



Guidance Note

2019 Round Table Implementation Meeting (2019 RTIM)

Prepared by Department of International Cooperation
Ministry of Planning and Investment
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The Round Table Process in recent years is about the ability of partnership to engage in policy dialogue for better development results. The high-level meeting (organised every five year) and the implementation meeting (organised annually) are the only venues in Lao PDR that gather representatives from all Government ministries & provinces at the highest level and all partners in development including private sector and civil society. The Government of Lao PDR considers what come out from the meeting are the most representative and consultative to shape policy options for the country development. Therefore, the Government of Lao PDR is committed to ensure that the Round Table Meetings are result oriented and they are effective and interactive as much as possible.

Further to the Round Table Implementation Meeting of 4 and 5 December 2018, and the subsequent retreat in February 2019 which identified follow up actions (see Annex 1), and in preparation of the RTIM in November 2019, the following guidance to the Sector Working Groups and Sub-Sector Working Groups is provided.

I. 2019 Round Table Implementation Meeting

Date of RTIM: 21 – 22 November 2019 (exact date to be confirmed)

Location: Luang Prabang (tbc)

Format: High level meeting preceded by technical discussions and a field visit

Purpose of the 2019 RTIM:

1. To further enhance effective development cooperation, including on the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan (VDCAP) for better results relating to:
 - The impacts of LDC graduation which is anticipated for 2024 (and the transition period);
 - SDG localization, particularly the SDG and LDC indicators which need to be monitored and reported against on an annual basis;
 - Disaster recovery framework including PDNA results and recommendations as well as indicative support at national, sectoral and provincial levels; and
 - The impact of climate change on Lao PDR's development trajectory.
2. To review and consult on drafting of the 9th NSEDP and its linkage with the budgetary process.

Over-arching theme of the 2019 RTIM:

Enhance partnership for effective development cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 8th NSEDP and preparation of the 9th NSEDP

Initial Draft Agenda

Day 1 – Technical Forum

- Welcome Remarks
- Presentation of the Luang Prabang Provincial priorities (reflecting the above topics)

- Panels will be held simultaneously in parallel sessions.
 - Panel 1: The impact of LDC graduation on trade, ODA, and financing opportunities
 - Panel 2: SDG localization: monitoring, implementation, coordination
 - Panel 3: Disaster Risk Reduction: follow up to the PDNA, indicative support and next steps in integrating DRR into the 9th NSEDP
 - Panel 4: The impact of Climate Change on Lao PDR's 9th NSEDP, including green growth strategy
- Lunch
- Field visit
- Baci Ceremony and formal dinner

Day 2 – High-Level Policy Dialogue

- Official opening
- Photo session
- Tour of the exhibition
- Coffee Break
- Presentation on the NSEDP – 8th NSEDP and preparation of the 9th NSEDP
- Statement by each panel
- Followed by moderated discussion.
- Lunch
- Preparation of the NSEDP - Means of implementation (planning and budgetary process, financing for development, public financial management, etc.)
- Plenary Discussion
- Wrap-Up and Official Closing Remarks

II. Actions required by the SWGs

1. **Discussions/consultations at sectoral level:** All SWGs are required to follow up actions of 2018 RTIM key recommendations and reflect on the priorities set for the 2019 RTIM and how the respective sector provides opportunities and challenges and what conditions need to be put in place to support Lao PDR's development in the coming years.

While it is important that thematic sector issues are discussed during SWGs meetings, the RTP Secretariat would like to recommend that individual SWG identify key messages at sectoral level which could be used to stimulate discussions during 2019 RTIM.

2. **Progress report by SWGs** in support of the implementation of the 8th NSEDP and the 2018 RTIM key recommendations (prepared jointly by the Government and development partners) should be submitted to the RTP Secretariat by **31 October 2019**.

While reporting, the SWGs are requested to reflect on i) the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan; ii) innovative approaches by government and other stakeholders; and iii) promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and accelerating the adoption and implementation of the National Youth Policy.

