

<p>Name of Sector Working Groups: Illicit Drug Sector Working Group</p> <p>SWG Chair and Co-Chairs: La Commission for Drug Control and Supervision</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:

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)		
<p>Outcome Cross Cutting Areas; action 17 – the importance of the rule of law as the foundation for equality and development</p> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p>Outcome 1 – Economic Development; connectivity and integration</p>	<p>Enhanced regional transport infrastructure and connectivity following the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community should be complemented by investments in law enforcement capacities in order to prevent organized crime from taking advantage of new opportunities. A key priority of the sector working group is to enhance capacities of law enforcement authorities to combat organized crime, in light of the on-going regional integration processes. Key activities have been:</p> <p>Regional cooperation: The Ministry of Public Security have taken an active part in several regional cooperation forums, including (a) the Mekong MOU on Drug Control, (b) the ASEAN Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC), (c) the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), (d) the ASEAN cooperation Plan to Tackle Illicit Drug Production and Trafficking in the Golden Triangle (2017-2019), (e) the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Communities Against Illicit Drugs (2016-2025), and (f) the Safe Mekong coordination centre.</p> <p>Border Liaison Offices and Container Control: Expand and build capacities for a network of Border Liaison Offices (BLOs) across the country. The purpose of the BLOs is combat organized crime through enhance intelligence gathering, intelligence sharing and cooperation. In 2019, several capacity building measures have been implemented for 15 existing BLOs, and 7 potential new locations have been identified for an expansion. The BLO programme is jointly implemented by UNODC and LCDC, and funded by Australia and Canada. Furthermore, a Container Control Unit has been established in</p>	<p>Enhanced regional transport infrastructure and connectivity following the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community has increased the challenges for Lao authorities in combatting organized crime. Southeast Asia’s public security agencies have not kept pace with regional economic integration. ASEAN governments have invested heavily in infrastructure (for example the Kunming to Vientiane railway in Laos) and ambitious cross-border trade pacts,</p>

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	<p>Thanaleng port on the Thai-Lao friendship bridge near Vientiane. The unit was funded by Canada and Australia.</p> <p>Enhanced forensic capacities: Digital evidence is becoming increasingly important both for drug crimes and other forms of organized crime. In 2019, the first Digital Forensics Laboratory was in Laos was opened. The laboratory was established through a cooperation between the Ministry of Public Security and UNODC.</p> <p>Capacity building measures for Law Enforcement: Several development partners have also supported capacity building measures for law enforcement, including (a) the United States supports the Lao Government on enhancing border security through an agreement with the Lao customs department, and provides trainings and limited operational expenses to the Lao drug control police and LCDC; (b) Japan has continued to provide annual training courses to Lao Government officials on drug control. Japan is also financially supporting iTWIN, a Japan/Lao project conducted by Interpol in 2019 to enhance the capacity if Interpol’s Global Police Secure Communications System within Laos; (c) the Australian Federal Police have continued to provide law enforcement training and equipment to the Lao police engaged in anti-narcotics and other transnational crimes. Australia also supports an ongoing programme of capacity building with Lao Immigration and Customs to strengthen Lao PDR’s border management systems. In August 2019, Australia also announced a new \$30 million initiative to help combat transnational crime in the Mekong Region; (e) UNODC has supported several capacity building initiatives, including through provision of trainings to border officials and provision of field test kits for drug precursors.</p> <p>Money Laundering: Both drug crime and other forms of organized crime are facilitated by Money Laundering. UNODC has an Anti Money Laundering (AML) advisor based in the country, working with national authorities on enhancing capacities for AML. Furthermore, the United Kingdom has recently funded two programs on combatting the illegal trade in wildlife and bulk cash smuggling. Canada is also providing multi-year support to the Institute for Legal and Technical Assistance for capacity building measures to help Lao police and judicial authorities disrupt and prosecute transnational organized crime, particularly money laundering.</p>	<p>but they have not made parallel investments in public security.</p>
<p>Outcome Cross Cutting Areas; action 17 – the importance of the rule of law as the foundation for equality and development</p> <p>and</p> <p>Outcome 2 – Social development; action 10 – Tackling rural poverty and</p>	<p>Opium cultivation in Laos is strongly linked to rural poverty and inequality. The Sector Working Group therefore focuses on introducing sustainable development models for poor, opium growing communities.</p> <p>Important progress has been made through an Alternative Development Project in Huaphanh province. The project has been funded by the United States and Luxembourg and jointly implemented by the Lao National Commission of Drug Control and Supervision and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.</p>	<p>Poverty remains the key driving factor for opium cultivation, and opium continues to be grown by poor and remote communities in the northern upland areas. Further</p>

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inequalities	The project aims to introduce sustainable development models to poor and opium growing communities in Huapanh province. Through the project, 381 families have introduced coffee as a livelihoods alternative, and are in the process of establishing a farmers' cooperative. The first General Assembly meeting of the cooperative is scheduled for November 2019, and the first minor coffee harvest is also expected in 2019/2020.	Alternative Development interventions are needed.
2. Other substantive actions/activities relating to overall sectoral strategies, if applicable, to support the implementation of the 8th NSEDP and preparation for the 9th NSEDP		
Treatment and vocational training of drug addicts	Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS) are considered the primary drug of concern in regards to drug use in Lao PDR. Supported by UNODC and with funding from the United States, the Government of Lao PDR has over the past three years made important progress on enhancing availability of evidence based treatment, through the establishment of Community Based Treatment Centres. Since 2016, 28 Community Based Treatment Centres have been established in different provinces. Further support has been provided to these centres in 2019.	A marked increase in the production and trafficking of Amphetamine-Type stimulants has taken place in the region over the past years. This increased availability also leads to increased use and increased demand for evidence based treatment.
B. Communication and outreach activities with the sector and across Sector Working Groups		
Communication channels have been established for the Alternative Development farmers from the Vanmai Community, who are in the process of establishing their own coffee cooperative as an alternative to opium cultivation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.vanmaicoffee.com • https://twitter.com/vanmaicoffee • https://www.facebook.com/vanmaicoffee/ • https://www.instagram.com/vanmai_coffee/ 	
A field visit to the Container Control Unit in Vientiane was organized for members of the sector working group in 2019	Through the field visit, members of the group learned about challenges border officials face in preventing organized crime from trafficking drugs and other illicit goods across the border. The members of the group also learned about the work that is made through the Container Control Unit.	
C. Cross-sectoral thematic areas applied to all SWGs		
1. Partnership for Effective	The Illicit Drug Sector Working Group (IDSWG) forms part of the National Round Table Process and constitutes the sectoral	

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Development Cooperation (in accordance to VDCAP 2016-2025) (Only narrative on each principles)	framework for donor coordination in the counter-narcotics sector in Laos. The IDSWG is chaired by LCDC, and co-chaired by the Mini Dublin Group Chair (Australia or Japan on a yearly rotational basis) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).	
2. Innovation and technology		
	Organized crime are increasingly relying on technology. In order to successfully investigate and prosecute organized crime, the Government of Lao PDR need to establish related capacities. An important initial step was taken in 2019, with the establishment of the first digital forensics laboratory in the country.	
3. Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment and accelerating the adoption and implementation of the National Youth Policy	Youth are a particularly at-risk group for drug use. Reaching this group with awareness raising activities is therefore critical.	