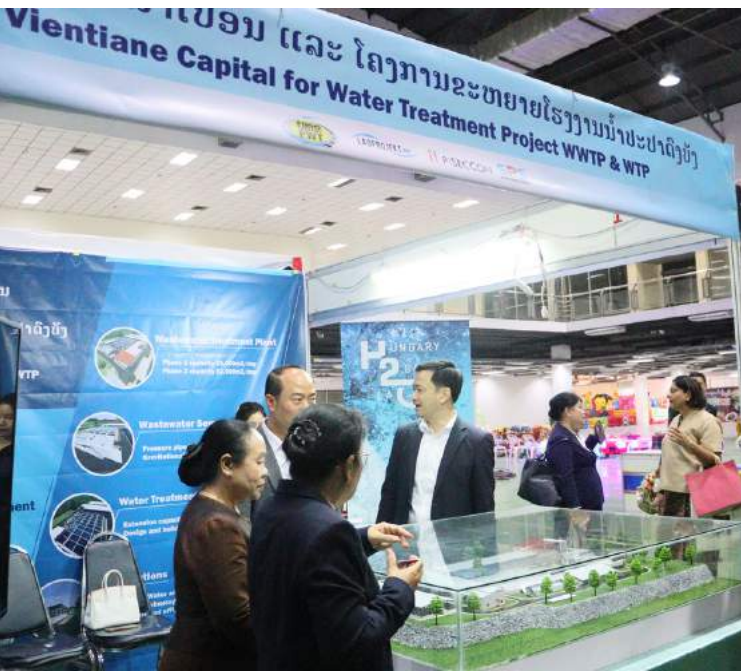
DAY 2



KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration to promote smoke-free environments.
- Strengthen the enforcement of smoke-free regulations.
- Promote the expansion of smoke-free places at both national and subnational levels.





This session, part of the Lao National Urban Forum, addressed housing, basic services, and transport. It emphasized sustainable urban development, focusing on Pakse City's Green City Action Plan (2022-2030). Key aspects included solid waste management, wastewater treatment, climate resilience, sustainable mobility, green spaces, and sustainable energy. The plan aims to enhance Pakse City's livability and sustainability, with specific targets set for each area.

HOUSING, BASIC SERVICES, AND TRANSPORT

DAY 2

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement solid waste management strategies, including increased recycling and waste reduction.
- Promote decentralized wastewater treatment and improve sanitation services.
- Enhance climate and disaster resilience through infrastructure improvement and community education.
- Develop sustainable public transportation and promote active mobility.
- Increase green spaces and implement energy efficiency measures in the city.





YOUTH AND UNICEF'S CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE

DAY 3

Organized by UNICEF, the session focused on the challenges and opportunities presented by rapid urbanization in relation to youth. Key issues discussed included the potential marginalization of vulnerable groups like children in the face of increased urbanization, limited access to basic services such as quality education, healthcare, and sanitation, and the lack of child participation in city planning and governance. The session also highlighted the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on children in urban settings.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement inclusive city planning with child-specific provisions guided by UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities framework.
- Strengthen public services, improve access to education, healthcare, and sanitation.
- Encourage community engagement through the formation of child councils.
- Foster partnerships to implement child-friendly policies and integrate sustainability and resilience into city planning.





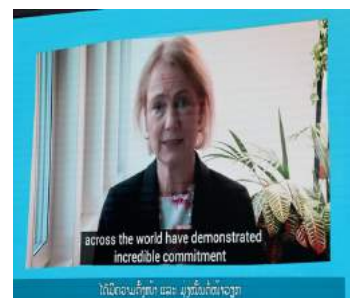
INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT'S ROLE IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Let by the UNOPS in cooperation with UN DESA, this session illuminated the role of Infrastructure Asset Management (IAM) in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communities. IAM refers to the coordinated series of activities that monitor and maintain these things of value. IAM is crucial in balancing risk, cost, opportunities, and performance throughout an asset's lifespan. The session highlighted successful IAM applications Keyna and Nepal, showcasing its impact on urban development and sustainability. It also emphasized the importance of sustainable funding and the potential of assets with significant revenue or funding opportunities.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Apply the IAM approach to balance risk, cost, opportunities and performance to realise the value of an asset over its entire lifespan.
- Successful implementation of the IAM requires adequate registration of asset information based on the awareness of the public asset, the establishment of policies and processes, and sustainable funding.
- Utilise the assets which have great revenue or funding potential.
- Implement sustainable funding mechanisms and policies for infrastructure management.
- Raise public awareness and establish clear policy frameworks for effective IAM integration.

DAY 3



Conducted by the Ministry of Science and Technology, this session delved into smart city development and the application of science, technology, and innovation. It highlighted the necessity for a comprehensive national policy framework to guide smart city initiatives and the importance of stakeholder collaboration. The role of data and technology in enhancing urban services and the need for capacity building and knowledge transfer were also discussed.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive national policy framework for smart city initiatives.
- Enhance stakeholder collaboration in the smart city ecosystem.
- Utilize data and technology to improve urban services and infrastructure.

LUANG PRABANG SMART INTEGRATED URBAN STRATEGY

DAY 3





Led by the Asian Development Bank and the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT, the session addressed challenges in landfill operations and maintenance. It underscored issues such as limited local authority involvement and the need for clear roles and responsibilities post-project. The session recommended the development of construction and operations guidelines, enhanced internal operations, and effective project duration planning.

LESSONS FROM SANITARY LANDFILL OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE UNDER ADB-FINANCED PROJECTS

DAY 3

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop construction and operations guidelines, complemented by training programs.
- Enhance internal operations, staffing, and planning for landfills.
- Plan reasonable project durations to monitor actual operations progress effectively.



Hosted by the Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT, the session highlighted smart solutions for sustainable city management. It showcased projects on wastewater and solid waste management, decentralised wastewater treatment systems (DEWARS), and GIS platform. The session emphasized accelerating green city development through recycling, reuse, and proper treatment of wastewater and solid waste. Citizen engagement through online applications was encouraged to promote activities and enrich the database.



SMART SOLUTIONS FOR SMART CITIES

DAY 4

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accelerate the Green city development through the recycle/reuse and adequate treatment of the wastewater and solid waste.
- Engage the citizen through the online applications to promote the activities as well as to collect the data to enrich the database.
- Utilize DEWARS for efficient local wastewater management.
- Implement GIS platforms for better data management and planning.



Organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the session focused on urbanization and climate change adaptation. It emphasized ecosystem-based adaptation, the importance of wetlands and stream conservation, and the role of youth in climate action. Recommendations included integrating nature conservation into urban planning and empowering youth for sustainable cities.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate nature conservation into urban planning, including streams, wetlands, and buffer zones.
- Implement urban ecosystem-based solutions and conserve upstream ecosystems and suburban wetlands.
- Empower youth as a powerful force for sustainable and climate-resilient cities.

URBANISATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

DAY 4





Led by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the session highlighted challenges of food security and nutrition in urban settings. It focused on the high rate of solid waste generation and food waste, emphasizing the need for better understanding of food labels, curbing over-purchasing, and choosing local foods.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Address the issue of food waste, which comprises 61 percent from households globally.
- Enhance access to affordable food for the urban poor by increasing their capacity to adapt to climate change impacts.
- Understand the interconnections between rural and urban food security and how living conditions play a role.

FOOD SECURITY

DAY 4

LEAVE NO-ONE BEHIND

Hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the session explored the intersection between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and human rights. It emphasized principles of a human rights-based approach to sustainable development and the importance of meaningful participation in the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Analyze the intersection and compounding of various forms of structural inequality.
- Collect data on gender-specific indicators and other groups left behind, promoting the development of gender-disaggregated statistics.
- Ensure systematic engagement with civil society, women's groups, national women's machineries, and representatives of diverse groups during the CCA and throughout the Cooperation Framework process.





The Strategic Development of Universities and STI in Lao PDR: Challenges and Opportunities

Presented by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sithixay XAYAVONG
Director of Research and Academic Service Office
NUOL

6-Oct-23

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sithixay XAYAVONG

DAY 5

INNOVATION, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY: DRIVING URBAN DEVELOPMENT FORWARD

Led by the National University of Laos, this session emphasized the critical role of the innovation, science, and technology sectors in urban development. The session explored AI's impact on education and urban services, the importance of strategic spatial development strategies in Lao PDR, and the need for a robust science and technology strategy to guide national development. It stressed the integration of these elements to foster sustainable and inclusive urban growth.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate AI in education and urban services.
- Develop strategic spatial plans that incorporate scientific and technological advancements.
- Building a comprehensive science and technology strategy to guide urban and national development.
- Cultivating a culture of innovation and research within urban development strategies.

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Led by Plan International, UNFPA, IOM (International Organization for Migration), and UN-Habitat, the "Safer Cities" session on October 6th, 2023, addressed urban safety, inclusion, inequality, technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV), and labour migration dynamics.

- Prioritize gender equality and inclusion in programming and ensure community engagement in decision-making.
- Address TFGBV, focusing on social media abuse and image-based abuse.
- Recognize drivers of migration, improve job opportunities in Laos, and make cities safer for migrants.
- Adapt urban environments to climate change risks and strive for inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities through enhancing the data-driven decision-making.

