

Food and Nutrition Security Forum

17th November 2016

Including 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) Pre-Consultation

The Implementation of a Convergence Approach to Address Food and Nutrition Security

Concept Note – First Draft

1. Introduction

- The Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) on 24th and 25th November 2016 proposes to have a dedicated panel discussion and a plenary policy dialogue on **implementation progress concerning** the multi-sectoral (convergence) approach to addressing food and nutrition security given the centrality of FNS to Least Developed Country (LDC) graduation.
- **At global level**, Lao PDR joint Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in 2011 with a letter of commitment from the Minister of Health to ensure that all people have a right to food and good nutrition.
- **At regional level (ASEAN level)**, Lao engaged in the development process of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on Food and Nutrition Security in the ASEAN region (SPA-FS) which provides scope and joint pragmatic approaches for cooperation among ASEAN member states in addressing food security in the region.
- **At national level**, Lao PDR has developed and implemented a number of policies and strategies to strengthen food and nutrition security, namely the Agriculture Development Strategy to 2015 and Vision to 2030, the National Rice Production for National Food Security Strategy, Development Strategy of the Crop Section 2025 and Vision 2030, and the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action.
- **At provincial level**, from 2013-2015, the implementation of the multi-sectoral (Convergence) Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan was piloted in three provinces: Luang Namtha, Oudomxay and Saravan.
- **For multi-sectoral coordination**, the National Nutrition Committee (NNC) was established in July 2013. Its function is to provide a multi-sectoral platform (MSP) for Lao PDR. The NNC is led by the Vice-Prime Minister, reflecting its importance and the high level of Government commitment towards improving nutrition for the Lao people. It brings together representatives from four ministries, sectors, departments and agencies. The NNC is supported by a functional Secretariat housed in the Department of Hygiene Health Promotion in the Ministry of Health.
- The FNS has been **a topic of on-going priority to the National Development Agenda**. For instance, the pilot provinces reported on progress during the RTIM provincial consultation in Laung Namtha (27-28 June 2013), RTIM provincial consultation in Saravane (15-17 September 2014) and 12th High Level Round Table Meeting (HL RTM) (November 2015).

- The pilot phase of the convergence approach was completed in 2015. With the adoption of the 8th NSEDP in 2016, **the convergence approach on Food and Nutrition Security has been rolled out nation wide**. The approach is a strategic initiative within the framework of the updated national Nutrition Policy/Strategy and Plan of Actions and Agricultural Development Strategy 2025 including a national strategic approach on rice production.
- Learning from national institutions, **local partnerships and operational mechanism** involved in the convergence approach is vital to enable effective, nationwide roll-out, especially in outreaching to remote communities and local engagement strategies.

2. Objectives

- A consultation with all stakeholders ahead of the RTIM would prove to be a valuable exercise. This could serve to help **mobilize further awareness, appreciation, profile and advocacy at sectoral and provincial levels** in support of the Nutrition Policy/Strategy/Plan of Actions, Agriculture Development Strategy and convergence approach to address food and nutrition security in Lao PDR. It could also help to **sharpen up some of the key messages** to be conveyed by the Government and leading development partners at the panel discussion and plenary policy dialogue during the RTIM 2016.
- A pre-RTIM consultation which will be organised as an integral part of the National Food and Nutrition Forum would provide an opportunity for all stakeholder involved and other related parties to **take stock of the implementation progress of the convergence approach during its first year of nationwide roll out and propose further actions** for capacity development of government officials, local communities and other related stakeholders at all levels to ensure effective implementation of relevant food and nutrition security policies and strategies.
- In particular, it could demonstrate how its **agricultural, health and educational components interlink**. It might also assist a better understanding of how **the partnership arrangements**, including with DPs and INGOs/NPAs could be further improved. Not least, how the programme is managed, implemented, financed and monitored, both at the national and provincial levels building on lessons learnt from the pilot phase of FNS implementation.
- It could be used as an opportunity to show how a nationally owned and led multi-agency plan acts to bring **greater coherence and coordination across sectors**, in line with the principles outlined in the new Vientiane Partnership on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.
- **Identification of local sites for visit** where either the pilot activities apply, or could readily apply to see implementation in action.

3. Proposed date and focused areas for discussions

- Date and Venue: 17 November – Place to be confirmed
- **Focused areas for discussions:**
 1. Recent achievements, update and lessons learnt from the pilot phase (2013-2015) of implementation of the Multi-Sectoral Convergence Approach to Food and Nutrition Security to assist full nationwide roll out.

2. Update on inter-ministerial cooperation food and nutrition security activities at national and provincial levels.
3. Key messages for the 2016 RTIM
4. Priority actions for accelerating effective implementation of the FNS for 2017.

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Provisional Agenda – To be confirmed