3. RTP Secretariat to meet with an individual SWG Secretariat: There is still a need to strengthen the 'policy dialogue' efforts within the SWG meetings, as many are reported to be rather stifled by process, speeches and protocol. Further efforts are needed in this regard, through the leadership of SWG secretariat. To help facilitate coordination across sectors and create common understanding on RTM preparation, DIC/the RTP Secretariat intends to visit individual SWG Secretariat (both chairs and co-chairs focal points). A request for meeting will be sent out well in advance to improve its coordination.

4. Meeting of chairs and co-chairs of SWGs and other related partners: DIC/MPI expects to organize regular meetings of Chairs and Co-Chairs of SWGs leading up to the 2019 RTIM. These meetings will focus on the progress of the preparation for the 2019 RTIM and discussions over key issues for clarification and common understanding.

5. Development exhibition: Development exhibition will be organized as side event during the 2019 RTIM. All SWGs are invited to display their activities contributing to sustainable development and inclusive growth. The National Secretariat of the Round Table Process will organize a briefing session with all SWGs and relevant stakeholders at least a month before the 2019 RTIM to go through all necessary arrangements for this side event.

6. Field visits prior to the RTIM: SWGs are encouraged to suggest, take the lead and design field visits which are in line with the concept of the 2019 RTIM. As highlighted early, different types of projects/programmes (ODA projects, PIP, public-private partnerships, South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation and others as appropriate) will form the integral part of the visits. The field visits should be ideally organised at least a month before the RTIM. The RTP Secretariat will send out a letter to all SWGs to inform about a concept and rationale behind the organization of the field visits.

III. Key preparatory activities and consultations leading up to the 2019 RTIM

Key activities	2019 Timeframe	Key agencies in charge
<u>Already carried out up until now</u>		
1. Preparation of national responses for the third global survey on partnership for effective development cooperation	January	DIC/MPI
2. Preparation of the 2019 RTIM Road Map and Guidance Note	January/February	DIC/MPI
3. Round Table Process Retreat	February	DIC/MPI
4. SWG outcome based Annual Work Plan (AWP), calendar of events and updated Terms of Reference	End February	SWG Secretariats
5. Dissemination of the Prime Minister Instruction on implementation of the 2018 RTIM policy recommendations	February – March	DIC/MPI
6. Finalization survey and attend senior meeting on the global partnership for effective development cooperation	April-July	DIC/MPI
7. Follow up actions/workshop on LDC graduation	March- May	DOP/MPI, LSB/MPI, DIC/MPI and DIO/MOFA
8. Meeting of the National Steering Committee on Round Table Process	July	DIC/MPI
9. Meet the press	Quarterly if possible	DIC/MP
10. Revisions and finalization of the SDG roadmap, SDG indicators, SDG communication strategy/action plan, etc..	Jan-July	DIO/MOFA
11. High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	July	DIO/MOFA
<u>From now till the RTIM</u>		
12. Another meeting of the National Steering Committee on Round Table Process	TBC	DIC/MPI
13. Dissemination of the 2019 RTIM guidance note/roadmap to all SWGs and relevant stakeholders	End of August	DIC/MPI
14. RTIM preparatory meetings and discussions with SWGs who could potentially lead the 2019 RTIM field visits	As often as needed	DIC/MPI and representatives from provinces

Key activities	2019 Timeframe	Key agencies in charge
15. Series of SWG meetings	Throughout the year	SWG Secretariat
16. Series of consultations at national, sectoral and provincial levels on preparation of the 9 th NSEDP	throughout the year	DIO/MOFA, DOP/MPI and LSB/MPI
17. Meeting of Chairs and Co-Chairs of Sector Working Groups (Policy level)	Quarterly (as often as needed)	DIC/MPI
18. Meetings of SWG Secretariats and RTP Secretariat (Technical level) – before: the RTP retreat, meeting of chairs and co-chairs, pre-consultation and other key policy consultations as appropriate	Every two months	DIC/MPI and SWG Secretariats
19. Submission of SWG progress report to DIC/MPI	31 October	SWGs
20. Finalization of the Foreign Aid Report and ODA review	November	DIC/MPI
21. 2019 RTIM invitation set out	At least two months before the actual RTIM	DIC/MPI
22. 2019 RTIM Background Document to be sent out to all RTIM participants	At least two weeks before the actual RTIM	DIC/MPI
23. RTIM pre-consultations	At least a month or two before the actual RTIM (Sept – Oct)	SWGs, DIC/MPI, DOP/MPI, LSB, DIO/MOFA
24. 2019 RTIM	21-22 November	
25. Debriefing with the Prime Minister	A few days after the RTIM	DIC/MPI

Please note that updated information on activities, consultations and other related matters about the Round Table Process including Sector Working Groups will be published through the recent revamped RTP website (<http://rtm.org.la>) on a regular basis.