DAY 5

PROGRESS OF THE SECOND LAO NATIONAL URBAN FORUM

SAFER CITIES



The "Collaborating for Liveable Cities" session, led by ALACE, focused on the crucial roles of architects and civil engineers in urban development. The session highlighted the importance of collaboration between these professionals for creating sustainable and liveable urban environments. It discussed the importance of professional registration, ethical practices, and the need for a framework that leads to practical actions.

The content suggests a plan involving six program frameworks aimed at setting priorities for employment and outlining guidelines for urban development projects. Other key discussions included innovative urban planning and housing strategies, the necessity for integrating architectural and engineering expertise in urban projects, and the role of these professionals in shaping the future of cities.

COLLABORATING FOR LIVEABLE CITIES: THE CRUCIAL ROLES OF ARCHITECTS AND CIVIL ENGINEERS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

DAY 5

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a comprehensive framework for professional activities and responsibilities.
- Emphasize the ethical practice and continuous development within the architectural and engineering professions.
- Create a prioritized action plan with a clear, practical timeline, focusing on sustainable and ethical urban development.
- Ensure registration and accreditation processes are robust to uphold professional standards.
- Foster collaboration between architects and civil engineers for holistic urban development.





DAY 6

SHAPING INCLUSIVE VIENTIANE

KEY OUTPUTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate for human rights and disrupt harmful stereotypes on disability, gender, and other social factors.
- Empower and inspire youth to ensure representation in decision-making and solution-building at all levels of society for building inclusive and safer cities.
- Encourage public and private entities to consider inclusivity in their policies and practices to ensure that urban development benefits every citizen.
- Call for dialogue and action to transform Vientiane into a city that truly embodies the ideal of leaving no one behind and is consistent with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Organised by Global Shapers Vientiane Hub, the session critically examined the inclusivity of Vientiane Capital. The session's unique approach involved participants using crutches and wheelchairs to navigate roads and stairs, simulating the experiences of people with disabilities. This hands-on experience aimed to raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in urban environments and to raise the question of the status quo of Vientiane Capital as an inclusive city.





PROGRESS OF THE LNUF

LNUF Proceedings Progress of the LNUF		
10:30 - 10:45	MC	Mr. Nalongxai MIVAPADITH, Deputy Director General, DHUP, MPWT
10:45 - 11:05	Briefings and Outcome Statement of the Second LNUF	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, DHUP, MPWT
11:05 - 11:15	Remarks	Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR
11:15 - 11:25	Closing Remarks	H.E. Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath, Vice Minister, MPWT



Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), emphasized the forum's dedication to fostering sustainable urban development, creating cities in Lao PDR that are economically vibrant, socially fulfilling, and environmentally sound. He stressed the importance of inclusive urban governance, integrating human-centric aspects such as health, education, and livelihood into urban planning. Additionally, he recognized the importance of cross-sectoral coordination and inclusive decision-making involving all levels of government and stakeholders.



The Progress Session on Day 5 of the Second Lao National Urban Forum acted as a Closing Ceremony and gave participants time to reflect on the key takeaways from the LNUF thus far. **Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Dr. Avi Sarkar, and H.E. Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath, the Vice Minister of MPWT** provided comprehensive presentations that highlighted the strides in urban development and strategic approaches for the future of Lao PDR.



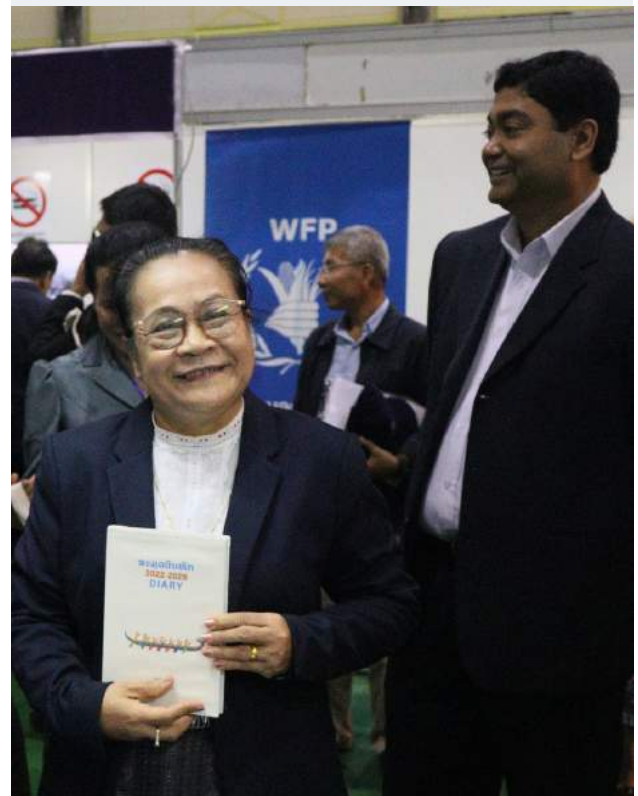
Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR, followed, commending the dynamic discussions and the dedication of various stakeholders to urban resilience. He highlighted the necessity of addressing the complex interplay between urbanization, environmental sustainability, and societal well-being, and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and other partners for their collaborative efforts in making the forum a success.





H.E. Ms. Vilaykham Phosalath, Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport concluded the forum by reflecting on the collaborative spirit and the significant progress made in understanding and promoting resilient urban economies. She acknowledged the contributions from participants and the invaluable support from international organizations, particularly the United Nations and UN-Habitat, and underscored the event's role in fostering a shared commitment to urban resilience and inclusive growth.

All three speakers highlighted a strategic vision for advancing urban development and resilience in Lao PDR. They reaffirmed the commitment to continue the LNUF as an annual event and discussed establishing a permanent platform to foster ongoing dialogue. The speakers emphasized the importance of engaging with global urban networks for knowledge exchanges and the importance of fostering partnerships that align with the New Urban Agenda and the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The speakers also reiterated the need for a people-centric approach to urban development. The message was clear: Building strong, inclusive cities in Lao PDR is a collective effort that requires the involvement of everyone from government agencies to local communities. The Progress Session concluded with a call to action for all participants to take the insights gained and work together to create a better urban future.





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Annex - Lao National Urban Forum Proceedings

ANNEX

A.

7-day Programme

B.

Daily Thematic Session
Programmes

C.

Lao National Urban Forum
Outcome Statement

D.

Issue Paper - Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United Nations
(FAO)

E.

Issue Paper - United Nations
Development Programme (UNDP)

F.

Issue Paper - World Health
Organization (WHO)

G.

Marketing Materials

H.

Acknowledgements



Annex A. 7-day Programme

Time	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Date	Monday 02 Oct	Tue 03	Wed 04	Thu 05	Fri 06	Sat 07	Sunday 08 Oct
9.00 - 10.30	Opening MPWT	Urban Development + SDG 11 Monitoring UN-Habitat & MPWT	Youth UNICEF	Smart Solution MPWT & JICA	Innovation, Science, and Technology: Driving Urban Development Forward National University of Laos	Shaping Inclusive Vientiane Global Shapers	(Event organized by ITECC)
10.45 - 12:15		Building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth: Indian experience sharing with Lao PDR The Embassy of India	Infrastructur e Asset Managemen t's role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communitie s UNOPS	Urbanisation and Climate Change Adaptation UNEP & MoNRE	Progress of the LNUF MPWT		
1.30 - 3.00	Smart cities and Digitalizati on ESCAP, UNDP, UN- Habitat & MPWT	Health - Tobacco WHO & MoH	Smart Cities ADB	Food Security WFP&FAO	Safer Cities UNFPA & UN- Habitat	(Event organize d by ITECC)	(Event organized by ITECC)
3.15 - 4.45		Basic Services + Housing + Transport UN-Habitat & MPWT	Landfill Operation and Maintenanc e ADB & MPWT	Leave No One Behind OHCHR	Panel discussion: Collaborating for Livable Cities: The Crucial Roles of Architects and Civil Engineers in Urban Development (ALACE)		

Annex B. Daily Thematic Session Programmes

The Second Lao National Urban Forum

Date : Monday 02 October (Day 1)

Session : Smart Cities and Digitalization

Host : MPWT, ESCAP, UNDP, and UN-Habitat

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
1:00	- 1:30	Registration	
1:30	- 1:45	Welcome & Opening	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
1:45	- 2:00	Global Context for Smart Cities	Mr. Ricardo Maroso, UN-Habitat
2:00	- 2:15	Regional Perspective on Smart Cities	Ms. Sanjeevani Singh, ESCAP
2:15	- 2:35	Development of a National Smart City Strategy for Lao PDR	Mr. Dao KEOSOUKAN, Chief of Urban Planning Division (DHUP)
2:35	- 2:50	Sub national financing for Smart Green Asean Cities (SGAC)	- Ms. Chencho Gyalmo Dorjee, Program Manager , Smart Green ASEAN Cities (SGAC) - UNCDF -Mr. Fakri Karim, Senior Advisor, SGAC - UNCDF
2:50	- 3:30	Panel Presentations on National Perspectives and Case Studies	ASCN Member Staff : - Mr. Souksavanh HANEPHOM - Mr. Yengher VACHA
3:30	- 3:45	Tea Break	
3:45	- 4:45	Visioning Exercise	UNDP
4:45	- 5:00	Closing Remarks	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, DHUP, MPWT