IV. Focal points within DIC/MPI

For all matters relating to the overall preparation of the 2019 RTIM, please contact:

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Annex 1 – Key recommendation from 2018 RTIM

Outcome 1 – Economic Development

1. Structural economic transformation toward sustainable, long-term, and green growth – targeting non-resource-based diversification.

Within the 8th NSEDP outcome 1, promoting ‘inclusive economic growth’, the Government has been putting greater efforts toward structural economic transformation which should be pursued towards sustainable, long-term, green growth, targeting non-resource-based diversification.

2. Macroeconomic stability.

The Government re-confirmed that achieving macroeconomic stability is an essential requirement for durable growth. Delegates discussed a number of current risks and vulnerabilities, as well as Government initiatives for tackling the challenges of growing public debt, revenue shortfalls, fiscal consolidation, management of the financial sector and strengthening buffers to shocks. Development partners reaffirmed their continued support to the Government with policy advice and technical assistance on these issues.

3. A link between planning and budgeting.

The Government’s initiative towards greater integration between development planning and budgeting was welcomed. This will greatly assist development partners align assistance to national development priorities, and enable greater predictability and sustainability of public sector investments. Decentralization of budgets has also been a priority for the Government. The recent momentum towards enhanced transparency and accountability was regarded as a further positive step.

4. The role of the private sector.

It was extensively discussed as a catalyst and important partner to development. Without adequate engagement of the private sector, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will remain out of reach and unattainable. There was a strong consensus for strengthening development dialogue with the private sector and for improving the operating conditions that would be attractive for quality private sector investment.

5. Quality, efficiency and safety of the infrastructure, power, and water sectors.

The Government has been putting great efforts, which are also welcomed by Development Partners, on ensuring the quality, efficiency and safety of the infrastructure, power and water sectors – in particular the strategic review of existing and new hydropower investments and projects in line with international standards.

6. Connectivity and integration.

Round Table delegates had opportunity to visit the site of the Lao-China railway, which provided evidence of the rapid transformation in connectivity and integration that is taking place in the region.

7. Further improvements to an enabling environment for contributions of various stakeholders at local level such as NPAs and INGOs

It is an on-going process for further improvements to an enabling environment under the national regulatory framework to ensure meaningful contributions of various stakeholders at local levels such as NPAs and INGOs.

Outcome 2 – Social Development

8. Human capital development and poverty reduction.

Within outcome 2 of the 8th NSEDP regarding ‘enhancing human development’ consultations converged on the themes of human capital development and poverty reduction.

9. Levels of investment in human capital and skills development.

In support of the economic transformation strategy outlined in Outcome 1 Round Table participants suggested that levels of investment in human capital and skills development would need to be increased.

10. Tackling rural poverty and inequalities.

Whilst both the Government and Development Partners acknowledge the significant achievements that have occurred in poverty reduction, a yet more ambitious effort to tackling rural poverty and inequalities would be desirable in line with the universal goal of ‘leaving no one behind’.

11. Determined perseverance to address food insecurity and malnutrition.

Delegates were reassured to learn that rates of food insecurity and malnutrition are reducing. The Government highlighted that determined perseverance is required in this area for sustainable results to be realized. This goal is fundamental to seeing the country climb the human assets index, which is vital to secure LDC graduation.

12. Greater efforts to address UXO issues.

Similarly, progress was acknowledged in reducing UXO casualties and the clearance of contaminated land - yet the challenge ahead still remains vast.