Date : Tuesday 03 October (Day 2)
Session : Urban Development & SDG 11 Monitoring
Host : MPWT and UN-Habitat

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
09:00	- 09:05	Introduction	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
09:06	- 09:11	Urban Management	Mr. Chenniphone XAYALATH Deputy Director General, Urban Development Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
09:12	- 09:20	Women and Urbanisation	Lao Women's Union, .Dr. Ninpaserth Xayaphone DG of Women Development
09:21	- 09:29	Perspective of a young person	Ms. Bounthida Ounavong
09:30	- 09:38	Pollution and Urbanization in Laos	Pollution Control Department, MoNRE, Mr. Phounsamai Silaphet, Deputy Head of division.
09:56	- 10:01	Emerging towns	PWT - Savannakhet; Mrs Khamphi Boulom; Deputy Director PWT Savannakhet
10:01	10:08	Emerging towns	PWT Xaybouly; Mr. Khamphet Phommalath
10:08	- 10:15	Discussion from speakers and/or audience	Facilitated by MC
10:16	- 10:31	Focus on SDG 11 Monitoring including DEGURBA and VLRs	Mr. Ricardo Maroso, UN-Habitat
10:32	- 10:42	Regional Perspective of SDG 11 Monitoring	Ms. Sanjeevani Singh, ESCAP
10:43	- 10:45	Concluding remarks	Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR

Date : Tuesday 03 October (Day 2)
Session : Building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth: Indian experience sharing with Lao PDR
Host : The Embassy of India

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
11:00	- 11:30	Building digital infrastructure and e-governance as drivers of inclusive growth: Indian experience sharing with Lao PDR	H.E. Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao P.D.R.
11:30	- 11:55	Interactive session	---
11:55	- 12:00	Concluding Remark	H.E. Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao P.D.R.

Date : Tuesday 03 October (Day 2)
Session : Promoting smoke-free cities
Host : WHO

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
13:00	13:30	Register	DHHP/WHO
13:30	13:40	* Welcome guests and introduce objectives of the meeting * Opening remark	Dr. Khatthanaphone PHANDOUANGSY, DDG of DHHP, MOH Dr. Phonepaseuth OUNAPHOME, Director General of DHHP, MOH
13:40	13:43	Play a video on youth opinion survey tobacco use	Ms. Dala SOUTTHICHAK, Tobacco Control Consultant, WHO
Presentation session			
13:43	13:53	Presentation I. Investment case for tobacco control	Mr. Paramy BOUPHA, Economist, UNDP in Lao PDR
13:53	14:03	Presentation II. Smoke-free environment/guidelines	Mr Douangkeo THOCHONGLIACHI, National Professional Officer for Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO Lao PDR
14:03	14:13	Presentation III. Implementation of the National Tobacco Control Law focus on Smoke-free Environments - lessons learnt and opportunities	Dr. Khatthanaphone PHANDOUANGSY, Deputy Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, MOH
14:13	14:17	Q&A session including Menti	Dr Maniphanh VONGPHOSY, SEATCA Project Manager in Lao PDR
Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
Panel session (Facilitator: Mr Douangkeo THOCHONGLIACHI, National Professional Officer for Tobacco Free Initiative, WHO Lao PDR)			
14:17	14:47	Discussion points: * How to improve enforcement of the Tobacco Control Law and multisectoral coordination? * What sectors should take the lead in enforcing existing regulations on smoke free environment? * What challenges need to be addressed, and by whom?	Panelist (up to 3 min each): - Dr. Khatthanaphone PHANDOUANGSY, DDG of DHHP/MOH - Mr. Sonephet KEOVONGSA, Deputy Director of Public Relations Division, National Tourism Office, Ministry of Culture Information and Tourism - Dr. Lo Ying-Ru Jacqueline, WHO Representative in Lao PDR - Mr. Paramy BOUPHA, Economist, UNDP in Lao PDR Ambassador Annette Knobloch, German Embassy in Lao PDR
14:47	15:00	Summary, comments and closing remarks	Chairperson



Date : Tuesday 03 October (Day 2)
Session : Housing, Basic Services and Transport
Host : MPWT and UN-Habitat

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
15:15	- 15:20	Introduction	Ms. Visaphone INTILATH, Deputy Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
15:21	- 15:26	Country's water supply strategy and challenges	Department of Water Supply - Mr. Xayana Xaphukdee
15:27	- 15:32	Emerging towns	PWT - Attapue; Mr. Viengthong Thammanouvong
15:33	- 15:38	Emerging towns	PWT Xaybouly; Mr. Khamphet Phommalath
15:39	- 15:43	Waste management/Waste water Management and Challenges in Vientiane	Vientiane City Office for Management and Services (VCOMS)
15:44	- 15:48	Railways strategy in Lao PDR	Department of Railway, MPWT; Mr Sonthanou Thongxaiyo
15:49	- 15:53	Remark	UN-Habitat; Mr. Buahom Sengkhamyong
15:53	- 16:03	Q & A	Facilitated by Ms. Visaphone INTILATH, Deputy Director General, DHUP, MPWT
16:04	- 16:30	Summary and Closing	Ms. Visaphone INTILATH, Deputy Director General, DHUP, MPWT

Date : Wednesday 04 October (Day 3)
Session : Youth
Host : UNICEF

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
09:00	- 09:12	Garment factories	Vientiane Youth Center
09:13	- 10:30	Good practices from child friendly cities across the world	UNICEF
10:29	- 10:30	Close	---

Date : Wednesday 04 October (Day 3)
Session : Infrastructure Asset Management's role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communities
Host : UNOPS

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
10:45	- 12:15	Infrastructure Asset Management's role in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient communities (Virtual panel discussion)	UNDESA and UNOPS, facilitated by Mr. Daniel Platz, UNDESA

Date : Wednesday, 4 October (Day 3)
Session : Smart Cities
Host : ADB

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
13:30	- 13:40	Introduction - brief ADB support in develop the strategy through ASEAN-Australia Smart City Trust Fund	Soudalay Souannavong, ADB
14:00	- 14:30	Present Luang Prabang Smart City Integrated Urban Strategy	Wang Wei, Consultant
14:30	- 15:00	Q&A session	Wang Wei, Consultant

Date : Wednesday, 04 October (Day 3)
Session : Landfill Operation and Maintenance
Host : MPWT and ADB

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
15:00	- 15:10	ADB supports to urban sector (Solid Waste Improvement)	Soudalay Souannavong, Adian Development Bank (ADB) & Virachith Douangchanh, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
15:10	- 15:40	Present lesson leant on Landfill Operation and Maintenance	Virachith Douangchanh, DHUP
15:40	- 16:00	Q&A session	Soudalay Souannavong & Virachith Douangchanh

Date : Thursday 05 October (Day 4)
Session : Smart Solution
Host : MPWT

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
09:00	- 09:05	Introduction	Mr. Dao KEOSUKAN, Head of Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
09:05	- 09:20	Decentralized Waste Collection Service - DEWACS	Mr. George Asiimwe Head of waste unit, GGGI Lao PDR
09:20	- 09:35	DEWATS	Mr. Bounchan KHAMPHALAYVONG, Head of Project, BORDA Lao PDR
09:35	- 09:50	GIS-Platform	Mr. Vasaly SISAVATH, Project CDUDCP, DHUP
09:51	- 10:15	Discussion from speakers and/or audience	Mr. Dao KEOSUKAN, Head of Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
10:15	- 10:25	Q & A	Mr. Dao KEOSUKAN, Head of Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
09:00	- 09:05	Introduction	Mr. Dao KEOSUKAN, Head of Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
10:25	- 10:30	Concluding remarks	Mr. Dao KEOSUKAN, Head of Division, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT



Date : Thursday 05 October (Day 4)
Session : Urbanisation and Climate Change Adaptation
Host : UNEP and MoNRE

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
10:45	- 10:55	Opening Remarks	- Mr Amphayvanh Oudomdeth, Deputy Director-General, Department of Climate Change (DCC), MoNRE - Mr Shyam Paudel, Chief Technical Advisor, UNEP
10:55	- 11:05	Building Resilience of Urban Populations Through Ecosystem-based Solutions (EbS)	- Mr Tavanh Kittiphone, Head of Climate Change Adaptation Division, MoNRE
11:05	- 11:15	Urban Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Tool Kit	Mr Thatsanee Sanouban, National Project Associate – Climate Change, UN-Habitat
11:15	- 11:30	Establishment of Urban EbA Knowledge Hub at the National University of Laos	Dr Phoummixay Siharath, Faculty of Engineering, National University of Laos
11:30	- 11:45	Restoration and Long-term Management of Wetlands and Streams to Reduce Flood Risks in Urban Areas: Lessons from the Urban EbS Project	Dr Chittana Phompila, Faculty of Forestry, National University of Laos
11:45	- 12:00	Youth participation in Climate Action and Sustainable Urban Development	Ms Souksaveuy Keotiamchanh, Founder, Zero Waste Laos
12:00	- 12:20	Audience Q&A	All presenters
12:20	- 12:30	Closing Remarks	Representative from MoNRE DCC

Date : Thursday 05 October (Day 4)
Session : Food Security
Host : WFP and FAO

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
14:00	- 14:10	Quiz and Presentation: Markets and urban households' food security	Ms. Rumbidzayi Machiridza, WFP
14:10	- 14:50	Quiz and Presentation: Reduce Food Waste	Ms. Yuno Ito, FAO
14:50	- 15:00	Concluding Remarks	Ms. Rumbidzayi Machiridza, WFP

Date : Thursday 05 October (Day 4)
Session : Leave No One Behind (LNOB)
Host : OHCHR

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
3.15	- 4.15	Leave No One Behind (LNOB)	- Ms. Priya Pravinchandra Lukka, Economist, OHCHR - Ms. Laura Macini, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR

Date : Friday 06 October (Day 5)
Session : Innovation, Science, and Technology: Driving Urban Development Forward
Host : National University of Laos

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
09:00	- 09:05	Opening Remarks	National University of Laos
09:05	- 09:20	Science and Technology Development Strategy and Its Implication for Urban Development	Mr. Soukasavath Sihapanya, General Director, Department of Science Management, MOES
09:20	- 09:35	Roles of University in the 4th Industrial Revolution	Assoc Prof Sitthixay Xayavong, PhD, Director, Office for Research and Academic Service Affairs, National University of Laos
09:35	- 09:50	Artificial Intelligence in Education, Science and Technology Development	Dr. Somsack Inthasone, Vice Dean, Faculty of Natural Sciences, National University of Laos
09:50	- 10:05	Sustainable Smart Cities: Initiatives in the Context of Laos	Dr. Parkpoom Srithimakul, Chairman, Zlcure Corporation
10:05	- 10:20	Concluding Remarks	National University of Laos

Date : Friday 06 October (Day 5)
Session : Progress of the Second Lao National Urban Forum
Host : MPWT and UN-Habitat
Chair : Vice Minister, MPWT
Co-Chair : UN-Habitat

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
		MC	Mr. Nalongxai MIVAPADITH, Deputy Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
10:45	- 11:05	Briefings and Outcome Statement of the Second Lao National Urban Forum	Dr. Viengnam Douangphachanh, Director General, Department of Housing and Urban Planning (DHUP), MPWT
11:05	- 11:15	Remarks	Dr. Avi Sarkar, Regional Advisor and Representative UN-Habitat Lao PDR
11:15	- 11:25	Closing Remarks	Vice Minister, MPWT



Date : Friday 06 October (Day 5)
Session : Safer Cities
Host : UNFPA and UN-Habitat

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
13:30	- 13:32	Introduction	Ms. Kumiko Hino, Programme Management Specialist, UN-Habitat
13:33	- 13:48	Inclusive and Safeguarding	Ms. Phonesavanh Souvannasy, Gender Equality, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager, Plan International
13:49	- 14:04	Gender Based Violence	Ms. Victoria Dart, UNFPA
14:05	- 14:20	Lao labour migration flow towards Thailand	Mr. Ken Endo, Junior Project Associate, IOM
14:21	- 14:36	National Climate Change and Vulnerability Assessment	Ms. Kumiko Hino, Programme Management Specialist, UN-Habitat
14:37	- 14:47	QA	
14:48	- 14:50	Closing	UN-Habitat

Date : Friday 06 October (Day 5)
Session : Panel discussion: Collaborating for Livable Cities: The Crucial Roles of Architects and Civil Engineers in Urban Development
Host : Association of Lao Architects and Civil Engineers (ALACE)

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
15:15	- 15:20	Opening Remarks and Introduce of the	ALACE
15:20	- 16:00	Panel discussion: Roles of Architects and Civil Engineers in Urban Development for Liveable Cities	Panelists: Lao National Council for Architects and Civil Engineers, ALACE, MPWT, Vientiane Capital DPWT, senior architect, senior civil engineer, National University of Laos. Moderated by: CSR Committee-ALACE
16:00	- 16:30	Q&A Public Dialogue: Using Architects and Civil Engineers for Better Urban Development	Moderated by: ALACE-CSR Committee
16:30	- 16:45	Hand on the Appreciation Certificates to sponsors/contributors	ALACE president
16:45	- 17:30	Social connections	ALACE committees

Date : Saturday 07 October (Day 6)
Session : Shaping Inclusive Vientiane (Is Vientiane friendly)
Host : Global Shapers Vientiane Hub

Time		Agenda	Presenter
Start	End		
10:00	- 10:30	Shaping Inclusive Vientiane Introduction with ask and answer game	Global Shapers Vientiane Hub
10:30	- 11:00	Showcase of: Design of a safe and inclusive city	Global Shapers Vientiane Hub
11:00	- 11:30	Demonstration of disability	Global Shapers Vientiane Hub
11:30	- 12:00	Conclusion and activity closing	Global Shapers Vientiane Hub

Habitat, Lao PDR: Footprint

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HABITAT



Key Successes/outcomes

Pioneering:

- First country, within UN-Habitat, to implement Fund project 8-2, GCF Readiness, ECHO and Country-led model of cooperation and

Successes:

- First country to engage in co-located urban setting
- Policy framework linking towns link
- Service del
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Annex C.

Lao National Urban Forum Outcome Statement

1

Provided a national platform for the second year in a row that promoted dialogue between urban sector stakeholders to help with the planning and management of urban growth;

2

Built upon the successes and lessons learned from the First Lao National Urban Forum (LNUF), held on October 31, 2022, to continue the forum annually;

3

Raised and increased awareness about issues pertaining to sustainable urbanization, the intersectionality of these issues, and the deep uncertainty surrounding them;



4

Amplified the intrinsic connection between human and environmental well-being, and the necessity of addressing the Triple Planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, within and beyond our cities, for prosperous urban communities;

5

Identified other thematic areas which would benefit from increased advocacy among stakeholders to help address urban challenges via human-centric, inclusive, and collaborative approaches for building more resilient and sustainable cities in Lao PDR;

6

Fostered strong cross-sectoral coordination and Government-Development partner dialogue on defining strategic areas of support for appropriate policy adjustment during the implementation process of development and investment programs and for applying new techniques in urban development and management;

7

Initiated coordination among local and international bodies and development partners for purposes of research and information sharing to strengthen the institutional framework in urban sectors;

8

Promoted integrated participatory planning, development, decision-making, and management of the natural and built environment amongst urban actors in urban areas;



9

Successfully served as a stakeholder forum to effectively support and complement other Government work requiring a coherent and integrated approach; and

10

Contributed to positioning Lao PDR as part of the broader international knowledge-sharing platform in Urban Planning by facilitating partnerships with other governments to highlight best practices from Lao PDR and from around the world.



Annex D. Issue Paper - FAO



Issue Paper

Title: Tackling Food Waste in Urban Area

Related Thematic Session in the Second Lao National Urban Forum: Food Security

Organization name: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Cite this content as: Yuno Ito. 2023. *Tackling Food Waste in Urban Area*. Lao PDR, FAO.

Executive Summary

Today, food waste negatively impacts food security and nutrition globally, and cities play a crucial role in reducing it. To address this issue, the Lao government has launched a few initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness about food waste and promote sustainable practices. However, more need to be done to address various challenges. This paper recommends developing reliable data to inform actions and identify gaps, well-defined policies to achieve the reduction, and a waste management system. Also, investment in infrastructure in food supply chains is crucial, and food-sharing services and awareness-raising campaigns can positively enhance the engagement of stakeholders and inform action.

Introduction

The 2023 report of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (FAO et al., 2023) highlights that up to 783 million people across the globe faced hunger in 2022, while more than 3.1 billion people were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021. Even though hunger and food security continue, an estimated 13 percent of the world's food is lost in the supply chain from post-harvest prior to the retail stage of the supply chain (FAO, 2022a); a further 17 percent of food is wasted in households, food services and in retail (UNEP, 2021). Food loss and waste (FLW) negatively impact food security and nutrition. Global FLW is estimated to cause between 8 and 10 percent of the emissions of the gases responsible for global warming during 2010 - 2016 (IPCC, 2019). The yearly global environmental impact of FLW includes a carbon footprint of around 500 million tons CO₂ eq. (690 kg CO₂ per capita), a water footprint of 19 km³ (26 m³ per capita) and a land footprint 95 million hectares (1300 m² per capita, and around 38 percent of total energy consumption of global food systems. According to the nutrition research in India, total vitamin A loss from selected Indian food supply chains (i.e. fresh chickpeas, rice, milk, and mango) was estimated to be 1.76 x 10¹² µg RE, mainly from mango. The total percentage of vitamin A deficient children in India that could be satisfied in their daily requirement for vitamin A by the estimated loss is 21 percent (FAO, 2022b).

Cities play a crucial role in reducing food waste because at least 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, and up to 70% of all food produced globally is destined for consumption in urban spaces currently (FAO, 2023b). Food waste is not just a problem in high-income countries. Household food waste per capita is broadly similar across high, upper-middle and lower-middle-income countries (UNEP, 2021). Thus, the food waste issue is an issue all nations, Lao PDR included and it needs to be addressed in a proper manner through collective action.