13. Maternal and child mortality.

Maternal and child mortality rates have significantly reduced. However, the rates are still among the highest in the region. Initiatives that support adolescent girls, prevent early marriage and early pregnancy, and achieve gender equality were very much welcomed.

Outcome 3 – Environmental Development

14. Post Disaster Need Assessment.

Regarding the 8th NSEDP Outcome 3: ‘Improved Environmental Protection’ - the international community continues to express its solidarity and support to the Government and people of Lao PDR in light of the tragic flooding that occurred this year. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) in response to the flooding benefited from strong leadership by the Government, supported by the World Bank, European Union and United Nations as well as other partners. This was a powerful example of Government leadership, coordination and collaboration.

15. Lessons learnt from PDNA and “Build back better” principle.

From the PDNA we learned that the rural infrastructure and agricultural sectors were particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, which are closely linked to food security, nutrition and public health. Across all sectors, the recovery and reconstruction presents an opportunity to apply the ‘build back better’ principle.

16. Climate change adaptation and natural disaster management across all sectors and into all provinces.

Exposure to this natural disaster re-focused the collaborative efforts that are necessary to support climate change adaptation and natural disaster management across all sectors and into all provinces. This includes finalization of the law on disaster prevention and control, and building resilience and capacities, for example, through early warning systems, especially with those communities at greatest risk. It also brought to light the necessity of financial preparedness through insurance initiatives which have recently become available in the region.

Cross-Cutting Areas

17. The importance of the rule of law as the foundation for equality and development.

With regard to the cross-cutting areas of the 8th NSED, there was a highly constructive discussion regarding progress towards a rule of law state by 2020 and improved access to justice. All participants acknowledged the importance of the rule of law as the foundation for equality and development.

18. Awareness of people's rights and obligations under the law and to strengthen institutional capacity for implementation and enforcement.

Consultations recognized that a number of important legal reforms have either been introduced by Government or are being introduced. These include revisions to the national constitution, human rights legislation and the codifying of criminal and civil laws. These reforms continue to bring domestic laws into alignment with international norms, noting that the next Universal Periodic Review is scheduled to take place in 2020. On-going efforts are needed to help to raise awareness of people's rights and obligations under the law and to strengthen institutional capacity for implementation and enforcement.

19. Support to decentralization initiatives.

Participants benefited from a clear presentation on decentralization, including the strengthening of People's Provincial Assemblies and local administrative and service delivery functions. Development partners expressed their willingness to continue their assistance in this regard.

20. Further strengthen participation of local communities and other stakeholders in poverty reduction.

In an environment of constrained public resources, the Government is committed to further strengthen participation of local communities and other stakeholders such as private sector, civil society and others in poverty reduction, where they have the capacity and the reach.

21. Gender equality, the advancement of women, statistical disaggregation and other vulnerable groups.

Progress and challenges regarding gender equality and the advancement of women were outlined in our consultations. Statistical disaggregation is increasingly taking place, which is welcome. This data will aid in the planning and targeting of services towards communities in greatest need and for promoting inclusive growth – especially in respect of vulnerable women, the disabled and communities in remote areas.

Annex 2 – Template for SWG reporting

<p>Name of Sector Working Groups:</p> <p>SWG Chair and Co-Chairs:</p> <p>SWG Secretariat Focal Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government Officials: - Development Partners: <p>Technical Supporting Staffs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government Officials: - Development partners:
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Overview of Sector Performance in 2019

Sector outputs and activities	Progress	Challenges and opportunities
A. Sectoral thematic (substantive) areas		
1. Actions/activities relating to the RTIM key recommendations as per Annex 1 (for most relevant recommendations only)		
1.1		
1.2		
2. Other substantive actions/activities relating to overall sectoral strategies, if applicable, to support the implementation of the 8 th NSEDP and preparation for the 9 th NSEDP		
2.1		
2.2		
B. Communication and outreach activities with the sector and across Sector Working Groups		
C. Cross-sectoral thematic areas applied to all SWGs		
1. Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (in accordance to VDCAP 2016-2025) (Only narrative on each principles)		
2. Innovation and technology		
3. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and accelerating the adoption and implementation of the National Youth Policy		