Definition of Food Losses and Food Waste

Food losses and food waste have a two-level definitional approach. One definition is for national to global data collection and reporting, and another one is for supply chain-level analysis of critical loss and waste points. SDG indicator 12.3.1.a and 12.3.1.b, defined food loss and waste as the below.

Food losses - are all the crop and livestock human-edible commodity quantities that, directly or

indirectly, completely exit the post-harvest/slaughter production/supply chain by being discarded, incinerated or otherwise, and do not re-enter in any other utilization (such as animal feed, industrial use, etc.), up to, and excluding, the retail level. Losses that occur during storage, transportation and processing, also of imported quantities, are therefore all included. Losses include the commodity as a whole with its non-edible parts.

Food waste is food and associated inedible parts removed from the human food supply chain in the following sectors: retail and other distribution of food; food service (restaurants, schools, hospitals, other canteens, etc.); and households. “Removed from the human food supply chain” means one of the following end destinations: landfill, controlled combustion, sewer, litter/discards/refuse, co/anaerobic digestion, compost/aerobic digestion or land application.

Figure 1: SDG indicator 12.3.1 a and b operational boundaries of food supply chains



Source: SDG 12 Hub (2021)

Causes of Food Waste

The major causes of food waste include:

At retail and food service levels

- Inadequate packaging, temperature, and humidity control in retails
- Removal of “imperfect” looking foods
- Overstocking
- Restaurants’ surplus preparation

At household level

- Confusion about “use-by” and “best before” dates
- Low-quality food purchased by low-income consumers that end up unused or thrown away
- Over-purchasing food for social events by households with a higher socio-economic status
- Significant levels of inefficiency in catering services for all age groups and different contexts, coupled with rigid food procurement specifications

(Source: Lipinski et al., 2013., IMechE, 2013., Porpino et al., 2015., Setti et al., 2016., Bharucha, 2018.)

Lao Context on Food Waste

Food waste in Lao PDR occurs at every stage of the food supply chain, from production to

consumption. Inadequate infrastructure and storage facilities, poor transportation systems, and limited access to markets contribute to food waste in the country. Additionally, cultural practices, such as over-preparing food for social events and ceremonies, also contribute to food waste. The issue of food waste in Lao PDR has economic, social, and environmental implications. Wasted food means wasted resources, including water, land, and energy, which could have been used to feed the population. Additionally, food waste contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbates climate change. To address this issue, the Lao government has launched a few initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness about food waste and promote sustainable practices. These efforts include improving infrastructure and storage facilities, promoting sustainable farming practices, and encouraging consumers to reduce food waste through education and awareness campaigns. However, more need to be done to address various challenges. It will require a multi-faceted approach that involves government policies, education and awareness campaigns, and investment in infrastructure and storage facilities.

Recommendation

Reducing food waste is a shared responsibility. All stakeholders at all levels need to be involved: governments, the private sector, civil society, development agencies, research and academic institutions and consumers.

Support data collection, management, and dissemination

Reliable data is critical to map food system interactions, identify gaps, and enable evidence-informed decision-making for food waste. The government should invest in national agriculture and food data systems and seek to engage with new data sources and methods to generate relevant information to improve food waste.

Develop policies with well-defined anti-food waste targets

Setting a goal and indicator by the government is necessary, such as reducing food waste by a certain percentage by a certain year.

Develop or support public-private partnerships to tackle food waste across supply chains

The government, businesses, and public authorities have to cooperate to implement food waste management in food supply chains. For instance, investment in infrastructural development in supply chains can avoid damage to food, and conducting training on how to keep fresh food for retailers is helpful.

Promote responsible food-purchasing behavior to reduce food waste

Awareness-raising campaigns about the benefits to be derived from reducing food waste can positively enhance the engagement of stakeholders and inform action. The government and local authorities should include subjects related to food loss and food waste in school curricula.

Promote food sharing

The establishment of a food-sharing system that accepts food donations from retailers and food services, non-profit organizations, and citizens can reduce food waste. Incentives for public and private actors to donate surplus food are essential for reducing food waste, for example, tax cuts for those donating surplus food.

Transform food waste into new products

Using disposed food for feed or industrial use is essential to reduce food waste. The government, private sectors, research and academia should develop methods to utilize food waste for others such as bio-fertilizers, animal feeding and clean energy.

Annex

List of Abbreviations

FBS	Food Balance Sheets
FLW	Food loss and waste
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

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Annex E. Issue Paper - UNDP



Issue Paper

Title: Urbanization & Digitalization in Lao PDR

Related Thematic Session in the Second Lao National Urban Forum: Smart Cities and Digitalization

Organization name: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Cite this content as: UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2023. Urbanization & Digitalization in Lao PDR. Lao PDR.

Executive Summary

This issue paper outlines how digitalization can function as an accelerator for Lao PDR urban governance. A brief situational analysis of digitalization and smart city efforts in Lao PDR is conducted. The main findings include that digitalization and smart city projects are almost fully detached and implemented independently, Lao PDR lacks a skilled digital workforce, and synergies between digitalization and urban governance efforts (e.g., platforms to enhance citizen engagement) remain unexplored. Consequently, the recommendations include building a common digitalization and urban governance task force, establishing a reporting platform where citizens can report, for example, damaged infrastructure, and increase the digital skills of the Lao workforce.

I. Introduction – Digitalization as an accelerator for a more effective and sustainable urban development

Globally, technology and digitalization have become increasingly important in urban development and governance, especially for smart cities. There are many definitions of smart cities, but they all share the common goal of using technology to improve the lives of citizens and make cities more sustainable. Some definitions focus on the strategic use of new technologies, while others are broader and emphasize that smart cities are characterized by smart (intelligent) physical, social, institutional, and economic infrastructure that centers citizens in a sustainable environment [1].

Smart cities build on digital technologies and digital governance to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time, such as climate change, air pollution, public safety, migration, traffic congestion, and solid waste management. Examples of these are real-time traffic information can help to reduce air pollution by enabling drivers to choose alternative routes,





crime data can be used to improve preventive measures by law enforcement, and mobile apps can be used to enhance citizen engagement and access to public services [3]. In Jakarta, Indonesia, the JAKI app allows citizens to report any problems they encounter when using public facilities, receive push notifications on safety alerts, and book vaccination appointments [4]. The Government Super-App, a joint project of UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR, offers a promising starting point to provide similar services in Lao PDR.

However, what makes these technological innovations feasible is people's empowerment through effective and smart city governance, skilled public workers, well-planned public realms, citizen engagement, and inclusion. In short, smarter and more effective cities are about people, not only about technology, and therefore have great potential for least developed countries such as Lao PDR.

In recent years, Lao PDR has made significant progress in digitalization. In 2021, the Government of Lao PDR published the National Digital Economy Vision (2021–2040), the National Digital Economy Strategy (2021–2030), and the National Digital Economy Development Plan (2021–2025). These documents outline the government's ambitious plans to transform Laos into a digital economy. Moreover, the recently published Digital Maturity Assessment (DMA) and the ongoing development of the Digital Government Masterplan (DGM) also show that the Government of Lao PDR acknowledges the importance of digital transformation. The DMA found that Laos is still in the early stages of digital maturity, but the DGM sets a roadmap for accelerating the country's progress.

With support from UNDP, the Government of Lao PDR is also working on a strategy to accelerate digital infrastructure readiness, the development of supporting technology, nurturing digital talent and literacy, and improving regulations on digital ecosystems. These efforts are essential to ensuring that Laos can reap the benefits of digitalization [5].

This issue paper aims to bring together efforts in advancing digitalization and effective urban governance in Lao PDR, identifying challenges and synergies, and deriving recommendations on how digitalization can contribute to develop more sustainable and livable cities.

II. Digitalization, urbanization & Smart City in Lao PDR – A situational Analysis

Digitalization

Despite recent emphasis on digital transformation, the Digital Maturity Assessment (DMA) [6], conducted in 2022, reveals that Lao PDR's maturity level is digitally nascent, the lowest out of 5 possible levels (see Figure 1). The provinces, which administrate cities, are at a lower level of

maturity compared to the ministries due to a lack of user-centric principles, lack of marketing and outreach strategy, absence of user-participatory approach, and limited digital transformation initiatives.

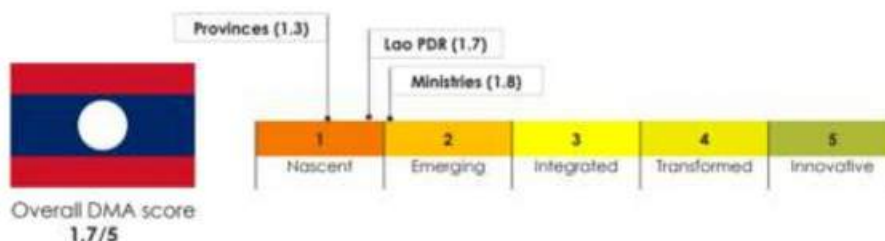


Figure 1: Overall Digital Maturity Assessment Score

However, the DMA highlights how the country is making good progress and is moving towards becoming digitally emerging in two areas, namely through:

- the enactment of multiple legislations and laws related to digital governance, and
- the previously outlined digital transformation initiatives (National Digital Economy Vision, - Strategy, and -Development Plan)

The DMA includes a pillar-level assessment, where four of six pillars were ranked digitally emerging, as depicted in Figure 2. These pillars include Technology & Solutions, Policy & Regulation, Service Definition & Delivery, and Institutional Frameworks & Collaboration, where Lao PDR made good progress over the past few years. Yet, the areas Skills & Capacity Building and User Centricity are still ranked digitally nascent.



Figure 2: Pillar level assessment of the Digital Maturity Assessment (DMA)





Moreover, the DMA concludes that the country falls behind in three areas:

- Affordability and quality of internet services,
- ICT/Digital skills, workforce, and educational ecosystems, and
- Lack of e-participation and feedback mechanisms.

Urbanization and the smart city initiatives

Urbanization is one of the defining trends of this century, with currently more than half of the world's population living in urban areas. Lao PDR is no exception.

The significant economic growth in the past decades has triggered a transformation from a primarily agrarian economy to an economy increasingly reliant on industry and services. This has contributed to rapid and uncontrolled rural-urban migration. With an urbanization rate of 4.9% [7], Lao PDR is facing the highest urbanization rate in Asia. This is putting massive pressure on urban and emerging settlements.

People are migrating to cities for better job opportunities, more diverse cultures and entertainment, better education, and a different lifestyle. However, the rapid urbanization of Lao cities is also increasing pressure on the good functioning of those cities and can jeopardize their attractiveness and assets. As the rate of urban migration exceeds the ability of local government to provide adequate infrastructure and services, there are many threats associated with urbanization, including:

- **Increased poverty:** Rapid urbanization can lead to increased poverty, as some urban migrants are unable to find affordable housing or jobs. This can force them to live in slums or informal settlements, which often lack access to essential services such as sanitation, clean water, and healthcare.
- **Increased inequality:** Rapid urbanization can also lead to increased inequality, as the wealthy often benefit from the growth of cities while the poor are left behind. This can be seen in the development of gated communities and informal settlements, as well as the disparities in access to education and healthcare.
- **More prone to disease and crime:** Rapid urbanization can make cities more prone to disease and crime. This is because people are living in closer quarters, which can make it easier for diseases to spread. Additionally, the lack of opportunities and social services in informal settlements can lead to other social issues such as crime.
- **More prone to pollution and natural disasters:** Rapid urbanization can make cities more prone to pollution and natural disasters. This is because an increase in the number of cars and factories can lead to air and water pollution. Additionally, the development of

concrete infrastructure can waterproof the ground, which can lead to flooding. Rapid urbanization can also make cities more vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones and earthquakes.

- **Accelerated damage to the infrastructure:** Rapid urbanization can put a strain on infrastructure, as more people are using roads, water, and electricity systems. This can lead to accelerated damage to infrastructure, which can make it difficult to provide essential services to residents.

To address these challenges, Vientiane and Luang Prabang are part of the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), which serves as a collaborative platform where over 25 cities work towards smart and sustainable urban development. As part of the ASCN, both cities identified focus areas and implemented two projects each [8].

In Vientiane, the focus areas are enhancing health and well-being, safety and security, quality environment and infrastructure. The first project is establishing an improved drainage system, which will simplify the operation and maintenance of the system and reduce flooding incidents. The second project is to establish a sustainable transport plan by closely collaborating with key stakeholders such as private transport companies and local transport departments. A pre-feasibility study on the drainage system and environmental improvement has been completed. However, further financial and technical support are required to advance the construction phase of the project [9].

In Luang Prabang, the focus areas are enhancing the civil and social, quality environment, and infrastructure. To achieve its vision of preserving its character as an international tourism center while becoming a livable and sustainable city, Luang Prabang's first smart city project is about wetland restoration. The aim is to restore 183 ancient wetlands and small ponds and improve green spaces to enhance eco-tourism and ecological diversity. The second project focuses on constructing concrete alleyways and footpaths to encourage pedestrians and to reduce the dependency on polluting vehicles. Luang Prabang aims to balance growth in tourism with sustainable management of the World Heritage Site. So far, all wetlands in the World Heritage Site have been surveyed. Moreover, two ponds were restored as pilot projects, while another three projects will be restored in the next phase. Like in Vientiane, the main challenge is limited budget [10].

In 2021, the Vientiane Capital Office of Administration granted local investors permission to conduct a feasibility study for a Smart City project in Vientiane Capital and has [frozen land across two districts](#) to ensure space for the project. The Nongpen Smart City project will be constructed on 2,900 hectares of land spread across 12 villages in Saysettha and Hatxayfong districts. The project aims to develop new infrastructure models, better use of resources and energy for environmental protection and urban management. A local private group is investing USD 580





million to develop and construct 300 Ha of land. Moreover, there are plans for the development of smart cities in Luang Namtha and Oudomxay by Thai investors. Even though those projects emphasize the modern and innovative infrastructure of smart cities, little information is shared about the governance, social and environmental model. In fact, there is still an unclear definition and regulation related to smart cities in Lao PDR.

III. Conclusion

Building on the brief state-of-the-art analysis in the two previous sections, the following opportunities can be identified:

1. **Enhancing synergy between digitalization and urban development efforts in Lao PDR.** So far, efforts for implementing smart city approaches and digital transformation initiatives have been conducted separately. In the smart city projects implemented as part of the ASCN or by private investors, digital thinking and digital technology do not appear or play only a minor role. Similarly, current digitalization initiatives usually do not overlap with urbanization and city planning topics. Yet, well implemented digital technologies can contribute to sustainable urban development and a more effective urban governance.
2. **Enhancing digital skill within the Lao workforce.** For pushing digitalization and smart city efforts, it is crucial to have staff with the necessary knowledge and skills in digital thinking and technology.

To identify in which areas digitalization can accelerate smart city efforts, best-practice examples in other Southeast Asian countries were reviewed. This has led to the following list of areas where strong synergies are expected:

- 1) **Smart Governance on state and municipal level.** Many examples in South-East Asia show the potential of combining digitalization and smart city governance by using digital technologies and infrastructure to leverage other urbanization projects. For example, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, one of the seven main components of their Smart City Masterplan is smart digital infrastructure; in Brunei, the Smart City Steering Committee also oversees alignment of initiatives to the country's Digital Economy Masterplan [11]. Therefore, aligning digitalization and governance topics seems to be promising field also for Lao PDR.
- 2) **Citizen Engagement.** Online applications and platforms where citizen can support the Lao Government in improving urban infrastructure is a best-practice example on how citizen



engagement through the leverage of digital technology can support urban governance and smart city planning. This could also address the lack of e-participation in Lao PDR, highlighted in the DMA. Successful implemented examples of citizen engagement in advancing smart cities include the app JAKI, in Jakarta, Indonesia or Thailand's Open Policy platform [12]. Similar applications and platforms could bridge digitalization and smart city efforts in Lao PDR.

IV. Recommendations

To address the challenges faced by Lao PDR in advancing digitalization and sustainable urban development and to leverage synergies of both fields, the following actions are recommended:

- ***Facilitate a consultation workshop with actors working on digitalization, urbanization, and smart city and set up a working group on digitalization & smart city.***
The consultation workshop is needed to map areas where efforts for smart city development and digitalization can be strategically combined and develop ideas on how synergies can be leveraged. The synergies outlined in the previous section can be considered. Building on ideas from this consultation workshop the working group can develop the ideas into concrete projects. Moreover, it could work on mobilizing further resources to implement more digital, smart city projects.
- ***Enhance citizen engagement through digital platforms.***
Following the examples of Indonesia and Thailand outlined above, an application or online platform can be installed where citizens can report problems with urban infrastructure such as road holes, broken lamps, or unsafe sidewalks. This enables efficient response of the Lao Government to most pressing cases (identified by the most reported ones).
- ***Increase digital skills and expertise within and outside of the Government of Lao PDR.***
Following the example of DKI Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Manila [13], setting up education programs to support the digital transformation is needed to close gaps in digital expertise and build a skilled digital workforce that will be able to drive forward digitalization and smart urban planning. The Digital Skill Assessment conducted by UNDP and MTC can serve as a starting point for designing this education campaign.





Annexes

List of Abbreviations

ASCN	ASEAN Smart City Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DMA	Digital Maturity Assessment
MTC	Ministry of Technology and Communications
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Annex F. Issue Paper - WHO



Issue Paper

Title: Urbanization and implementation of smoke-free laws in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Related Thematic Session in the Second Lao National Urban Forum: Health & Tobacco

Organization name: World Health Organization

Cite this content as: Urbanization and implementation of smoke-free laws in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. World Health Organization Lao PDR; 2023.

Abstract / Executive Summary

To effectively protect people from tobacco smoke and alleviate the associated health, social, and economic consequences of tobacco use in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), prioritizing the implementation of smoke-free laws within discussions concerning urban governance and sustainable development is critical. In line with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, Lao PDR's national law mandates smoke-free environments in all indoor public places, workplaces, and public transportation. However, limited enforcement and insufficient public awareness of the law pose significant challenges to compliance. This issue paper emphasizes the importance of implementing and enforcing smoke-free laws within the context of rapid urbanization in Lao PDR and highlights challenges in the current situation. Recommendations to address these challenges include developing a comprehensive enforcement plan or strategy for smoke-free laws at the subnational level, with strong national-level coordination; strengthening multisectoral coordination to enhance the effective enforcement of national laws; and establishing sustainable funding mechanisms to support enforcement activities. Drawing from successful initiatives, such as Smoke-free Luang Prabang, the Wat Phou Champasack World Heritage Site smoke-free project and Smoke-free Plain of Jars, Lao PDR can expand efforts at the subnational level to further promote smoke-free environments and contribute to sustainable urban development.

1. Introduction

In the dynamic context of urbanization, the convergence of rapid urban growth and tobacco use has emerged as a crucial challenge for both public health and sustainable development. As urban areas continue to expand, they attract diverse populations, economic activities, and changes in lifestyle. This urbanization process has profound implications for tobacco consumption patterns, presenting both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, urbanization can encourage the adoption of healthier behaviours and provide a platform for effective tobacco control interventions. On the other hand, it can create environments that facilitate tobacco marketing, accessibility, and consumption, thereby exacerbating the burden of tobacco-related diseases and social inequalities. This intricate relationship between urbanization and tobacco use necessitates the development of comprehensive strategies to navigate the evolving public health landscape in urban settings.

Several global and regional commitments and networks recognize the undoubted impact that urbanization has on health outcomes and the important role subnational action plays in promoting well-being. The Shanghai Consensus on Healthy Cities, endorsed in 2016 by mayors worldwide at the 9th Global Conference on Health Promotion, committed to Healthy Cities with action areas including creating smoke-free environments within cities by making indoor public places and public transport smoke-free, and banning all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (1). Further, in 2018, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Smart Cities Network (ASCN) was established. ASCN places emphasis on smart and sustainable urban development with some members,

including Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), prioritizing health, well-being, and environmental quality (2).

2. Current status of tobacco use and its health, social, and economic impacts in Lao PDR

In Lao PDR, a country with the highest urbanization rate in Asia (3), tobacco poses a multifaceted challenge to the pursuit of healthy, economically sustainable and socially viable development. The toll of premature deaths and preventable illnesses caused by tobacco use undermines the healthcare system and economic growth. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately 1.5 million people currently use tobacco products in Lao PDR (4), leading to over 7000 annual deaths; out of these fatalities, 5848 are attributable to smoking while 1383 are linked to exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) (5). This equated to 215 669 years of healthy life lost (disability-adjusted life years [DALYs]) due to death and illness caused by tobacco use in this country in 2019.

Table 1 Number of deaths, DALYs, and years of life lost attributable to tobacco in Lao PDR in 2019

		Both	Male	Female
Deaths	Tobacco	7 009	5 483	1 526
	Smoking	5 848	5 117	731
	SHS	1 382	550	832
DALYs	Tobacco	215 669	165 827	49 842
	Smoking	168 683	147 933	20 750
	SHS	53 173	22 880	30 294
Years of life lost	Tobacco	189 946	147 137	42 809
	Smoking	147 584	130 313	17 271
	SHS	47 844	21 327	26 517

Source: Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network (2019) (5).

Tobacco-induced poor health significantly impacts productivity, as individuals who become ill from tobacco use are unable to work or may experience diminished work quality due to their health status (6), resulting in both individual and societal economic losses in addition to healthcare costs.

The *Investment case for tobacco control in Lao PDR* – a report by the Ministry of Health, Research Triangle Institute International, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), and WHO – found that in 2017, tobacco use imposed a financial burden of 3.6 trillion Lao Kip on the Lao PDR economy (7). This amount was about 2.3% of the country's gross domestic product for that year. Given that the number of tobacco-related deaths in 2019 exceeded those in 2017, it is reasonable to infer that the economic impact has increased.

Table 2 Economic losses due to tobacco in Lao PDR in 2017

Tobacco-related mortality	2.3 trillion Lao Kip
Healthcare expenditure attributable to smoking	240 billion Lao Kip - medical treatment for illnesses caused by smoking: 111 billion Lao Kip to Government, 116 billion Lao Kip to citizens - private insurance and non-profit institutions serving households: 12 billion Lao Kip



Lost productivity due to tobacco-attributable mortality and disability as well as workplace smoking breaks	1 065 billion Lao Kip - <i>miss days of work (absenteeism): 191 billion Lao Kip</i> - <i>less productive at work (presenteeism): 515 billion Lao Kip</i> - <i>smoking breaks: 359 billion Lao Kip</i>
TOTAL	3.6 trillion Lao Kip

Source: Investment Case for Tobacco Control in Lao PDR (2022) (7).

Furthermore, tobacco use exacerbates social and economic disparities by redirecting resources away from critical necessities such as food and education. This, in turn, deepens issues of hunger and family impoverishment (6). These burdens pose even greater challenges on vulnerable populations, and the disparity can be magnified by unplanned and rapid urbanization, thereby adding layers of complexity to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, tobacco production and use harm the environment, leading to deforestation, soil degradation, water resource depletion, and air pollution (8). To chart a course of genuine advancement, policies must intervene and address the multifaceted impact of tobacco.

3. Tobacco control in Lao PDR and relevance of smoke-free laws in urban settings

The full implementation of the WHO FCTC reduces the prevalence of tobacco use, leading to substantial health gains, recovery of economic losses, and sustainable development for countries. Since ratifying the WHO FCTC, a global treaty on tobacco control, in 2006, the Government has made progress in legislating tobacco control measures. The country adopted the national Tobacco Control Law in 2009 and set regulations on smoking in public places, packaging and labelling of tobacco products, and tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (9). The Decree on Penalties and Measures to Implement Tobacco Control Law and Regulations, adopted in 2019, established the penalties and violations of the Tobacco Control Law 2009 and specific regulations issued under that law. Recently, the Government took a further step to close gaps and align the national law with the WHO FCTC by adopting the 2021 Tobacco Control Law (Amended). This amendment expands the ban on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, strengthens the regulations for health warnings and labels on tobacco products, and prohibits the use, production, import, export, transport, or trade of new forms of tobacco products (e.g. e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, shisha or baraku) (10).

While comprehensive implementation of tobacco control policies is vital to reduce the health, economic, and social impacts of tobacco use, there is a particular need to prioritize the prohibition of tobacco use in all indoor public places and workplaces within the context of urbanization. The goal of the Lao National Urban Forum is “to support sustainable urban development in Lao PDR so that urban areas are pleasant, safe and healthy places to live, and economically, socially and spiritually sound with active participation from all key stakeholders in good urban governance” (11). Considering that one of the prominent features of Lao PDR is the rapid and uncontrolled urbanization driven by dynamic rural–urban migration (11), the concentration of a sizeable population in urban centres could present notable challenges in implementing smoke-free laws. For example, the diverse economic activities and lifestyle changes expedited by urbanization can introduce complexities in terms of ensuring public awareness, monitoring, and enforcement of smoke-free laws, which might undermine public compliance. The effective implementation and enforcement of smoke-free laws play a pivotal role in shielding individuals from second-hand smoke and reshaping behaviours and perceptions surrounding tobacco use. This, in turn, leads to a reduction in tobacco consumption, thereby helping to alleviate health disparities related to tobacco and lessening the societal and economic burdens. Ultimately, the establishment of comprehensive smoke-free environments contributes to the creation of healthier and more appealing cities, thereby enhancing the potential for sustainable urban development.

4. Successes and progress in Lao PDR in implementing smoke-free policies

Article 8 of the WHO FCTC (Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke) requires the adoption and implementation of effective legislative, executive, administrative and/or other measures to protect people from exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places, and other public places as appropriate (12). The guidelines for implementation of Article 8 provide the principles that should guide Parties in meeting their obligations under Article 8.

The seven principles for implementing Article 8 of the WHO FCTC (13)

Principle 1: Effective measures to provide protection from exposure to tobacco smoke require the total elimination of smoking and tobacco smoke in a particular space or environment in order to create a 100% smoke free environment. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

Principle 2: All people should be protected from exposure to tobacco smoke. All indoor workplaces and indoor public places should be smoke free.

Principle 3: Simple, clear and enforceable legislation is necessary to protect people from exposure to tobacco smoke. Voluntary smoke free policies have repeatedly been shown to be ineffective and do not provide adequate protection.

Principle 4: Good planning and adequate resources are essential for successful implementation and enforcement of smoke free legislation.

Principle 5: Civil society has a central role in building support for and ensuring compliance with smoke free measures, and should be actively involved in developing, implementing and enforcing legislation.

Principle 6: The implementation of smoke free legislation, its enforcement and its impact should all be monitored and evaluated. This should include monitoring and responding to tobacco industry activities undermining the implementation and enforcement of the legislation.

Principle 7: The protection of people from exposure to tobacco smoke should be strengthened and expanded, if necessary, by actions including new or amended legislation, improved enforcement and other measures to reflect new scientific evidence and experiences.

In Lao PDR, the Ministry of Health issued a Decision in 2007, which mandated all indoor health sector locations to be smoke-free zones (14). The 2009 Tobacco Control Law banned smoking in all indoor health and educational facilities and public transport in Lao PDR (9). The 2016 Ministry of Health's Agreement No.1067/MPH on Governing Implementation of the Tobacco Control Law further restricts the establishment of designated smoking areas to only outdoors and at least 10 metres away from doors and windows of the building. This regulation made all indoor public places, including government facilities, private offices and workplaces, and restaurants, cafés, pubs, and bars, smoke-free (15). The 2019 Decree on Penalties and Measures to Implement Tobacco Control Law and Regulations imposes penalties (fines) for not posting "no smoking" signs in the non-smoking areas and smoking in the non-smoking areas, solidifying the legal basis for the enforcement (16).



As a result of advancements in national smoke-free legislation, WHO has acknowledged Lao PDR for reaching the highest standard of smoke-free legislation in indoor areas, aimed at safeguarding individuals from exposure to tobacco smoke (17). Lao PDR is among the 74 countries worldwide that provide the highest level of protection against tobacco smoke exposure. In May 2023, the Cultural and Social Committee of the National Assembly of Lao PDR received the World No Tobacco Day Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to tobacco control. Since 2009, the Committee has played a central role in the adoption of significant legislation aimed at shielding people from the devastating health, social, environmental, and economic impacts of tobacco use in the country.

5. Challenges

According to the 2015 National Adults Tobacco Survey, 63.1% of adults (aged ≥ 15) working indoors experienced second-hand smoke exposure at work in the past 30 days (18). About six in 10 adults were exposed to second-hand smoke in government buildings (56.2%) and restaurants (57.5%), while 31.0% were exposed on public transportation and 11.8% within healthcare facilities.¹ Alarming, adolescents were also exposed to second-hand smoke. Findings from the 2016 Global Youth Tobacco Survey show that 38.5% of students aged 13–15 were exposed to tobacco smoke inside enclosed public places during the seven days preceding the survey (19). Furthermore, a recent analysis from the Global Burden of Disease Study estimates that 1382 deaths (550 among men and 832 among women) were attributable to second-hand smoke in 2019 (5).

Despite having smoke-free measures in place, implementation and compliance challenges remain. The compliance scores reported in the eighth *WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic* indicate the urgent need for comprehensive and effective implementation and enforcement of smoke-free laws in the country. While compliance with smoke-free measures has been assessed as high in some areas (such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, offices, workplaces, and public transport), lower levels of compliance have been observed in government facilities, restaurants, cafés, pubs, and bars. The guidelines for implementation of Article 8 of the WHO FCTC highlight the key components of the enforcement infrastructure, including:

- the authority of officials responsible for enforcement
- a system both for monitoring compliance and for prosecuting violators
- the process for inspection of businesses for compliance
- a national coordinating mechanism to ensure a consistent approach nationwide
- inspectors or enforcement agents at the local level where possible
- an overall enforcement plan including a process for training of inspectors
- funding mechanisms (13).

In Lao PDR, certain components are either limited or absent, which presents challenges to the effective implementation of and adherence to smoke-free laws. These challenges can be summarized as follows:

- **Enforcement and compliance monitoring system:** Lao PDR lacks a clear system for monitoring the enforcement and compliance of smoke-free policies. A report from the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance on the implementation of Article 8 of the WHO FCTC in ASEAN

¹ In 2015, only healthcare facilities, education facilities and public transportation were completely smoke-free; other indoor public places were allowed to have smoking areas, so they were partially smoke-free.

countries in 2020 noted that Lao PDR, like most countries, does not monitor and evaluate their implementation regularly at the national level (20).

- **Enforcement plan or strategy:** While the Ministry of Health offers no-smoking signage for the public sector, regular inspections and training of enforcement officers are imperative to strengthen enforcement and enhance compliance. Awareness of the national Tobacco Control Law among both government officials and the general public is inconsistent and generally insufficient. There is a pressing need for a more proactive advocacy approach to enhance awareness and garner support from various stakeholders, including health and non-health government authorities, policy-makers at different governance levels, the private sector, and the general public.
- **Sustainable funding:** The Tobacco Control Fund established by a Prime Minister's Decree in 2013 under the Tobacco Control Law is intended to support tobacco control activities. However, regulations on the management and use of the Fund are pending. The Government relies on financial support from the WHO FCTC 2030 project and development partners like WHO, UNDP and the Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance for smoke-free implementation efforts. This underscores the urgent need to address the challenge of activating and accessing the Tobacco Control Fund.
- **Coordination and collaboration:** Given rapid urbanization, stronger coordination and collaboration are essential for the effective implementation of national smoke-free laws in various contexts and at different levels, including urban and rural settings.

6. Recommendations

Lao PDR has distinct opportunities to strengthen the implementation and enforcement of smoke-free laws and regulations. Doing so can increase compliance with these life-saving tobacco control measures, thereby optimizing the advantages of a comprehensive smoke-free policy. Following the adoption of the 2021 Tobacco Control Law (Amended), the Government has been proactively engaged in revising related regulations and decrees to facilitate the effective implementation of the amended legislation. To effectively tackle the complexities associated with tobacco use in urban environments, a series of critical recommendations emerge as essential, particularly for policy-making and urban planning and governance.

1. **Advocate for strong compliance:** Improve awareness of the national laws and regulations on tobacco control and encourage advocacy efforts aimed at fostering stronger adherence to smoke-free laws among both the public and businesses. Highlight the health and economic benefits associated with compliance.
2. **Develop a comprehensive enforcement plan:** Create a comprehensive enforcement plan and strategy for smoke-free laws, covering both urban and rural areas. This plan should include regular compliance monitoring at subnational levels and coordination at the national level to ensure consistent adherence.
3. **Strengthen multisectoral collaboration:** Foster cooperation and collaboration among various sectors, encompassing health, education and sports, culture, information and tourism, finance, industry and commerce, public security, agriculture and others, at different levels of governance. The existing tobacco control committees at national and subnational levels are key mechanisms for multisectoral engagement in tobacco control, ensuring tobacco control laws, decrees and regulations are well-informed, implemented and enforced, including smoke-free regulations.



4. **Secure sustainable funding:** Establish sustainable funding mechanisms dedicated to tobacco control, including creating smoke-free environments. This can include gaining access to the Tobacco Control Fund. Adequate funding is crucial to swiftly and effectively execute initiatives aimed at reducing tobacco use and its associated health and economic burdens. Raising tobacco tax is a best-buy policy to generate government general income and earmark for tobacco control. WHO recommends that the tobacco tax rate should be at least 75% of retail price.
5. **Foster cross-city or jurisdiction collaboration:** Promote collaboration among cities within the country and the international communities to collectively strategize and coordinate efforts for the effective implementation and enforcement of new smoke-free laws and regulations.
6. **Share best practices:** Promote the exchange of best practices and insights derived from successful smoke-free initiatives, such as Smoke-free Luang Prabang, the Wat Phou Champasack World Heritage Site smoke-free project and Smoke-free Plain of Jars, within the country. Highlight the positive effects of comprehensive smoke-free measures on health, the economy, the environment, and society at large.

7. Conclusion

Lao PDR has enacted a comprehensive national law to safeguard the public from tobacco smoke exposure in all indoor public places and workplaces. However, the limited implementation and low compliance with this law have impeded the realization of potential health, economic, developmental, and social benefits. Achieving effective smoke-free measures in urban settings holds the promise of multiple advantages that align with the goal of promoting pleasant, safe, and healthy urban living.

To address the gaps in implementing and enforcing the smoke-free law, the following six recommendations are crucial: advocacy, developing and implementing a comprehensive plan, strengthening multisectoral collaboration, securing sustainable funding, fostering cross-city or jurisdictional collaboration, and sharing best practices. Lao PDR, with its exemplary national smoke-free law and model smoke-free sites, can take the lead in the smoke-free movement, contributing significantly to the development of healthy cities as an integral part of its urban development strategy.

Annexe

List of abbreviations

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)

Second-hand smoke (SHS)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)

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Annex G. Marketing Materials

ປ້າຍເຈແຜ່ກ 60cm x 1.5m = 5 ປ້າຍ



ປ້າຍຂ້າມທາງ 1m x 10m = 2 ປ້າຍ



ປ້າຍເວທີ 4m x 10m = 1 ປ້າຍ



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 5. Department of Pollution Control (DPC)
 6. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
 7. Embassy of Germany, H.E. Mrs. Annette Knobloch, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Lao PDR
 8. Embassy of India, H.E. Mr. Prashant Agrawal, Ambassador of India to Lao PDR
 9. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
 10. Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)
 11. Global Shapers Vientiane Hub
 12. J-mart
 13. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
 14. Lao Women's Union (LWU)
 15. Ministry of Health (MoH)
 16. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)
 17. Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT)
 18. National University of Laos
 19. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
 20. Project for Capacity Development on Urban Development Control and Promotion in Laos (CDUDCP)
 21. Ramboll consultant team under support of ASEAN-Australia Smart Cities Trust Fund (AASCTF)
 22. Rimping Supermarket
 23. Smart Green ASEAN Cities (SGAC)
 24. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
 25. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
 26. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 27. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
 28. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
 29. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
 30. Vientiane Women and Youth Center for Health and Development (VWYC)
 31. World Food Programme (WFP)
 32. World Health Organization (WHO)
 33. Zero Waste Laos
- ... and many more

We thank you for your continued support in our efforts For A Better Urban Future and sustainable settlements in Lao PDR

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